

Chapter 19

Skatefest started with the solo competition. Perfection and Odin each destroyed their routines. When Thor's turn time to skate came around, he picked up his skateboard only to discover— one of his wheels was missing? “Curse Heimdall!” Thor hissed, stomping a foot. “How did this happen?”

As soon as he asked the question, he knew the answer, turning his head to glare at Skyrmir, who shook his head and made an innocent look like, who, me?

“What happened?” Odin asked, seeing Thor in distress.

“Perfection sabotaged my board!”

“You can use mine,” Odin said. “It’ll be fine.”

Thor didn't know if it would be fine. Like many serious skaters, and he was as serious about his skating as any girl, he had a deep and complex relationship with his boards, especially since it had been with him ever since he'd become a girl. More importantly, he'd made numerous tweaks and modifications to get it just right. Odin was actually using one of what Thor considered his everyday skateboards, which was a good quality board, but it wasn't the same as Mjolina.

Yes, he had named his board after his now missing hammer.

“It's not the same,” Thor said. “That hag!”

“Wait a minute,” Odin said, thinking. “Skyrmir's whole thing is illusions. Maybe he didn't sabotage your board, but...”

“... made it look like he did!” Thor reached to where the wheel should have been and, sure enough, he felt it. “It's an illusion,” he said.

Odin smirked. “Think how impressed the judges will be when you nail your routine on three wheels?”

Thor smiled, walking sassily to the half-pipe, putting an extra swing in his hips.

“What's this?” Perfection said.

Thor lit it up! He attacked the half-pipe, spinning, jumping, raking... even on four wheels it would have been impressive, but everyone from the judges to a 4 year old in the crowd was stunned at what Thor seemed to be doing on only three wheels.

Fine, Perfection thought, slitting her eyes. I'll get you yet, my pretty!

It went like that all day. Perfection caused a wall of flames to appear the next time Thor skated. He ignored it, skating eight through, the crowd shouting in terror and then amazement as this skinny blonde girl seemed to pass through fire, laughing as the burning embers trailed off behind her.



The competition was single elimination, with girls eliminated each round until there would just be two and then the champion. Odin made it to the final four but lost out to perfection by a score of 9.9 to 9.8. As soon as he saw the results, tears rolled down his cheeks. He wanted to win, to beat Perfection, and, honestly, to beat his sister/daughter, not just because she'd slept with Tech, but to remind Thor who her Daddy was.

Thor hugged Odin. “We still have the team competition,” he reminded his sobbing little father. “You did so great!”

Odin touched his son on his smooth, soft cheek. “I’ll be fine,” he said. “Now go out there and kick Perfection’s ass!”

“I will,” Thor said, slitting his eyes, feeling like a warrior once again about to stride into battle. “But first I need to check my makeup.”

No one was more excited for the big finale than Darcy. She’d been waiting for this moment all day, when she would totally humiliate Thor in front of everyone. It wasn’t anything personal, though she did hate how pretty and perky and blonde Thor was. She had grown weary of her life as a girl and wanted out, and Gabe had promised her—

“Ow!” She winced as someone pinched her ear and began to drag her down an alley, out of sight. She started to struggle, to summon her magic, but then she looked and saw who it was who’d grabbed her. She realized there was no point in fighting. Her assailant threw her against the wall and glowered down at her.

“Well, hello,” Darcy said. “What an unpleasant surprise.”

“You look pretty today,” his assailant said, “Darcy? is it? Or, should I call you by your true name, Loki, God of Mischief?”

“These days,” Loki said, hooking his hair behind his ear. “My title is Cute Little Barista.”

Chapter 20

Thor, having touched up his lipstick and tightened his pigtails, turned to Odin who, having stopped crying, had repaired his own runny mascara. “Come with me,” Thor said. “I need you at my side.”

“For what?” Odin asked.

“I’m going to confront Perfection.”

Perfection, as rich as she was, sat in her tent, shielded from any photographers or fans or really anyone while her team of stylists worked on her hair and makeup, even applying powder to her legs. Skymir, as a woman, had learned that he liked everything

to seem effortless, so while he spent a small fortune to be beautiful, he always told his girlfriends when they got together for brunch or yoga, that he'd just "thrown something together."

Skyrmir, of course, had a security guard on site, and even though he now found tall, strong men a little intimidating, Thor pushed right past the handsome stud and burst into Skyrmir's tent.

"Oh, dear," Skyrmir said, pretending to examine his nails. "Does someone have her panties in a wad?"

"You're not funny," Thor said, throwing his hip to the side and planting his fist. "We need to talk."

Skyrmir, seeing the determination in Thor's big, pretty eyes, flicked his wrist toward the door. "Girls?" He said to his team. "A moment."

The stylists filtered out, glaring angrily at Thor and Odin. "Bitch," one of them hissed at Odin as she passed.

"Unh!" Odin said, tossing his hair, scrunching his nose.

Skyrmir crossed his legs and wrapped his hands around his knee, tilting his head back, looking down his nose at Thor. "What?"

"You've been cheating all day!" Thor said.

"I know."

"Well, now it's down to you and me, and I am challenging you right here and now to a fair fight. I skate. You skate. The best girl wins."

Skyrmir slit his eyes, thought about it.

Thor waited, staring right back into Skyrmir's eyes, the two females locked in a battle of wills. Neither looked away.

"Fine," Skyrmir said with a shrug. "Fine."

"You had better keep your word," Odin warned.

"Or, what?"

"I'll tell everyone you have crabs!"

"Later," Thor said, tossing his hair. He and Odin turned on their heels and sashayed out the door.

“Buh-byeeee,” Skymir sang. He had every intent of cheating. How could Thor be so naïve? Well, he was a blonde. “Bitch still doesn’t know who she’s dealing with!” His stylists returned, busying themselves making sure Perfection lived up to her name.

The time came for the showdown. The two girls would skate at the same time, showing off their skills, while the judges and the audience watched. “And now the moment we’ve all been waiting for!” Gabe shouted into the microphone, doing his best to imitate an old-school TV announcer. “In this corner, Tia, the upcoming sensation, and in this corner, Perfection, the living legend!” Both girls raised their arms over their heads and strutted around while the audience went wild.

Deep, thumping music began to play from the row of huge speakers, and the crowd grew into a frenzy, clapping, stomping their feet, shouting. Thor closed his eyes and centered himself. This was it. The ultimate test. His chance to prove he was the best skater girl in all Captiva.

The countdown began. Thor got on his board and got ready, mentally running through his routine. He glanced over at Odin, who watched, arms crossed under his breasts, an intense look in his eyes. “You got this,” Odin said.

A sense of complete and total calm came over Thor. It was just him, his board and the sky.

“Go!” Gabe shouted.

Thor pushed off, the ground popping under his wheels. Odin watched, impressed. Thor looked like he was floating, his movements so graceful and fluid they almost seemed to defy the laws of physics. He zipped up the halfpipe and flew into the air, sunlight glinting in his golden hair, a bright smile on his face. Odin felt a sense of fatherly pride that his son was so pretty, so athletic, fearless. His feelings of competition melted away. Thor was his daughter, his sister, and he only wanted her to be happy.

Skymir looked good, too, shredding with an arrogance and ease that belied what Odin knew were extremely difficult maneuvers. She was good. It might just come down to the whims of the judges.

Skymir couldn’t resist his true nature. He was a cheater born. This time, his illusion would be more subtle, as Thor had learned to ignore his flashier tricks. He would simply

make the lip of the halfpipe appear to be half a foot closer than it actually was. Thor would mistime his jump and take a vicious tumble— and lose!

Skyrmir smiled as he raised his hands, the magic crackling along the tips of his long, crimson nails. And then,— what? It just— stopped. Nothing happened.

A hand squeezed Loki's shoulder. "Well done."

Loki frowned. It was *not* fun helping Thor, the little princess that he was!

Annoyed, confused, Skyrmir finished his routine as did Thor, who repeated the leap he'd practiced before, racing up the halfpipe, reaching an incredible speed, flying high, high into the air before seeming to float down, land, blast down the halfpipe and then dismount, immediately doing a ballet bow, board in hand.

The crowd roared. Thor held his pretty pose, a huge smile plastered on his face,



eyes sparkling. Skyrmir just crossed his arms and put his nose in the air. Later, judges would say it was the way Thor finished that had caused them to score him higher. He was just so sweet, whereas Skyrmir came across as smug and superior, which no one really likes— in a girl.

Thor and Odin held hands while the judges finished filing out their cards. Gabe collected them, scowled, just for a moment, before adopting once more his mask of neutrality. "And the winner is, by unanimous decision and with a historic, perfect score of 10.0— Tia!"

The crowd roared. Tia had won them over with her pretty smiles and bright, happy energy.

Thor screamed. Odin screamed. They jumped up and down, laughing, hugging.

“I was robbed!” Perfection howled, his hands twisted into claws as he stormed off.

A man in a suit and dark sunglasses walked up to Thor and Odin. “Name’s Wilkens McGee,” he said, handing them a card. “And I am ready to offer you an exclusive contract as teen models for my sports advertising company. Team Pika can be huge, and I want to help you make that happen.”

“Teen?” Thor gasped.

“Models?” Odin gasped.

“That’s right. Teen models.”

Thor screamed. Odin screamed. It was a dream come true!

“I’ll take that as a yes,” Wilkens said.

“Yes! Yes! Omigod!” Thor said. It was like the best day of his life, ever. For sure.

“I’ll be in touch!” Wilkens said.

Thor and Odin were both dazed, happy, utterly smitten with their new lives, their luck, their – modelness? Was that a word?

“Odin,” they heard a familiar voice call from behind them. “It’s time to come home.”

Odin spun, his pretty mouth dropping open in shock. “Freya!”