



A Pocket Full Of Moonlight...

It was in those days when the lords and ladies of Asgard slowly became accustomed to the reality that Baldur The Bright, Baldur The White was no longer with them and would only return after the end of days when the final battle of Ragnarok had been fought.

Freya sat on her throne in her hall called Sessrúmnir, her head resting on her hand as she was lost deep in thought, much deeper than a common might have expected it from the goddess who ruled over physical love and the bliss it could bring.

But love was not on Freya's mind these days at least not the kind mortals associated with her.

With a sign Freya rose finally rose from her throne. Her handmaidens quickly gathered around her and followed her into her private chambers in the back of the hall.

But Freya had no need for them now. She was on a mission now, one she had to undertake alone.

The goddess donned her golden battle armor, a golden helmet adorned with the silver wings of an eagle and crowned by an emerald serpent and a white thick cloak made of ermine. When she was done Freya sparkled and shone like the sun itself, radiating light like only Baldur had before the mistletoe had brought him down.

The chariot was white like bone with wheels of glittering silver and pulled by two white horses with silvery eyes.

Holding the reins of the chariot was a boy or so he looked. His curly hair and his skin were white as milk and although he looked so young - no older than perhaps fourteen or fifteen summers - his eyes were those of a man who had seen lifetimes come and go. They were of a silvery pale-blue colour but despite their ageless knowledge they were neither old nor weary. These eyes had seen it all yet they were still full of curiosity and full of care for all the events that transpired down in the realm of Midgard. It were the eyes of the father, the grandfather and the child full of the never ending, never tiring love one felt for one's family.

Thor was the protector of Midgard but Manni was its caregiver.

Above his head and shoulders shone the pure white halo of the full moon. Hatti the moon dog was far away tonight which served Freya's purpose well.

"Manni." She greeted the charioteer, guiding her own winged steed to run in unison with the moon's horses beside the chariot.

“Freya,” he replied and for a moment a hint of knowing, a spark of understanding danced in his pupils. There was the goddess of love and sorcery who carried the grief for a lover lost deep in her heart but not deep enough for Manni not to feel the echo of the pain.

“You are as beautiful as ever, Freya.”

“The same could be said of you.”

Freya looked at the bright shimmering orb that Manni carried across the sky every night, constant only in its constant change. Tonight the moon shone in all its glory.

No, not glory. That was not the right word. Glory was the quality of the sun, the day, the victory of the battlefield. The power of the moon was different, shifting, changing, yet soothing ephemeral but true.

It was the power of deepest feeling, the tide that created the ebb and flow not only of the oceans but also of human life. It was the wisdom that filled Manni’s eyes too. He was not just the charioteer. He was the moon.

“You come here with a weight on your shoulders,” Manni observed, “How can I help you to lift that burden?”

“Is it so obvious?” Freya asked back, I hoped to be more of a riddle.”

Manni lowered his head, smiling, “Forgive me Freya. This is not the place to keep secrets of the heart. That is not the way of the moon. It is not the way of the goddess of love either but then you are here not as a lover but as a warriorress.”

“Yes, I have seen battles to come and deeds that need to be done. So I came here to ask for a favor.”

Once again Manni looked at her. His eyes met hers and they shared a divine moment. By surrendering himself, by giving in to the presence of the goddess without condition, without fear he could reach out to her and understand what did not need to be spoken. He understood and nodded, ending the moment of oneness before it became too uncomfortable for the proud queen of the swan maidens.

“I see what you need and I hope I can give it to you. For the sake of the one will lost and the one we might save.”

Manni raised his right hand and silently asked Nott the night herself to assist him and Freya. And from the very fabric of the night Manni drew a tine piece of inly blackness and formed it in his hands, weaved it with his fingers and his intention until there was a little of midnight black.

And then Manni reached inside himself, reached deep into his heart and soul where the grief and the mourning for Baldur’s passing had taken root and hidden themselves behind a wall of forgetfulness, acceptance and routine.

Manni tapped deep into the grief and he cried. He cried silvery tears and as he sobbed and the pain shook his body the tears fell into the pouch of midnight black and changed to become the most beautiful, white and silver light, sparkling with tiny stars.

Manni closed the pouch and tied it up before the light could escape again. He handed the full pouch to Freya. His eyes were clear again and his lips showed a genuine warm smile.

“This will help your cause. Freya.”

The golden Valkyrie took the pouch and hid it inside her ermine cloak. Then she looked at Manni.

Their eyes met again for a movement that lasted a second and an eternity.

“You will be repaid for this Manni I swear. Whenever you need me, call on me.”

“It is all good Freya,” Manni replied, “Your prize was my relief. I needed to do this for a very long time. You see, although I’m not counted among the Aesir I loved Baldur too. We must protect what we still have.”

And Freya pulled hard on the reigns of her winged steed, leading her away from the chariot of the moon back to the rainbow bridge, back to Asgard that she called her home now.

As she rode and Manni continued his journey through the night sky, Freya thought for a moment she could hear a faint angry howl from a raging beast somewhere in the dark.

Not tonight Hatti, she thought, *Or any other night if I can help it.*