

Chapter Four_Branthor

****Chapter Four Summary:****

As my sixtieth birthday approached, the atmosphere around me became increasingly bizarre and anxious. Residents of Mossdale, including my family, seemed overly agitated, as if they wanted me out of their sight. Traditionally, my brothers and their partners loved organizing celebratory events, particularly birthdays, which had transformed into grand feasts of food, gifts, and, notably, elaborate cakes since the human brides entered our lives. Somehow, a simple day of marking my aging had shifted into a worrisome spectacle, and I began to suspect a conspiracy was brewing among my kin.

My unease intensified when Holly and Kairos vanished for an entire day, supposedly using our solitary portal for errands. The night before my birthday, sleep eluded me as I sensed something ominous in Holly's absence. When I inquired about her, Ragnar responded with vague comments about her not feeling well, which only deepened my apprehensions. The uncertainty about my birthday's plans left me feeling uneasy.

The morning dawned, and I hurried to Ragnar's house, where chaos reigned as his son Maverick screamed over a broken toy. Ragnar assured me it was just a fleeting phase for the boy. My attempts to uncover the secret behind the preparations were met with playful resistance. Ragnar dismissed my concerns, insisting it was just a birthday celebration. Yet I could sense something darker was afoot.

By noon, the town gathered by the river where a massive party tent overflowed with food and drink. Among the noise of playful children and bustling villagers, Holly approached me, asking me to cover my eyes for a surprise. Trusting her, I complied, but as I was led toward the center of the tent, my heart raced with anticipation.

When the scarf was finally removed, I was stunned to be face-to-face with a gigantic cake. As things grew chaotic, the top burst open, revealing a stunning woman who jumped out, proclaiming, "Happy Birthday, Branthor!" The crowd erupted in cheer, and I was confused, bewildered by the revelation that this ethereal figure was meant to be my bride. This unexpected twist upended my certainty about what I wanted and left me grappling with the implications of this bizarre celebration.