

### 1.3 Incoming

Kàra drew in a slow and deliberate breath, then peeled herself from the floor. Maybe I'm still gettin' used to the connection between us?

Kàra pulled herself up to the stone window on wobbly legs, and fixed her sight on the distant horizon.

wouldna be so bad if it didn't knock ya on yer arse at moments notice.  
Didna tell us about that in school.

Kàra grumbled as she leaned against the stone window frame. She clenched a fist with her face tightening as she strained to stand. She sighed and relaxed into the stone, and within moments, slumped her body out the window, bent at the waist.

You know... I have come to realize that I can be a bit dramatic, with my rear end hanging out there, and I just don't care. Magick isn't just for offense. Enchant a cute pair of under garments, and no one dares come near unless invited. And I suppose my rank might have something to do with it. I for one think modesty is a tad over-rated sometimes, and besides I just gotta... well...

I dunno... let it all hang out, and... I guess, indulge in the nonsensical, even sometimes when I shouldn't. She let her arms drape down, two simple circlets bounced off one another as they met at the palm of her right hand. Sometimes interesting things come into our lives through unexpected consequences... a clang, a song, a friend, a lover, or a monster. Always a story written, and yet still unfolding, an infinite number of finite possibilities lay ahead.

Kàra focused on the sides of her vision to see her dangling locks. It doesn't have to all make sense; a whimsy is just that. I figure it is the mind's way of trying to add in new experiences into our lives, and... uhh...

I guess into where-ever our memories go.

I think it is so our minds can connect the dots just a little bit easier, like checking to see if the thing, idea, or concept still behaves as we would predict, and if not add it to the repository of things that are associated with that concept.

Yep...

Fire is still hot or, nope, this one is new. I have yet to encounter fire that wasn't hot, but my mind doesn't seem to understand that. And so I would argue that this example highlights the gloriousness of our mind: The concept of placing your hand in fire, and the resultant natural consequences have bubbled to the surface of your mind, as it has mine, without much effort I might add. Isn't that amazing? It just comes to you, because it has hurt you in the past.

The only differences that I could imagine would be what the nature of the consequences would be; does your concept of fire look the same as mine? I imagine they are inherently different for each of us. Some feel more than others, some feel nothing at all. But I am not sure the specifics matter for our understanding of the concept.

And I would argue that this is a big but, for which I cannot lie I do enjoy from time to time; but, I think this whole thing is our mind's way of reassuring ourselves that we are still here. Like, we still exist right here, right now, what we have come to understand as fire, is still what it is.

I mean think about it, we are just a meat suit carrying around this thing that interprets the world around us, I know for certain that I have had experiences that others have not, and vice versa. Do our realities look the same? Maybe one day the fire won't be so hot, maybe the sky will part opening a door to a home denied. There has to be some sort of commonality between our stories, something we can all agree on as a truth.

So, I posit that the question is valid and makes sense. Is the fire hot? I could trust your experience, or I could run my hand across it, I mean, how do I know I have not been recently imprisoned by a Djinn? Or am I witness to the Ethereal and the Aetherial<sup>[1]</sup> converging upon Yggdrasil?

How do I know I am still real? What is real anyways? Maybe my current boredom and lack of someone to talk to has taken my mind and simply run away.

I don't know the answer. I am not sure there is one. But, and this may sound weird, or simple, but I would think that we don't all have to do dumb things to answer our own questions. Sometimes we can use the experiences others have had to fit into our idea of how our existence works. We can still have the strange questions but answering them shouldn't always have to be painful.

Unless...

Kàra bit at the inside of her lower lip, sinking into the thought as she closed her eyes. She gave herself a moment before releasing her lips with a soft breath.

I mean... it shouldn't hurt unless you want it to, and even then, within reason.

Kàra straightened herself, stretching her back and arms before leaning out the window again. She looked down at the bustle still taking place at the gate, as people, cargo, and standard trade moved in and out.

They seem to keep on like if it were any other regular day, as if there were not a scourge barreling down upon their society... mmhmm... My dad used to have all these kinds of sayings for situations like this.

He just seemed to collect these things in his head, and they tended to fit whatever situation... what was it? [2]

Kàra stuck her hand out and began counting on her fingers: There WAS...

"Slicker than snot on a glass doorknob."

No... That is for something slippery...

"Shiverin' like a dog passin' razor blades."

No... That one is for being really cold.

"As useful as tros in a box." — I think this one is kinda like: Are we making compost? If not, I am not sure the purpose.

"Runin' round like a kitten in a mitten."

That last one is code for you don't have the slightest clue what you are doin', but you sure are doin' it. I would argue this last one is our case with our calm, "it is normal that soldiers came to town," populace.

A surface level calm... but... it feels coerced somehow. I mean we are quite the ways from any settlement. We are literally on the fringes of society. Beyond this, to the south... Nothing but death awaits.

So, yeah, I think that one fits the best. Kàra chuckled out loud breaking the silence, drawing her attention to how alone she was.

Yeah, so my pops certainly was a collector of information. Seemed to have the right know-how for just about any situation, that gut feeling sort of thing. But yeah wasn't always the kind of information I wanted to know about, but I could usually understand the motive. And you know some stuff was just down right funny.

I can tell you that I enjoy a good hunt because of him, and fishing still calms me down. Those were the times when you would hear the strangest things, but the most pertinent to keeping yourself awake and entertained while you simply waited. Spice of life sort of thing, and you only get fleeting moments of it.

Time is certainly precious...

I guess because of him I did a lot of things maybe outside my comfort at first, but you know you learn to just jump right in because you are eager to be noticed, to be seen by this person who was down at the docks, tending to the loading and unloading of metals, before I even woke up.

My mother on the other hand was a healer and had to work strange hours for the sake of her role caring for soldiers. She was just usually sleeping during the day. I mean when we got older, she was able to transition to daytime healin'; but...

Kàra chuckled out loud, this time stifling the noise with her hand.

She had this sayin' - there is always a saying - I mean it was the thing we heard every morning. "Don't wake me unless there is blood." Well, it

was a hot midsummer day, and I wanted to cool off in the below ground hideaway, and simply enjoy my pitcher of Feldehan's brand lemon-drink.

I was pretty singularly focused in those days, as I figure an eleven year old would be, and so I decided - hey lets take that pitcher down stairs so we can enjoy it in dugout of our modest home... Oh but I should probably bring more lemons too incase I need to punch it up a bit... But we don't need to take the gate at the top of the stairs down, just step over it... Weeeeeee... Splat.

Oh... there was blood. I flew down the stairs landing face first on the not so soft ground. I bet it had to have been a good five meter drop to the ground. I ended up losing a big triangle in my two front teeth while learning about gravity and awkward legs.

Awkward might be an understatement.

I know that my outward appearance is from an inherited lottery, and they say, the only thing others cannot imprison, is your mind... Well try to get people to take your mind seriously, your thoughts and ideas... When you've got this golden brown hair, and breasts that were distracting the girls, and the boys alike... Your body changing and becoming more awkward by the day... Well, I guess you tend to imprison yourself.

Kàra sighed out loud. The universe is weird...

So I understand if this next part is just that for you.

But... I want you to go ahead and grant yourself a moment of whimsy. This... is something I used to do to free my mind of the locks I used to put on it. Kind of like reminding myself that my mind is in control of this meat suit, and not the outside world.

Now, stick out your tongue.

No seriously, try it.

Free your mind...

Kàra stuck out her tongue. But could feel the familiar twinge of embarrassment.

Nope, that is just silly... but not very full of whimsy.

Uhhh... what was that thing Helga said to do? Oh yeah!

Okay. Okay! Now I know that this one works! For this you will need paper hats, two bears, a hunter, and a bee's nest, just oozing with honey. But its really just a pressure device that explodes its contents all over the place, be it bees, lemons, or that really fine confetti that just sticks with you, and lives with you for weeks on end.

Shower? Nope that doesn't rid you of it, found some in my armpit. But anyways, as you dance around to the natural consequences as they unfold - the bees, bears, and hunter. It is so whimsical! So freeing!

Who will walk away? Who will eat whom? A nail biter to be sure! Will the bees ever get justice for their hard work being blown up? Of course they will! We aren't monsters.

Feldahan's brand bee bombs come with a new, roomier hive in which the queen sits and awaits her brood to complete their task. She sits on a throne, if you would believe it, just waiting for her brood to be released from their exploding home. It was all worked out in some sort of contract Feldahan's had secured with the Queen-Queen bee. She is a hoot, but I really wouldn't make her mad.

But, see, after all that don't you feel just a bit more in tune with yourself? Don't you just love them little pollinators? Don'tcha feel just a bit

freer than you were before? But what I wonder is whether you could ever do that again?[3]

What is weirder to me is that even if you didn't stick your tongue out... Or play with a Feldahan's bee bomb in reality, whatever that looks like for you... You did in your mind... Woah.[4]

But... and, I am quite certain about this, you pictured something. You understood the idea. The ideas were weighed and judged by a massively complex interconnected belief system in your mind.

Do it, or don't. An interesting system always weighing do it or don't do it, believe what you experience or don't.

Kàra forced herself upright, pushing off playfully. She crossed her arms as they stretched out above her head, and she spun.

Kara made two twirls, to ensure her skirt would spin, and as she let her arms fall they found the sides of her worn but still snug, mythril lined leather tunic, to which, she adjusted it. Her hands then migrated to her, luxuriously soft, leather skirt.

Feeling the soft texture, she lost track of her surrounding and she slipped and hit her head against the chair.

"Ow!" She exclaimed as a hand nursed her sore spot.

He... Ow... **What...** is going on?

Did my inner voice just change? Some knock on the noggin I should probably see someone about that...

Sooo... Anyways...

The skirt is mythril lined; I had that done on a separate trip to the region, Fjallheim that is. We as a society have not figured out matter transporters. Quicker travel maybe?

Quick Travel sort of, but instant, Nope.

A journey is apparently still meant to impart wisdom, and wisdom only comes from an understanding over time. A suffering of change.

Well, okay..

Maybe I wasn't quite accruate..

We do have portals it's just that anything that goes in living, comes back out as some Cronenberg esque monstrosity.. Was that akin to my voice cracking?

Anyways, each pleat of the skirt has this beautiful golden embroidery around its border, I guess it was a gift from my mother, but I don't ever remember mom giving it to me.. **The ornate, and decorative skirt stretched most of the way to her knees, but** anyways.. can you blame a girl for wanting to look good as she goes into battle? Me..ow..

Did I just say.. **meow?**

Am I having a full-on **breakdown** from the boredom?

Now, you may wonder to yourself, or maybe not, but I do.. What have we gotten ourselves into?

Are the lizard people going to show up?

Well, I hope not.

Seriously, those things kinda scare me..

Nice enough people, but they just kinda creep me out..

The lizard people were not coming.

Yet.

Now as I was saying..

Wait, what?

So..

As I am sure you are aware by now, there are some strange things afoot, and I know the real burning question on your mind..

Kàra wandered about, eventually finding herself at the edge of the balcony where she could feel the wind pick up, bringing with it a sand that bit at her face. She pulled at her shawl slightly, freeing up a piece so she could pull it across her face.

You want to know how in the world something lined with mythrill could be comfortable, or breathable, or you know, bendy? I mean the flex on this thing, Kàra pulled a pleat up, running a hand along its worn but soft leather exterior enjoying the feel; letting her fingers drag along the embroidery. She pulled the pleat upwards exposing the gentle arc that the pleat made, while exposing part of her thigh. (Even when others aren't around I still notice...)

She began bending it in every way she could think of. "See?" She said aloud which instantly made her feel embarrassed.

**WELL, I WILL TELL YOU...** What just happened? Am I dying?

**Underneath the scarf Kara pursed her chapped lips, and then bit at another bit of dry skin.**

The Dwarves of Nisavellir... They know their way around a mythril chainmail. You use that as a backing, or midpiece such as mine, soft on both sides, doesn't get wet, pretty great really. It is a hidden advantage concealed by a stylish, and less irritating armor. Now in many colors. Guaranteed to clean up easily.

Sorry, it's catchy.

**What?!** <sup>[5]</sup> **Kàra paused lingering on her thought, staring into the distance.**

They pay the bards in Midgard to sing the praises of Mythril Brand - Dwarven Products.

And, hey Bards can sometimes throw down a catchy tune.

**She surveyed the battlefield.**

**She could feel an excitement build within her chest. Soon it will be time. Out of habit she brushed a lock of hair behind her ear, her plan of action running through her mind: Destroy bug things. Gonna destroy big bug things and little bug things, and not become food. oh, and win this contest**

In all seriousness though... I can't wait to come off the front for a while. It has certainly been a push, and I know everyone is getting a bit run down. I heard Cook has even resorted to two nights of venison backstrap stew. We definitely cannot sustain that rate of resource use.

I can tell everyone needs to blow off some steam, and Field Marshal Arturos has assured us of rest and relief as soon as the Sentinels[AH] arrive.

So until then, we wait, we hold, and we press on. But you want to know what I would really like to do? Like, not a tros field version, either.

Give you a hint we left port about five cycles ago, and before that it was another three at sea.

uh... oh, um...

**So... uh a cycle is, uhm, is how long it takes for our moon, Fólkvangr, to orbit our world. About a quarter of a season is a good measure. It is locked in our rotation, with only the slightest variance in its orbital speed relative to us ants down here...**

A timepiece just slowly movin' through the sky. Takes just near two months, give or take a few days here or there.

**Kàra gestured to two horizons opposite one another. Two months between here and there, and then gone for two more.[6]**

Anyways, the other moon, Valhalla, has a much shorter period traveling with the rotation of the planet. Setting every day as our star rises, or I suppose sets, depending on where you are in the world. All I know is that the light that comes from that place. It... It just feels different somehow...[7]

But anyways. I want to bathe... and I mean I want to take a real bath. Not a simple in and out of a portable tub, no. Conjuring up "perfect" water, sure. The environment? No. Hard no. Tell me how I am supposed to relax out here?

Now, what I'm imagining is a visit to the gardens of the Citadel. Slip into those thermal pools, and just melt. A constant haze of both smoke from Feldehan's brand products, and the mixture of mountain air and the warm pools, creating this...

Fog, that just takes a moment to get used to, or lost in. It can take your breath away. Similar to Jim's sauna back home, get that thing crankin' and you come in from the cold, and she'll take yer breath away.

Yeah, so, one of those baths where the world's problems just melt away. I can just imagine the warm water caressing my skin, taking my dry and cracked skin, nourishing it with exotic soaps from far off lands, leaving my skin feeling so smooth I could spend hours under the stars, first alone, and then...

With Astrid by my side. **Kàra reveled in the thought for a moment until she spotted a change in the background.**

**Aww... Tros.**

Why couldn't they wait ten more minutes?

**A black streak on the horizon had caught her eye, and a sour look took hold on her face momentarily before being replaced with one of resolve. She reached into her bag pulling out a wooden tripod and a**

long spyglass which she then affixed to it. She looked at the side which was marked with, angles.

As she set up the tripod in the shade of the balcony, she could see the massive outline of darkness began to expand as she tinkered with the spyglass.

Almost got a fix on 'em. She tinkered with a few dials, and checked her readings on the side, she then took a moment to watch through the spyglass as the darkness spread across the distant mountainous horizon.

Almost got a rough calculation.[8]

Breathe...

She pulled out a clutch of paper, and a piece of sharpened coal from her bag and began scratching down a few numbers.

Today we are not just soldiers, Today we are family. Today we step into Fenrir's mighty jaw, Today we pray to you.

Valfreyja, protect us with your divine light.

Today we pray to you and your Valkyrja.

Hmmm...

They seem to be moving faster than normal...

Kàra looked up at the balcony's roof, a much appreciated roof for seeing and not frying, but for signaling, not so good. Kàra's eyes began to dart around.

Need to get into the open.

Kàra ran out of the study and to the other side of the rampart threw up her hands sending bursts of color shooting high into the air for all to see.

Adjust - Speed - two hundred thousand paces, mark.[9]

She drew in a deep breath and attempted to steady her mind.

“Ohhhh yeah! We, are, on!” Kàra shouted, and quickly descended the ladder, just off from the stairs. Her feet landed awkwardly on the sandy cobblestone with a thud. As she went to get up, she fumbled her step slightly, sending her tumbling, but she quickly recovered and took off.

Stupid ankle. Kàra dusted herself off and set off towards the middle ward.

I found everyone except for Talik, with whom I cannot seem to reach Yeah, I did that time skip thing, didn't figure you needed to hear about operations stuff. And you know... for those who might be listening in... She flagged down a runner and set them off to establish contact with Talik.

Plus...

I haven't really told anyone about you yet. So rather than put everyone on edge, I have chosen to keep you my secret for the time being. But anyways, I just wanted to hear status reports, and make sure everyone had what they needed.

I like to remind myself that everyone has an important job, and everyone deserves to know it, even if it doesn't feel like an important job it might just free up worry for another person, and every action ripples outward, impacting the course of someone else's path. So, if I can positively nudge here and there, like checking in with everyone I can, even if they can be difficult to reach, I try.

upon concluding her business with the runner Kàra returned to the southern rampart, and to her, home away from home. My smelly armpit of despair. A true taint Skeggja<sup>sr</sup>[10].

Kàra thrust her head out the window adjacent the balcony doors; the Skrípi had reached the edge of their territory.

Let's see...[11]

Tros. They are almost in range! Kàra ran into the open again and sent up an even more grandiose signal.

Adjust - Speed - twenty-five thousand paces, mark.

They are going to reach the river much sooner than expected, and planned for! Kàra sighed; she really hated these things.

Kara held her breath and bit her lip. She could hear the dull roar of a stampede slowly building in distance. She eyed the brackish river water, it seems to be at its seasonal peak, and it is churning along swiftly.

We followed that river all the way from the North Week after week of combat with these creatures. From one sea to another if we keep up this little dance of ours.

The horde was closing in, the sand churning beneath their limbs, generating a massive cloud in their wake. They have crested the dunes south of the river...

Kàra drew in a deep breath.

Hopefully the river will slow them down...nope.

Owww. She had bit down hard on her lip.

The battle had begun in earnest with fireteam after fireteam unleashing strong concentrated fire along the riverbanks, from dug in positions within the palms, and along, and into the lagoons. The horde was significantly stymied, as burst after burst of explosions could be heard. Ætherial magick is a real riot in close quarters.

Kàra watched as the mutilated bodies of the Skripi were swept downstream by the strong currents. With so many different Magicks lighting up the battlefield, it reminds me of the parades along the river back home when I was a young girl.

Except, here, with each new explosion all that remains is death and a pockmarked patch of earth **A massive flash lit up the landscape, blinding Kàra for a moment.**

Okay, so this may sound weird, but despite my hatred for these things, they are kind of fascinating creatures. No, hear me out here. As they approach their long tails are the first thing you see and what is probably what makes them so formidable. Their tail is so agile, as is their bodies. But it is the razor sharp spike at the end that is what is frightening.

You should never take your eye off of it.

Their official designation, which only the highest of councils could have ordained mind you...

The Skrípi. It literally means the horror...

The Horror...

Now imagine this... In the tens of thousands.

Granted this is just a rough sketch, best I can do with my mental canvas, but I think you get the idea. Anyways, their hunger, or drive, whatever, is so strong that they will literally be

running a top of one another, desperately trying to reach their prey.

The creepiest part, or at least I think so, is that the hairs that line their bodies will bristle against one another. A little static crackle heard only when they are on top of you. The hushed stampede still sends a tingle down my spine.

Let that sink in for a moment.

A rumble felt in the ground... beginning as a simple movement quickly evolving, and becoming more and more violent as it approaches.

A fast moving blight is what it is.

It isn't long before you have a full on stampede. The ever shifting sand covering any trace of you after they reach you.

Those eight watchful eyes secured their target hundreds of paces prior.

I can tell you this... That tail precedes its sound. With that distinctive crack, that tail reaches out as if a living harpoon. The armored black spear sinking into your chest, crushing, and eviscerating everything in its way. Snapping your spine as it exits.

But if you are unlucky enough to survive, your wound closed off by a thick mucousy layer... The rot'll get ya in hours. Eats right

through you. The horrors one must witness, if you could stay awake that is.

"Hmmm..." Kāra hummed.

Might be something interesting to study. Not that I want anyone to suffer that fate, but the reality is, this is war.

Anyways. I think that alone justifies my hatred of these creatures. These eight eyed armored hairy spider scorpions deserve to be wiped out.

**Kara felt her energy surge, manifesting as a faint golden glow that shimmered across her skin before fading away.**

The moments before complete engagement seem to smash time into two categories: the incredibly long wait, and the intense, and fleeting rush of engagement.

These feelings of the moment, prior, and of waiting, feel as if it were nothing but a lingering fantasy.

Taunting you with an illusion.

A time just... before.

Before you compromised, just that little bit of who you thought you were, and you never got it back.

But hopefully you don't have to. You just hope this time isn't the last, and that this mission doesn't destroy who you are. We have

been quite fortunate, I think. The soldiers are hardy. We are the best after all.

Kàra could see the advanced fireteams falling back towards the ridge, and Kara turned her head to look out through the door, and at the heavily armored Major who was waiting in the doorway, and she shouted, "Now! Bófreðr! LOOSE!"[16]

Within moments she saw her planning come together as she stuck her head out the window and watched volley after volley of, Ætherial armor piercing arrows, streak across the sky. Kàra was feeling giddy. The Skrípi's multi-jointed legs were churning up the sand as they raced towards the outer village, obscuring visibility.

Every few moments arrows from along the wall would fire, and then the Ætherial knights will morph them into whatever they please.

Usually high yields.

Kara tried to enjoy the brief moment, and even cracked a smile as volley after volley burst into flashes of different colors every few moments. The bursts spawned smaller bursts that glowed brilliantly and created a deafening shockwave as they pockmarked the desert.

It is an amazing thing to watch such coordination between soldiers. The grit it takes to do some of these jobs... Right now it is literally raining bombs in front of them, and they are holding the line.

Not only are they holding the line, but they are slowly working them back towards the ridge to maximize kill time.

I mean... I can feel the heat... And... The shockwaves, one after another adjusting our breathing to the rythmn of war. It gives me such. **Kara bit the inside of her lip.**

Those soldiers there. Their grit, and dedication to their art, which, to me it is our opportunity..

These moments are our opportunity to mourn peace. A victory or a defeat can feel like an eternity, until it is over; but it is now, and now is the only thing standing between you and an uncertain, but generally directed outcome. Not divinely, unless you mean as in pressing start on some sort of weird experiment..

But yeah.. Life is full of outcomes that are unexpected. Knowing how to live with yourself if you should win or lose.. That is what ends up making you, you..

**Kàra watched as the wall of creatures slowed, but the sustained barrage after some time could not completely halt the arachnid advance. Instead a dam began to form against the bridge, and had begun backing up the river and into the lagoon. A strange wall of corpses is forming a very weird bridge.**

**Kara stared towards the lagoons where crippled creatures were washing ashore, pawing at the sand, and thrashing their tails.**

Fascinating<sup>[6]</sup>.

They just.. kinda piled up there.

I certainly give the Knights points for creativity..

But..

As a horde wants, it will press on. Now they are using their dead as a road of sorts. The more that die, the more they seem

to just pack in there... It is definitely one of the more queer things I have seen them do.

The horde has been difficult to contain across the board, breaking through the fire line in various pockets along the front.

As the platoons fell back one after another, each holding out as long as they could, they collectively made their way towards the hard ridge, and to Bófreðr's waiting command.

Kara looked out across the battlefield one last time, climbed into the window frame drawing in one last calming deep breath, and upon exhale a vibrant golden shimmer swept across her body and she leapt from the window.

The leap left a cracked footprint in the stone window casing, and carved a body sized channel in the eve. The Skrípi were closing in fast, and Kàra was reaching her apex high above the battlefield, and well above the village.

Highest I have jumped from, not the highest I have been. [?Where was the ref]

Kara clenched her fists tight. Reached towards her side, and to her sword.

I am going to kill so many... So... So many.

There was fire in Kàra's heart as she freed her slender rapier from its hilt. You and me, we have Skripi to kill.

A shadow cast an eerie contrast onto the horde of dark creatures. Time began to slow, Kàra closed her eyes, and when she opened them, a burst of blue energy shot from her body, solidifying her control over the battlefield, and slowing everything it touched.

Now, it is important to note that candle wax, when in its liquid form, is generally hot.

Oh.

I'm sorry... I uh... need to focus. Sooo...

Weird stories help me to... um, focus my energy a bit.

I heard this neat saying once, "What's a person without imperfections?<sup>[1]</sup>" Or something similar to that. The point is I heard it when I needed to hear it.

I found a way to bridge the gap so to speak. Kinda like you didn't quite know something one moment, and then just "Ah-ha!" Or something like that.

So, one thing kind of led to another and this is something that I came up with that helped me to... let go. It... distracts me from the million other things running around in my head... and it helps me to find the person behind the imperfections.

To find the strength to fight today.

**In the corner of her eye she could see the arrows overhead come to a crawl. Kara liked to think that, in battle, time has to get by me.**

Anyways, so yeah, it was a concept that I apparently, failed to learn. The way that is. Everything is about perspective, and when you hear glowing reviews of this new way to sculpt...

Well, let me clue you in; Helga,<sup>[5]</sup> who, first told Nevek about it, who then told Talik, who then told Bófreor, who then confided in Astrid. To which of course she just had to tell me all about it. Well the way she described it, it would be some sort of work of art when all things were said and done...

Well, to be honest, by that point I thought I was going to be learning how to create something out of clay.

So I had on this cute frock, and... I walked in to this small wooden hut. Maybe hut is generous. The air was acrid; the smell of wax was overwhelming.

The smoke made it hard to see, and by the time I was seated I knew something was amiss.

No...

We don't have that kind of relationship yet... Boundaries are important. You, may be the interpreter, but you get the gist of it... and that is all you will get... For now.

Maybe later... Let's try something else... I got these cute new boots... They are a cute red and brown lace up. I was going to surprise Astrid, but, uh...

**HEL... ELLOO... H... QU... QUARA...** A deep static filled voice cut across Kàra's mind.

Look here buster, quarantine provided an opportunity. An opportunity to learn how to communicate again.

**OOO RECPT...** Hello?

It seems like something, the Astrid thing... Uh... you wouldn't forget, but I guess when you are stuck in the same routine day in day.

Ahh!

Kàra winced, doubling over as a pain sank to her stomach.

**K... KÀRA CAN YOU READ ME?**

Kàra's hand darted into her bag quickly procuring a scrap of leather, and just as quickly it was between her teeth.

Feeling a stinging sensation creep along her skull, she struggled to continue her inner monologue: in some of the AETHERIAL aid missions we were on right after graduating... where... We received our first commands. I went off to nvdillir while Astrid went to further training through the realm. For a while her missions were more secretive than my own!

In... Kàra bit harder into the leather. In...fact some still are.

K...

I GET IT! Kàra screamed out loud, "I GET IT!"

The pain began to subside.

Funny how it all works out

Kàra straightened out, stretching her arms out above her head, and raising herself on her toes.

The point is getting that different perspective after helping to open my mind, but if I expected others to have the same conclusions about things as I do isn't it to their disadvantage if I use my understanding against them?

**THAT WAS RICH. I MEAN SERIOUSLY, IT WAS FUN TO LISTEN TO.**

**AM I** just baiting people into arguments?

Kàra burst out laughing, but could feel a sole tear soaking into her dry skin.

[1] Etherial – Define AEtherial

[2] From the book of Ed. An obscure text that I have never actually seen, but I certainly have heard of.

[3] If your answer is anything but, no, I would ask if your scenario a sketch, a painting, or reality? How much of your reality are you capturing in your scenario, how much of it is made up? Is it okay to be surface deep, knowledge wise, an ocean wide but no more than a few centimeters deep? Can you rewind the event with perfect clarity?

Our limitations on what we know, and how it all connects to one another, limits our own resources to understand a given scenario. I have realized that if you can at least recognize you don't know something, that there is a limit to what I know, (so far). Once I know the depth of my own understanding I can choose to expand my understanding, or not. The hardest part for me is remembering set a sign post indicating shallow water, (shallow understanding). Lest you dive in head first, and make a fool of yourself, or worse.

[4] Keanu! You heartthrob. Swoon. Phill and Fred's Excellent Adventure was simply a masterpiece. I mean going back in time? How all the timelines don't just fracture? It is crazy. (Frowned upon thing in our society. Time travel that is.) Always saying don't regret your past, but don't run away from it either.

[5] Paying tribute to my Henny Penny. He who liked to spout off some seemingly random factoid, and immediately say after he finished, "What?! I (heard, saw, read, did... etc.) in some (show, book, experience)." Always brought a smile to my face. Ya know, when the gag is novel, and not... Annoying.

Also, they, (the boys), just seem say the same things over... and over... and over... One day one kid was in the bathroom, and the other was in their bedroom. I hear one kid shout, "I say ass, you say..." The other without missing a beat, "Holeeeeeeee." - "Ass" goes one "Hole" goes the other. And so on and so forth. Kids are silly.

[6] It is clear to the casual observer that this would be different depending on where you are on the planet.

[7] When Fólkvangr is out of sight, and it is just Valhalla, it feels like things just get a bit more, erie.

[8] Suppose our arc of Skripi shows at an angle of 2 degrees on the horizon. If I know my planet's radius, can I find out the distance to target If I translate the two arc lengths on top of one another, and swing the triangles through so it looks like an ice cream cone, one stuck in the other, but since the angles of the similar triangles are so small relative to the distances we are thinking about... I posit that they can be treated as similar triangles, sharing the distance of spread on the horizon with that of a longer, angle that its triangle would make at the center of the planet. So we have an angle, which when projected backwards would make a super small angle to the planets center of gravity. I know the radius of the planet, being the long leg of the perpendicular triangle... Which would be my distance to target, and to one half the arc these things are making. So, 2 degrees on the horizon, my glass is scaled to each tick of separation being 1000 meters, so what 15,000 meters on the horizon? So relate that back to our planet at about 15,000,000 meters in diameter, so about

7,500,000 meters long leg, at about 15,000 short leg. ---- NEED TO FINISH @mile uo 150km is about the most.... Soo too much?

[9] If you were on a sphere what would be the difference in distance knowing that if we realize the 100k paces represents a path that covers that arc of the sphere to which they approximate their world. All of that versus saying it is the distance to the right angle triangle A to B is the same, but the distances traveled must necessarily be different due to the arc contained by A and B, and supported by the right triangle Origin, A, B. - Fun to think about.

[10] DEFINITION? Forgot ☹️

[11] their distance is speed times time - know distance know their general speed... 25,000 paces - time to arrive is 30 paces/ second so 25,000paces / 30 paces per second - sooo 2,500 / 3 seconds - so 2100 would be 3 groups of 700 – and 2400 is 800 with about 33 remaining seconds. And at 60 seconds per minute I can fit 600 seconds in ten (minute) groups of 60 seconds – with 200 remaining which is close to 180 which is 3 groups of 60 – so about 13-15 minutes until they reach us.

[12] Thank you TheOatmeal.

<https://theoatmeal.com/comics/apostrophe>

[13] Live long, and prosper Spock.

[14] Was watching Letterkenny Sn 9 Ep 3 - Scorched Earth. - Sometimes it is hard to look past our mistakes. So much so that is blinds me to a pathway forward. Take a step back, and try to assess. Breathe. Do I need to keep on fighting?

[15] Mummu

[16] I once was lost.