



1.4 Heinrikr

Yeah, so I lost the last pair of boots in cards a few weeks back, but that isn't the embarrassing part. The embarrassing part is how I won them back, sorta. No, seriously, I'm not always the best at cards. But that evening I was on fire. And then out of nowhere I was on fire! Needless to say^[1], I lost my mojo. And... I lost everything but my dignity, lets just leave it at that. I mean...

I did not lose everything, but you get the picture...

Another story, for perhaps another time.

Whoa... Okay... Perhaps sometime you will share with me... I...

Huh?

I need to attend to this.

Kàra shifted her weight to one foot, and looked down, a twinge of pain streaking across her face; she closed her eyes and drew in a deep breath.

Say... have you noticed my golden hair? Today is a bun day! Astrid said it would look cute... Yeah, you interpreter. That other fellow is gone for now. I can feel it.

Kàra straightened out and patted at her tightly braided, and spun bun

When the Valkyrja go into battle we all know that this could be our last, and we all handle that notion a bit differently.

I feel... if I didn't, I wouldn't be showing the due respect this enemy deserves.

I have seen whole villages swallowed in the breath of a day.

So, this... Ritual of mine, it helps me focus my power, and gives me perspective.

Those embarrassing moments, are nothing but that.

And if by her grace I should survive...

Kàra could feel her power come to a crescendo. Her whole body convulsing at its peak energy; a blinding golden glow bursting forth and shimmering across her skin, before fading away.

The trick is to catch them as they are cresting the small rise.

Haha...

No it isn't, The trick is to make sure they are dead.

Kidding, not kidding.

Three..

Valfreyja... Protect us.

Two...

Kára's rapier had begun to glow a soft white as she extended it high into the air.

one.

Lightning arced from, the once cloudless sky, to the tip of Kara's blade. She felt the heat as she held on with every ounce of strength she could muster. She drew in a deep breath tensing her arms and back as she pushed the lightning from her blade into the oncoming horror.

H...

The massive energy bolt crackled as it surged along the black mass of bodies. Within moments chain lightning burst forth seemingly at random along the bodies of its victims; as the air ionized. from the backs of the shimmering creatures.

Each Skrípi along the chain just sort of... burst. They exploded into white hot flashes... The creatures, they burst into showers of gore, streams of innards venting from every armor plate, each popping open like steam plates.

Is that what you wanted to hear? Hmmm..

Hm

usually they would have scattered after something so far reaching into their ranks.. I mean, I would think anyways. They.. seem to be even more driven this time instead of turning away!

can see them starting to distance themselves radially until, as time began to tick by faster and faster as she reached the end of her abilities. For the moment.

My story buster.

Kàra touched down moments later near the edge of the easternly lagoon. The mill blades prominent in her front view as creature after creature crawled forth from the muck of the lagoon.

Surrounded... She looked back again and saw another pair closed in.

She looked down at her stuck feet and around to all of the creatures; of whom bulbous eyes were locking in on her. Another three fast approaching, their hairy legs busy churning up the sand, from the dunes. The wind had shifted and was reducing her ability to see as the wind whipped the sand battered her face.

Kàra began to assess her options when she noticed a sharp pain in her forehead. She blinked heavily, collapsed to her knees, and began breathing quickly and shallowly.

Well, this is new. **NOT... NOW!**

Within moments a white shimmer streaked across her body bursting forth into a brilliant spherical blast of energy that vaporized everything within its path. Kàra could feel her head strike a rock as her cheek found its way into the sand.

Totally... worth it.

Kàra spit some sand from her mouth and pushed herself off the ground. Sitting there, knees bent and tucked underneath her bottom, the bun in her hair had come loose, and she felt the surge of battle wane; a sense of unease crept in as she felt her energy diss

Yeah so... not my finest landing, but... Hey we got there.

Kàra could feel the blank stare that had settled in on her face. The world took on a slight daydream like quality. Her hand had found the side of her head, and there among the red stained strands of hair she found a gash, seeping blood.

The blast had given Bófreðr's soldiers time to reach her with their extraordinary leaping magick...

The soldiers began expanding the pocket around her that she had created, as creature after creature flung themselves at the group. Kàra blinked heavily and listlessly looked about, noting she was pinned in by soldiers supporting her. She felt the strong hands lift her to her feet.

She could hear what she thought was Bófreðr's voice from behind, "Colonel!" He called out as he drew near, nailed it.

"Astrid isn't far behind." Her white, dress. I love the dress, but why white when you know there will be blood. I mean... white?

I mean, I guess she could have a magick or something.

Kàra brought her hand to her head and closed her eyes momentarily as a faint green light reflected off her golden hair. She drew in a deep breath as she slumped to the ground. She turned her torso and blurted out, "Astrid?"

No, response.

Long gone. The divine tend to walk a different path than the rest of us. They start to believe at one point or another that they are equals to those, that, they, themselves serve.

That sounds right i'm goin' with it. I don't even care.

She is a blessing, and a curse.

Kàra struggled to her feet, sheathed her blade, and then turned away from the growing battle around them to face Bófreðr directly. She watched out of the corner of her eyes as Heavily armored soldiers were streaming towards her and into the fray. Kàra slowly walked towards the palms and towards Bófreðr. "Major! Am I glad to see you!"

A gruff voice replied from a few meters away, "The Skrípi are formidable, but they are falling back from the ruins, but I do know they are forcing us towards the palms along this southern ridge. They are. Not us. "Oh," He drew in a breath, "and they are close to taking the mill, and by that I mean destroying it. Where is Talik? Wasn't she supposed to meet you here?"

Kàra could hear Bófreðr, breathing heavily in his heavy armor, clanking away as he made his way to her. He smirked, "A couple runners." She tossed a strand of hair back, looking over her shoulder turning her body to welcome them.

Ya know I think I just realized why we do this... [note]

Kàra stuck out a calm finger towards Bófreðr as he stomped up to her, leaving massive footprints in his wake. She looked away from Bófreðr's footsteps, and began giving orders to the runners, "I want you," She pointed to one of the runners, "Get word to Nevek, and Talik that we need to shore up the ridge, I want Alpha and," She pointed to the other Runner, "Brovo, and Delta companies respectively will need to hold the ridge. I will have Bófreðr's Easy company break through when it is time, I will need Astridr, on standby, and have Odinn on standby. I want this to go as smooth as our maneuver at Kastonbak. We cannot let them get over that ridge. Go!"

When Kàra finished she faced Bófreðr, he flipped up his thick helm, and she looked him in the eyes.

"Report Major, and why did you wait that long to flip up your helm?" She pushed his arm playfully.

"They are falling back from the ruin's, Colonel." Bófreðr pointed towards the ruins completely ignoring her remark.

"A little later than expected..." Kàra muttered.

They both turned to survey the line of fighting which was ebbing and towards the ridge; "Look at the way these creatures move atop one another... Their column just... pulsates as some move faster than others.^[2]"

"Look at the swell out by the mill. We need to get more directed fire..." Kàra trailed off as she felt a piercing pain that cut through side of her forehead.

"Ow." Kàra said as she hunched over, her hand clutching the side of her head.

Her voice was strained forcing her to enunciate her words as the undulations of pain streaked across her brow. Bofreth began,

"We need to press them harder..." He stopped and looked at his commander a question drawing to his lips, only to be cut short.

Kàra began quickly, but with labored breathing, "I... need you to have first and third company... forward and shift against their flank..."

Kàra took a deep breath.

"Ugh." She said quietly, her voice getting more labored, "Ruins to palms, box them in with the rest downstream." She collapsed to her knees, but put a hand up to stop Bofreth from helping.

Kàra struggled to pull herself upright, but once finding wobbly knees, she focused and brought herself upright, *and made sure to do it with the toss of my hair.*

Kàra drew in a labored breath, and finished,

"We need to focus on the stress in their lines. I want them to be across that river in within the hour." Kàra said as she flashed a roguish smile, that quickly faded.

"Aye." Bófreðr said eagerly before clanking off towards the ruins.

As she turned back to the littered shoreline she felt her side, pulling up her tunic so she could see the dark colors mixing just below the surface of her skin. She placed her hand on her side winced and put her tunic back down.

I can't help but try to process the bigger picture here as I am on my way to find Talik, who is near the mill, all so we can blow up that corpse bridge. whose idea was this?

We spent weeks tracking this horde south... We traveled almost the entirety of Kàrakazan's western border.

Engage, and evade. Engage, and evade. They knew we wouldn't cross over into their lands. Somehow they knew...

Carries a hefty price. Death, and by that I mean even if you make it back from their lands alive. You have hefty charges brought up against you for violating the treaty with the Priests of Myrkr. So yeah

You will probably be dead..

So... fight, fall back, fight, fall back.

They taunted us with tens of thousands of their dead.

But still they would come, by the tens of thousands. And every time we would stand our ground, and fall back, stand our ground and fall back. Until Astrid was in range, then standing order is defensive positions away from the blast.

A swell of emotions overtook Kàra, as she leapt up on top of one of the shells of a dead arachnid. She ran along its back and suddenly mid stride, a booming voice came through her mind.

THAT WAS PRETTY AWESOME.

“What the actual fuck!” Kàra shouted as she slipped off of the armored creature, narrowly missing a stinger, and falling into the stained sand below.

Kàra scrambled to her feet kicking up a fair amount of sand in her panic. A golden hue fading from her skin as she spit out sand and brushed herself off. Her eyes darted about the eviscerated carcasses that she found herself among. “Hello?” She whispered confused.

Hey, at least I didn't get the wind knocked out of me this time. I guess that is a win. I just need to keep it together for a little bit longer. Then we can have all sorts of breakdowns.

THIS IS TRUE. LAST TIME YOU FEED YOURSELF A LITTLE.

Shut your whore mouth

Kàra drew in a deep breath while climbing to her feet. She clenched her fist tight and took off in a jog, drawing her slender rapier. A gold shimmer flushed across her skin. The world slowed around her, and for a moment Kàra felt at ease.

TIME SHIFT? IMPRESSIVE. I FEEL A BIT WOZZY, THOUGH.

From the perspective of Kàra's soldiers on the battlefield she was a remnant of a thought, buried within the minds-eye. Fodder for dreams, or nightmares to come. The aftermath of her efforts were almost instantaneous, and not as easily forgotten; gore explosively hurtling through the air. Creature after creature bursting apart in flashes of white light, right before their eyes.

BUT... OH... NOO...OHHH!

Kàra's shifted perspective was as strange and grotesque to her, but she still couldn't help but find joy in the, strange, world around her. The world around me has always been fascinating to me. I try hard to keep myself knowledgeable of the land, and even of the rotting roots along Yggdrasil's own majesty you never quite know what you can learn by just... takin' a look.

KA...KÀ.....RA..... RA.....

Everyone and everything is... just so still. No busy bodies to intrude on your thoughts. I don't know if I've ever noticed before... I

mean the little histories of everything, that seem to just come alive before my eyes. Everything just seems so full of potential, a story just waiting to unfold however it deems.

WH... WH... AH.. AHH... T...

Now, and I know this sounds as flimsy as crackers in water, but seriously... hear me out... The interval of time between then and now, can... well... it is quite infinite in possibilities, but is bound to a beginning and an end. This place exists in between the larger moments, and lives among the possibilities that the Ætherial bestows upon us.

T.....RRRRR..... O.... SSSSSS...

Here...

KÀRA SPUN HERSELF ABOUT, RAPIER EXTENDED.

This is where the big picture comes alive. It is like a snapshot of time in which only I can go. I used to only be able to hold this space for a moment, when I was a kid. The long hours of training..

THE ENERGY AND FOCUS REQUIRED...

Now? I can hold it for maybe, an hour provided I can keep my mind relatively clear.

IF... YUH... OOH... AH... DUH... SSSST...

Look at the ferocity of these creatures, and of the Valkryja as they engage in all stages of battle within this one moment...

Through the palms, and along the lagoons she walked, studying, and euthanizing all skripsi along the way.

Kàra was proud to see foe after foe falling to the Valkeryja. Kàra forcefully slipped her blade deep into a creature's belly, sending a

shockwave of blue energy running from her sword into the creature. It kinda makes their bellies glow.

But! The really fun part, is in the end! I like to find myself a nice spot to sit, and it is almost like pressing a detonator when time snaps to. The Ætherial shockwaves pop open the Skrípi... and they... just go poof. What can't fit through the overlapping plates of natural armor, goes through their belly. If you do it just right, and position them just right... And with dash of color here, annnd, there. You can paint a painting with the right perspective..

Which... Kàra looked towards the village's towers.

Kàra smiled as made light work of the Skrípi near the lagoon's edge and found herself lost in light thought of perception.

I can feel myself indiscriminately stabbing into these creatures. My boots kicking up sand and clumps of jellied viscera. The water mid-lap against the shore. But this? These soon to be felled, creatures before me. Their only command, nay desire, is to kill that is.

Beyond that, I am not sure why they do what they do, just that they seem to do it.

KAH... KAR... KÀRA...

Good to see you could join us, poor reception?.

**I MUST SAY THAT THIS TIME BENDING POCKET OF THE UNIVERSE,
YOU GOT HERE...**

IS NO PLEASURE. RATHER DIFFICULT TO BE PRESENT.

Kàra looked down to see herself knee deep within the lagoon that she had jogged into. Seeking a more advantageous route she leapt up to the top of one of the bulbous bodies above the giant towering legs.

I told you, these things were big. Like little trees pawing at the sand.

Standing atop the creatures fearsome pincers she could see a good distance. She had finally spotted Talik's soldiers across the lagoon.

If they were to hold the mill... Why are they moving away from it?

What are they up to?

Oh.

A blinding flash of light lit up the horizon by the bridge. She quickly turned her head to look away.

There, well... I guess the corpse bridge, and the real bridge are taken care of.

Kàra hopped down to the tough and slick outer shell that made up the creatures back. She looked to the edge and attempted to stand while sliding down the back side of the creature but slipped and fell onto the water below. Sitting there atop the surface of the water, her sore back against a carcass.

She took a few deep breaths.

I don't know when...

WH...AT... DO... YOU MEAN? HEY... I CAME... THROUGH ON... THAT ONE!

What did you do?

You don't remember what?

I didn't say I didn't remember.

WHAT DID YOU DO?

I just had to make a few slight modifications, to my connection to the Aetherial...

JUST SOME TECHNICAL STUFF...

I think it worked. I don't feel as much pressure behind my eyes.

SAY, WHAT YOU WILL ABOUT FELDEHAN'S BRAND WHISKEY, IT'LL FIX YOUR HEAD PAINS MIGHT QUICK.

Ya, know... If you ever decide to kick the Feldehan's to the gutter...

You might see a strength in yourself that you had previously lost

An angelic presence, if you will.

Helping to keep you on course with life. Not how well you are doing, but just as a preservation of your own life.

YOU MUST take the rudder, and **CONTROL IT, BUT IF YOU PUT YOUR FAITH IN YOUR CHOICES.**

HEY! What! Are you doing to me?

I turned you down. It was getting hard to think.

What do you mean you turned me down?

It is important to have faith in your choices, and to believe they are right, but admit, and accept when they were wrong.

Because once you admit, and accept, well.

Well, what?

You you might just see the things that you do unto others, and you might just see it from the other perspective.

Kàra twirled herself about..

This angel divinely inspired in nature; that is to say only Mimir could know as to its origin. This creature of immense beauty coming in through the window... Eyes transfixed upon their beauty.

Hmm...uhhmm...

CAN YOU IMAGINE THOSE BREASTS?

DaMN! Not strong enough

Well now that you mention it...

I can see her. She is flying high above this Euclidian existence, a traveler upon time, experiencing things as a change in position rather than the time itself.

You intersect for only the briefest of moments, but they seem to linger on your mind, imprinting itself into your mind.

I must ask, what have you been smokin'?

Generally, only the highest quality of Feldehans, of course.

I don't think I have partaken. Is it a tobacco, of sorts?

OF SORTS.

Ah good. I should see the quarter-maester.

So, yeah, there you are, uh, KÀRA, you are frozen in place staring up at this face. A face you feel you've known your whole life. A face so soft and familiar to you...

You are offered gifts in return for your worship. Wishes would be fulfilled; promises that things will be all right in the long run. **Except when it won't, because it can't.**

But you believe it because you will, pick something. Insert feeling, insert situation, you name it, why not numb it up?

Kàra?

That whatever is wrong with you today, you can heal it, but not today.

Today I am going to grieve.

And bring light to a lot of dark places.

Did you lose someone?

L... L... Don't know how to let go. I can still feel her breath against my neck. Her smile, when she is truly happy. Her last minute just in time perfection. L... I just don't want to let go, but I also don't know how to...

HOW TO LET THE LIGHT BACK IN?

Yeah...

HOW MUCH DARKNESS IS ENOUGH TO SUFFER?

Is it truly a dark existence or are we closing our eyes and ignoring the truths that are in front of us.

SHINE.

Shine so bright within the confines of your own mind. But don't let it out, oh.. nn...

SHOW THE WORLD, WITHOUT SHOWING THE WORLD, EXACTLY.

The world needs a sense of uniformity to it, huh.

Whoopie, almost lost it there.

I mean this has been a ball, except without all the pomp, but I am not ready for the grand finale just yet so if you don't mind uh, switching off for a good while or so...

YES, YES. OF COURSE. DANGEROUS MISSION AND ALL.

Kàra could feel the pressure in her temples subside, and she took a sigh of relief. Sometimes it is tough to be just on with someone, when you need to be "on" elsewhere in your life.

Kàra found her way to her feet, feeling the water drain from her accoutrements. She stepped deftly, finding another vantage point atop the creature so she could see out across the lagoon once more.

There are countless numbers of these creatures. All in varying degrees of battle. Oh that is neat, look how high up that one got. Oh, I suppose you can't, but you can imagine it. Close enough. You wouldn't want to be here anyways. One of the last things you feel are the little hairs on the legs of their young as they crawl across you.

Oh, wow that is kind of interesting. The explosive power released from my soldiers sent Skripi bodies hurtling through the air. And right now, they are just in the air, floating, some dead, some alive.

These things are plenty terrifying if they catch you off guard; The Skripi stand at least twice my height, and twice my length. So if you don't know what they are doing at any given moment, it can be a bit overwhelming.

HE...LL.OH...EH... Heinrich's voice cut across Kàra's mind; her temples radiating a pain she hadn't felt before.

"The fu..." Slipped from Kàra's mouth as her face contorted in pain. Kàra quickly succumbed to her pain as she brought her hands to her forehead. She could feel her stomach churn. Her eyes fluttered as she collapsed, her body slumping down to the carcass below. A booming voice echoed throughout her mind:

YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING?!

Kàra's face was plastered against a thick armor plate, as she slid down onto the water below, eyes aflutter. Her focus lost, her handiwork was prematurely set off. Explosions of different patterns of color, and timing began to snake its way across the landscape. Kàra's body slipped into the water.

Kàra took a fleeting glimpse to the surface of the water, and could see the air above burning, but growing darker. Her last coherent feeling was of being pinned below the surface of the water by the thick slab of the creature's armor. As her vision blurred, a chill overtook her body.

Kàra! Kàra!

Is that... you Astrid?

GET ON YOUR FEET SOLDIER! THAT IS AN ORDER!

Yahweh...

I see the dark crimson pools coalescing, no... undulating.

You look upon me with that bulbous head.

Distorted.

I can hear muffles from beyond... this... existence.

Is that a heartbeat?

KÀRA?

Has it always been like this?

Hard to breathe...?

Kàra!

Kàra opened her eyes to a fog so incredibly thick that she thought her eyes were failing her. It is a dull pain to even see.

I can breathe, that is good.

Hmm... She pushed herself up off the sandy beach. Pushing herself with ease to her feet, she spun about in the sand taking in a quick look at her surroundings. She was in a white billowy dress.

Great pines, sandy beach, mountain lake. Late season. I can't tell where the sun is. This looks familiar...

Fjallheim?

Why am I here? What happened to your voice, so to speak.

Is this better?

Sure.

The air is crisp, my breath lingers in the air.

The sand beneath my feet numbingly chilled. **She agreed that this must be Fjallheim.**

She made her way off the beach and towards a grassy knoll that lay just before the pine forest. She turned around to face the shore behind her.

Kàra?

Oh, yeah, I remember now what I wanted to ask you.

When your heart just cracks in two, at the things you are a party to, witness or not...

Do you find it hard to breathe?

As if the sky darkens, not of the shadow of night, but of the clouds as if they are transitioning your day. The shadow of the oncoming storm.

And you willingly walk into it.

Is that what she was?

She was, what?

Was she the storm? If so, I am certainly no victim.

I knew what I was doing.

I thought I saw a path where no rain would touch me.

As I set out on my journey a drop here or there was shrugged aside. But you start second guessing your path and making adjustments. You don't notice when your feet are getting wet because you only see what you want to see.

By the time the ocean has swelled to your belly, you are willing submit to it.

Giving yourself unto them so that you may guide and shape each others lives. But if by the time you are taking your last breaths. You succumb to the darkness. **But, perhaps it renews. Perhaps you sleep eternally. Do you leave behind all that you knew, because of a gut feeling?**

Do you like swimming?

Yesss...Where are you going with this Kàra?

Do you like swimming when you can't see the bottom?

Not my favorite.

To me it feels to love someone so immensely, and lose them along the way feels like being in a rainstorm, walking into the tide to drown. I am saying that when you truly love someone they are never gone. I am also saying that you also have a choice to drown in submission, or turn around and find the path you were on. That we all have choices, we all can decide what to do in this moment. But we can't choose for one another.

Are you sure, I heard of this crea... We cannot choose for another.

So we choose for ourselves, but not others.

You cannot will someone to love you. You can't will someone to want to stay with you.

I mean you can hold someone hostage, but that is physical control, you will never have control of their mind, even conjuring is only a trick of the mind, you can get their body to do things, but you cannot get what makes them, them, to want to participate if they don't want to.

I don't know why it has taken me so long to understand that.

What? A control magick?

I mean sure you hear it, but you don't generally think about it more than superficially.

And, if you or your partner chooses, they may depart. Sometimes it is the levers we pulled some time ago that pain us the most at this point in time;

Where there isn't much you can do once you feel the tracks diverge. **Of course you have little knowledge of what lever was pulled when, but it is, becoming inescapable that...**

That you finally understand this person, or at least have a better idea of who they were by your side for so many years... That they will be gone, and you will feel alone.

You can still see them, but at a distance that ebbs and flows. A distance that is no longer a choice. It certainly isn't yours to take either. You held hands, and one by one as the tracks separated, your fingers slipped. And all you can feel is despair.

She thought she could make out some sort of structure in the distance, but she couldn't put her finger on it with the fog. She spun about again with the sound of footsteps off in the distance.

The forest ahead seems to have cleared some.

I don't get it.

I don't either.

I heard you clearly that time.

So did I.

Are... you here?

Kàra's voice cracked slightly as she said into the forest, "Hello?"

Stay... Here.

In our minds.

Okay... This seems a little weird.

You... are telling me. Do you suppose this could be a permanent connection?

I don't know. I am pretty sure I am drowning, so I think it might, I mean one way or another I guess everything will come to an end. Right?

A tad cynical don't you think?

Well don't get me wrong it matters what we do. or at least I choose to believe that it does, but in the grand scheme of thing kinda thing, when you are in a pool of water, and you can't bring your consciousness back from a far flung place in the world. I would say my assessment is fairly fair.

Ah, I guess that makes more sense. So now that I got you here, I need to know, you and Astrid...

Is that really what you want to know about? You figure due to the implicit^[3] access to my mind...

Well. Yeah. I guess that was uncouth of me. The name is Maester Heinrich Silvadori the third. Serving at the behest of Maester Octavian Artouros, AETHERIAL Council. And, I have been on a bit of an adventure of myself^[4], to which we share in that.

I was dispatched by Council member Artouros myself.

Funny coincidence.

Haha, my companions have been quite puzzled at my queer behavior as of late. It has gotten so bad that Sven keeps trying to push his home remedy for mind quakes.

So what kind of work are you doing in that particular region? I thought Fjallheim was closed borders.

Ever since we entered this region... I... began hearing your mind call out to me. I have been attempting to respond, but as you can see those other attempts...

Kàra could hear a branch snap in the nearby forest, and she spun about again, but to no avail.

A tad elusive aren't you.

Let's play a game...

What kind of game?

Something to get to know you. I'll go first, upon first light you arise in an unusual circumstance. Where are you?

This is a game? Uhm. In the loft of a barn.

Go on.

What do you mean go on, you asked and I told you. Now show yourself.

In due time, what are you doing there, at this barn?

I don't know pitching tros?

Perhaps I need to come at this from a different angle. What grounds you to this place, here? What history do you have here that would bring us here?

So you are here...

I feel like I've always been.

What?

Yahweh, you spoke of their name.

I did?

Kàra heard another branch snap and she slowly took a soft step towards the noise.

Want to hear a story?

Sure.

Well, let's just say the evening before I was in a mood, and went to my girlfriends. She kept talking about this guy she knew and wanted to hang out with. Well of course I obliged, why wouldn't I? Well one argument led to another, we went to a social gathering at a neighbor's barn, and well, I caught her, well, dipped in the

Feldehan's, and making out with this dude. You know what I did? That's right I got totally out of my mind, and when I came back around in the morning, I was completely naked, hay in annoying places, a bit goobery, which was confusing at first until I saw her, the next morning cuddled into him, it, whatever I guess you would call something that looks like gelatin. Now I understood why she wanted to party with

Davik.

Davik could change his shape.

Fun, but not. My turn.

Kàra caught a flash of a brown canvas cloak.

Do you listen in on many people? I have heard you were something of a scoundrel, and on the outs with the council?

Well, what you have heard is correct, which it is why it took twelve sacks of Hauflin brand spice to bribe my way into this region!

Let me tell you, that stuff is not easy to come by. But... and to answer your next question...

Kàra spotted a thick branch as she crept quietly through the thicket. As she drew near she reached down and gently released it from its home among the other detritus forest material.

I am searching for a relic while in the company of eleven seasoned Aetherial knights, and another half dozen greenhorns straight out of the academy. The General Researcher and Aetherial Devotees are students that are just so happy to have been able to stay in school a bit longer, as long as their funding doesn't run out.

You said you were in Fjall...

Kàra could feel her throat tighten.

Why is it so hard to breathe?

What do you mean?

It is as if someone has taken my ability to breathe. What do I do???

There was a heightened level of anxiety in her inner voice.

Uhh... Let me try...

Kàra jolted awake; her vision blurred by the murky churned up lagoon water. She pushed the heavy armor plating off her body and burst forth from the water gasping for air.

Kàra sloshed through the water, feeling disoriented and light headed. She began to slowly find her way to her feet, gagging on this nasty water. It only took moments before she was noticed by the numerous soldiers sweeping through the area. She found herself surrounded by soldiers. She leaned into them allowing their mass to will her legs to move.

As she was rushed about, she kept trying to understand her own movements. She walked in a daze through the throngs of soldiers dutifully going about each their own business of war. She heard, the sounds of battle seem to be moving...

Ahhhhhhhhhh the ringing!

Kàra blinked heavily, dropping to her knees, soldiers shoulders dipping slightly as her feet began to drag in the dirt.

Well, this all could have gone better.

Astrid once annoyingly asked, "EWWW can you get it?" About a small bug...

I admit, though, I would much rather be there, with her, even with her little annoyances.

Aww hey! I missed the explosion!

That's the best part!

Kàra could hear the clanking of Bófreðr from not too far off. So..
The Skripi are tough They have an exceptionally tough exoskeleton, but their underbellies are soft

She pushed her hand into a belly of a corpse nearby.

If I recall correctly it was for egg production?

EWW...

Okay.

I wonder if anyone has studied that yet? I mean I am the closest thing to a field researcher at this point. Might make for an interesting discussion topic at the next convention physik. Am I being watched?

Kàra swiveled her head about dramatically.

Do you know how bad the inside of these things smell? And I mean, I have met a real life cyclops, and they are notoriously smelly.

Are they looking at me?

Not their fault, it is simply a matter of size. Trolls that is. Hard to get a bar of soap big enough... Or that is my working hypothesis, I have an appointment with a soap maker to..

“They are watching me... Brindlebock, the soap maker” She muttered as her head swiveled.

His name was Njorn. Nice fellow. Smelled of potatoes. Said he was a potato farmer in the gullies^[5] of Buckthorn Swamp.

I've been, excellent hunting there.

Kàra slipped through her escorts support and fell face first into the sand.

OW.

[1] Which is needless to say.

[2] wave speed vs packet speed. local vs macro

[3] You know which implication is the worst? Watch ASIP

[4] Internet you have ruined me. Spiderman – Willem Dafoe

[5] (Grew up going there) - The swamps of Buckthorn is near a gully, in which there exists a small place out of time.

[Note]: I think we turn our bodies to essentially show a good faith gesture, since well all of our bellies are kind of necessary to house our organs. Expose the meat suit a bit would be one of the quickest ways to show vulnerability. To show in good faith you do not come spoiling for a fight, but instead welcome you the door of our minds eye. Two (or more) brains using meat suits to talk to one another. Then after the moment of vulnerability you have to have good reflexes should your assumptions go wrong. But the hard part is recognizing when our assumptions are wrong.

[c]I think it makes sense that this is the thing that sends Heinrich into his decline - or the thing that takes his memory? (That could be like the start of it, and he works his ass off knowing his memory is going to be gone soon.) Little hooks to previous journeys.