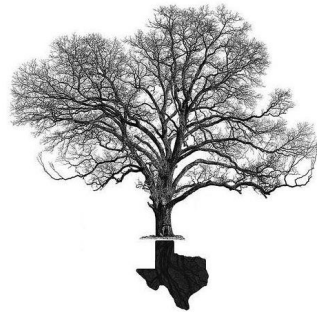


# Minnesota Christmas

ALAN NAFZGER



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MINNESOTA CHRISTMAS

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A dazed and confused Viking warrior from the 10th-century (Erik) arrives in time to meet a 21st-century Minnesota farm girl (Nora).

FADE IN

BEGIN TITLES

EXT. BEACH - EAST COAST OF ENGLAND - 980 CE

Stormy and sunless winter day. A Viking ship lands on the coast. The VIKINGS, in full battle gear, look up a tall cliff. It wasn't a wise landing, but behind them the sea is rough. They look at the sea and they look at the cliffs. They consider things, but they follow ERIK (21) down the beach until there is an easy path up to the top. Erik, their leader, is 6'8" and 280 lbs.

NOTE: Some lucky actor is going to LOVE playing this role. Eric speaks medieval English but with a Norwegian accent.

They arrive on top. The snow is more evident there and the wind is considerably stronger. There are trees but it's rolling grasslands and several inches of snow. The wind is from the north at 30 knots sustained.

They make their way through it all, carefully. They are cold and disgruntled but press on. They pass through a graveyard, and they note the crosses. They look at each other; perhaps the raid may pay off. Suddenly they hear a church's bell. Their hearts lighten and a smile breaks through.

They turn and make for the sound.

EXT. MONASTERY OR CHURCH - DAY

The Vikings arrive and hide at the edge of the trees. It's a funeral bell. The entire village is on their way into the church. The Vikings wait. They hear the songs from inside the church and stand shivering in the cold.

The least violent Viking leaves the group when he spots a barn. He enters the barn and herds the sheep out into the cold. He's leading them back in the direction of the beach.

END TITLES

SUPER: Ancient Norwegian superstition: If you see a black and white crow flying towards the sea, your future lover will come from the sea.

SUPER: 980 CE, EAST COAST OF ENGLAND

EXT. MONASTERY OR CHURCH - DAY

The TOWNSPEOPLE exit the church behind a casket. The casket is placed on a wagon, and it's drawn down the lane. The wagon disappears and the Vikings emerge from the trees. They are cautious but there is no mistaking their target. They enter the church.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MONASTERY OR CHURCH - DAY

The Vikings are running from the church into the trees. A novice priest, who remained at the church, is ringing the bell again. But this time it's clearly an alarm. The Vikings have arms full of gold and silver - coins, plates, cups, crosses. One Viking has a chair, and another has several suits of clothes.

The townspeople come running back along the road. When the priest sees what the Vikings have taken the pace quickens.

PRIEST

Kill them!!!

There is a chase. The pursuing people stop by their village and pick up swords, pitchforks and stones.

EXT. PATH DOWN TO THE BEACH - DAY

The chase ends at a choke point, the path down to the beach. The sheep are blocking/hampering the escape. The Vikings leap the sheep in their panic like it's the 100 meter high-hurdles. But they drop half their loot on the path.

EXT. ALONG THE BEACH - DAY

The village people don't navigate the sheep; they actually don't want a close encounter with a Viking. The village people

remain on the cliffs and throw stones down on the Vikings as they flee down the beach. It's a good distance and the coast is rocky. Many of the Vikings are hit in arms and shoulders with smaller rocks. They drop their loot on the beach.

The only Viking with any loot (a giant gold cross) remaining is Erik; he stubbornly will not release it.

HOWEVER, on the cliff is an equally strong ENGLANDER. He picks up a giant stone the size of a softball and he casts it down. The stone crashes into the helmet of Eric. Eric is unconscious and bleeding there is a one-inch deep dent in the helmet.

The other Vikings pick up their fallen leader and drag him to the ship. They abandon the gold cross in the sand.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VIKING VILLAGE - NJARDARHEIMR - DUSK

The ship with the Vikings arrives. They exit the ship without Erik, who remains lying in the boat. He's not regained consciousness.

A girl, BREIGH ERICDATTER (13), stands there lost. Ericdatter isn't her real name but this is what the village calls her. She's a captured English girl and unransomed hostage. The entire village is on the way to the beach but the English girl is already there. She's looking for someone that didn't return. Breigh Ericdatter looks left and right and puts her hands on her head in despair. She begins to weep.

ERICDATTER

Erik?

The Vikings point her toward the beached ship. The English girl runs over to the boat and cries. She's in a dire situation and she strikes the body with her fists. Intense grieving!

VIKING #1

Worthless girl.

VIKING #2

Well, she taught Erik to speak the Englander language.

VIKING #1

A lot of good that did him. Look at him now.

VIKING #2

We've never kidnapped anyone the English weren't willing to buy back.

VIKING #3

You kidnapped the wrong girl.

(beat)

Next time we go raiding, we should take a Viking woman. They know the value things.

VIKING #2

Take my wife with you please! And I'll stay here.

They chuckle but stop to look back at Erik's apparently dead body.

VIKING #1

It's a sad day.

VIKING #2

It's a expensive day.

VIKING #1

That English girl, She's very distraught. What do you think they talked about all those hours?

VIKING WIFE #1

Maybe she's just hungry.

VIKING WIFE #2

This is poor land to be farmers.

The social outcast and SEIÐKONA (Viking hag) emerges from her modest shack. She wears a shabby blue cloak and a headpiece of black lamb trimmed with white ermine. She carries a symbolic distaff. She's disrespected but she is the village's wise old crone. The seiðkona knows mysterious things.

SEIÐKONA

He's not dead.

VIKING #1

What? You witch.

VIKING #2

We were there and saw him fall.

SEIÐKONA

I'll see for myself.

VIKING #1

No, you won't; leave him be.

VIKING #2

He didn't believe in your magic.

(glancing at the English girl)

She might, but you will leave him be.

VIKING WIFE #1

We don't need any of your black magic.

SEIÐKONA

But...

VIKING #1

Thor says he's dead.

VIKING #2

We'll put him away in the ship; just let us say "hello" to our wives first.

VIKING #2

I hate to lose another ship.

VIKING WIFE #2

He was so young. Maybe just put him in the ground?

VIKING WIFE #1

Every time we burn a ship we must build a new one, and the children go hungry.



VIKING #1

No, it must be done properly. He died in battle.

VIKING #2

It wasn't a very big battle. We'll use the smaller/older leaky ship.

Viking #2 gestures to a much smaller boat and everyone seems to agree.

VIKING #1

This village is divided.

VIKING #2

Did you ever know a village that wasn't?

There is a traditional/establishment religion and those followers are well-dressed; they walk past the seiðkona, ignoring her or even scoffing at her. There are also those, we can see from their expressions and poor clothing, that they follow the seiðr (black/blue witches) magic.

The seiðkona returns to her modest home; she walks with a purpose and a determined expression.

EXT. VIKING VILLAGE - NJARDARHEIMR - NIGHT

Most of the couples are inside getting affectionate and drunk. The English girl walks through the village. Ericdatter glances down to the ship and brings blankets and furs to wrap Erik's body. He's laid out for a Viking ship funeral. Several unmarried/young Vikings and women are loading small kindling (tied with twine) and wood on the ship.

INT. THE SEIÐKONA'S HOME - NIGHT

MAGICAL REALISM. Greenish glow. It's a spooky interior. Black magic and green apples. The English girl enters. The seiðkona emerges from the shadows.

SEIÐKONA

That was some exhibition of grief.

ERICDATTER

Well, I'm sorry. I'm no princess. My family can't possibly ransom me. Erik was the only one of you who helped me.

SEIÐKONA

He was feeding you? He gave you a roof.

ERICDATTER

I taught him my language and he fed me. Fish, potatoes, venison. He brought me a milk-goat once.

SEIÐKONA

And why did he do that?

ERICDATTER

I know what you are thinking. He just did it, I imagine, maybe because he thought learning English was a bargain. And now he's dead and I'll starve.

SEIÐKONA

Not so fast.

Seiðkona hands Ericdatter a jug. The English girl surveys the witch's room. There are baskets of green apples and a wooden pulverizer, spices and herbs. The various ingredients all put off a slight green glow.

ERICDATTER

What's in it? Smells like apple cider, spices and other herbs?

SEIÐKONA

Caraway, fennel, cumin.

ERICDATTER

Aquavit?

SEIÐKONA

I think you will find it more than just aquavit.

(beat)

Just put it on the burial ship.

ERICDATTER  
For his journey to Valhalla?

SEIÐKONA  
There and back, dear.

EXT. VIKING VILLAGE - NIGHT

The English girl runs down to the smaller ship. They've moved the body and have finished loading small kindling and wood on the ship. The English girl places the jug of aquavit on the ship next to the body of Erik. His weapons and some basic possessions are laid out beside him in the boat.

The village slowly leaves their huts and walk down to the water. Seiðkona and some followers watch from a distance.

VIKING WIFE  
This isn't right. It's a moonless foggy night.

VIKING #1  
Let's get him off.

VIKING #2  
The journey is long.

Several men set the sail and others push the old boat into the deeper water. The sail catches but it's a slight breeze. Like in 100 other Viking movies, the men fire flaming arrows into the ship and it catches fire. The ship sails into a fog bank which turns greenish in colour and the ship almost disappears. We see a slight fire through the fog.

But suddenly we hear from the fog...

ERIK  
What the devil?

We hear splashing and stomping. Never dead, Eric has awoken and put out the fire and thrown the wood overboard?

ZOOM in on Ericdatter, who is momentarily distraught but then hopeful that Erik will someday come back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

NORA (24) and TORI (34) exit their cars and an odd bird, a black and white crow, flies East.

TORI

Where do you think he's going?

NORA

East. Lake Superior maybe?

They walk past a host of tailgaters; they are drinking beer, smoking briskets, brats and fish tacos before the game. It's cold but there is plenty of beer.

EXT. BEACH - CASTLE DANGER, MINNESOTA - DAY - 2023 CE

Erik's funeral boat is floating in Lake Superior. Erik wakes up in the small boat when it grounds on the ice. With brute strength, Erik drags the boat five yards up and over the ice until he reaches the beach. We know it's modern times because of all the trash, beer cans, on the beach.

Erik looks about and sloshes the jug around. The jug isn't empty; we can hear the liquid. It's cold, the late fall, but Erik is a Viking and accustomed to it. He ties his small boat to a tree.

He puts on some of the armour. He's fashioned clothes out of his burial blanket. The Viking helmet that was dented so deeply, he can't put it on correctly. He finds a rock on the beach and bashes the dent out of the helmet until it fits properly on his head again.

Erik looks around to make sure he's not being watched. Erik walks a bit into the forest and hides the green jug of aquavit in a hollow log. The jug is his time machine.

INT. NORSEMEN FOOTBALL STADIUM - CHEERLEADER DRESSING ROOM

Can we license the Minnesota Vikings? The CHEERLEADERS are almost finished dressing for a home game. NORA is the most Scandinavian of the 30 Minneapolis cheerleaders. Nora's friend is TORI.

TORI

Nora, how's work?

NORA

I stare at a computer screen all day.

TORI

Okay, I've known you for how long? And I've never asked... it's buying and selling but what exactly?

NORA

Agricultural commodities. Corn, wheat, soybeans, oats, peas, sunflowers, canola, barley...

TORI

For beer?

NORA

Beer never hurt my feelings. Boys. Wheat crops and cars, sure. But beer has treated me pretty well. My dad's a beer farmer. Hops, barley and also some wheat, rye, oats and corn.

TORI

You're just a farm girl come to the big city?

(beat)

You're not moving to Chicago.

NORA

No. Why would you think that? Their football team is terrible and their cheerleaders are worse.

TORI

Of course, but you're my best friend and I don't want to lose you.

NORA

Not today; look at me, a Norseman cheerleader.

All the mirrors are occupied, 30 women and 4 mirrors. Nora and Tori are now fully dressed and they look each other over.

CUT TO: Fans in the stands dressed as Vikings.

Waiting for the game to begin... there is a television in the dressing room and three of the girls are watching the news.

EXT. CAMP RIPLEY - MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD - DAY

Erik walks past a huge industrial (military) diesel-powered generator. He notices it's warm. He hugs the generator and is warmed. Soldiers return from an exercise and walk past Erik. Erik is perfectly still, trying to warm up. They don't see him.

At a building not far, a television truck pulls up with a reporter and cameraman. They don't notice Erik hugging the generator, either.

INT. CAMP RIPLEY - MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD - DAY

Minneapolis broadcast television news..

TV REPORTER

The yearly exchange promotes goodwill and sharpens military readiness between the nations as well as provides opportunities for cultural understanding among its participants. Here is what the base commander had to say...

MINNESOTA GUARD COLONEL

And so in the spirit of friendship, I want to welcome our counterparts from the Norwegian Home Guard to Camp Ripley. Next year, we will travel to Norway and be their guests. I'm proud to say the exchange, which began in 1974, is the longest-running military exchange partnership between any two nations.

Translated into Norwegian. The soldiers applaud.

TV REPORTER

The Norwegian Home Guard soldiers are staying at Camp Ripley, the Minnesota National Guard's training center. They will be conducting winter training operations. In addition, the Norwegians will stay with a Minnesota family and get the opportunity to experience some local culture as well.

MINNESOTA COLONEL

We will train hard this week and return for the traditional Thanksgiving Day turkey feast.

The soldiers from both nations cheer. But in the background, we see Erik stealing two frozen turkeys. None of the soldiers notices it; they all have their backs turned and are hamming it up for the television camera.

CUT TO: The dressing room. Watching it on television, Nora notices the Viking and the two turkeys and points it out to the other girls who are amazed and chuckle. The women think it's a hoax.

NORA

(chuckling)

What those guys won't do to entertain the Norwegians. I suppose now they will all spend hours, in the snow and ice, chasing an imaginary Viking.

BACK TO: Television.

TV REPORTER

Next year while in Norway, the Minnesota National Guard Soldiers and Airmen will conduct winter operations training with the Norwegian Home Guard. They will participate in a field training exercise where they will ski into the mountains and sleep in tents and snow shelters. They will also conduct weapons familiarization with their Norwegian trainers.

CUT TO: The dressing room.

TORI

Maybe the Viking is payback for some practical joke they played on our Minnesota boys when they were in Norway?

NORA

(chuckling)

Whatever. I'm amused.

EXT. CAMP SITE - NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING AREA - THANKSGIVING

Snow and subfreezing weather. Erik has built a structure and a fire and has cooked and eaten an entire turkey. The second turkey lies frozen in the snow.

SIX SOLDIERS (three National Guard and three Home Guard) have spotted Erik. They are hiding in the forest not far from Erik's camp.

LIEUTENANT

I don't know who he thinks he is stealing our Thanksgiving turkey.

SARGENT

Can we shoot him?

LIEUTENANT

Why would you ask that?

The sargent shrugs.

SARGENT

You have no idea how much I'd like to, but we can't. Not in front of the Norwegians, anyway.

LIEUTENANT

And besides, I think it is a hoax by the colonel and entertainment.

SARGENT

(to the corporal)

Part of the training. It's got to be. It's too bizarre. Everyone confirm to me; weapons to safety.



They disable their rifles. And begin a stealthy approach.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - MINNEAPOLIS - EVENING NEWS

NEWS ANCHOR

Perhaps you were watching yesterday when we reported about the joint Norwegian-Minnesota National Guard training. And we received hundreds of calls about this... play the tape...

In the background of the previous news story... ZOOM in on Erik in his Viking garb sneaks into the kitchen and removes two turkeys.

NEWS ANCHOR

At first, we thought it an elaborate holiday hoax; a strange character dressed as a Viking sneaking onto a military training base and liberating not one but two turkeys?

(beat)

However, today the National Guard announced a change in the scheduled training. What was a winter survival training mission has now become a winter manhunt.

(beat)

The turkeys have not been recovered and the culprit is still at large.

EXT. CAMP SITE - NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING AREA - THANKSGIVING

The national guard use their winter camouflage skills to assault Erik; however, Erik is aware of their presence. He glances at his weapons and the frozen turkey. He lures them in with a pretend nap.

Suddenly, Erik (always a *berserker*) wakes up and throws the frozen turkey, which crowns one of the soldiers. He picks up the turkey and brains another soldier. He throws another soldier into a tree. He picks up his sword and it could get dangerous, but he uses the hilt to knock out the other three soldiers.

There are six unconscious soldiers. Erik disappears into the forest with the remaining turkey.

EXT. LAKES & LEGENDS BREWING - MINNEAPOLIS - EVENING

From across the street, Erik watches people consuming the beer. Of course, he's puzzled. He watches how the taps work. He watches the people pay. He waits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKES & LEGENDS BREWING - LATE NIGHT

The brewery is closed and locked up. Erik crosses the street. He's probably going to break down the front door, but a police cruiser races by with their lights on. In the ice, it takes an entire city block to stop.

POLICE ROOKIE

You don't think?

POLICE VETERAN

I think that's the Viking guy who beat up the national guardsmen and stole their turkey.

POLICE ROOKIE

(into the radio mic)

10-96. Psych patient, a person exhibiting crazy or psychotic behaviour. 1368 Lasalle Ave.

By the time the police stop and turn around, Erik has found the alley and the back door. Erik literally breaks off the door handle and pulls the door off it's hinges. He props the door back into place.

The police car comes back through the alley. The police spotlight surveys the buildings. They miss the broken door. Erik has disappeared inside.

INT. LAKES & LEGENDS BREWING - LATE NIGHT

Erik walks behind the bar and gets a glass and pours himself a beer, which produces a large smile. He drinks thirstily.

EXT. NORSEMEN FOOTBALL STADIUM - VERY LATE NIGHT

Erik is very drunk but sees a castle in the distance. He's raided many a monastery and church but this is the largest building he's ever seen. Eyes large, drunk and dreamy.

Erik is reassured when he sees a billboard size sign: "Norsemen Welcome" and there is a photo of a coalition of pretty Norsemen cheerleaders, who are opening the door for fans dressed as gameday Vikings. It's invitation enough.

He arrives but the doors are locked. He peers through the glass. There are "Valhalla Food Court" posters with tantalizing photos of the delicious concession stand foods - grilled brats, boneless wings with waffle fries, brisket sandwiches, cheeseburgers, cheesesteaks, chicken nuggets, pulled pork sandwiches. Without breaking the glass he literally pulls the locked door open.

INT. NORSEMEN FOOTBALL STADIUM - VERY LATE NIGHT

He enters, finds the freezer and the brats. He plays with the grill controls until the stove ignites. He places a dozen brats on the grill. He's nearly falling down but he gazes on the cooking brats with true anticipation (love).

INT. LAKES & LEGENDS BREWING - EARLY MORNING

There are five BREWERY EMPLOYEES in the security room where the security cameras are up on the monitor. They are fast-forwarding the security tapes. On the monitors, as Erik pours and drinks yet another beer, they count.

FIVE EMPLOYEES

Seventeen. Eighteen. Nineteen.

A POLICE DETECTIVE joins them as Erik exits the brewery.

INT. OTHER DOWNTOWN SECURITY ROOMS - MORNING

The POLICE DETECTIVE is watching on CCTV Erik stumble drunkenly through the snow. He's drunk but avoids the few people who are out at 3 am. He narrowly avoids a snow-plough and he's helped up after he falls.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NORSEMEN FOOTBALL STADIUM - LATE MORNING

There are eight STADIUM EMPLOYEES watching the videotape of the break-in. They also count as Erik eats brats (one after another), hot off the grill. He uses a giant fork.

FIVE EMPLOYEES  
Seventeen. Eighteen. Nineteen.

The POLICE DETECTIVE arrives with two UNIFORMED OFFICERS.

POLICE DETECTIVE  
Where is he?

GENERAL MANAGER  
Officer, I doubt he'll give you much resistance, he's eaten nearly twenty brats.

STADIUM EMPLOYEE  
In fact, he may be dead.

The security guard changes from the tape to a live view. Erik is sleeping on the floor of the concession stand.

POLICE DETECTIVE  
We're gonna need back up. This guy is huge.

INT. OUTSIDE CONCESSION STAND - STADIUM CONCOURSE - NOONISH

The detective tries to lock Erik inside but the door will no longer lock or shut properly. He directs an employee to pull a stadium "injury cart" in front of the door; it should block Erik's escape.

The TEAM OWNER arrives.

TEAM OWNER  
What's the situation? My team tells me he ate nineteen brats.

POLICE DETECTIVE  
That's a lot.

The owner gestures to a large sign on the wall: Norseman Records. It lists all the stadium records for each menu item.

TEAM OWNER

The record for brats was twelve.

POLICE DETECTIVE

He's inside. We're just waiting for re-backup to arrive.

Then Erik wakes up and begins to push the door open; he's pushing against the weight of the injury cart. The injury cart's wheels are locked but he slides the door open.

STADIUM EMPLOYEE

(to the team owner)

Sir, that thing weighs 1,200 lbs.

The owner, always on the alert for football talent, makes a mental note of that fact. FLASH: In the owner's mind he envisions a heavy blocking sledge being pushed in practice by the team's strongest linemen.

On the concourse, Erik looks at the five uniformed officers. They expect him to surrender, but Erik stands ready for battle. But wisely he drops the sword and the police holster their weapons. Everyone stretches and ready themselves for an old-fashion fight.

There is another non-lethal fight. Eight police are required. Erik doesn't stop until they have the plastic zip ties on his wrists. The police relax and Erik breaks the plastic ties with brut strength. The second round of fighting begins.

Nora and the cheerleaders arrive on the field for practice in their Danskin leotards. Many of them (including Nora) climb the stairs and watch the struggle.

Now, there are over a dozen police, and they still can't control Erik. They taser Erik, but he simply pulls out the electrode darts. He only stops fighting when he makes eye contact with Nora. The police take the opportunity to quickly put metal cuffs on Erik. Erik is bending them but can't break them.

POLICE DETECTIVE  
Okay, big guy. What's your name?

ERIK  
I know not what thou are saying.

A BLOND COP steps forward.

BLOND COP  
I think he's British.

ERIK  
*Nie. Jeg er norsk.*

SUB: No, I'm a Norwegian.

BLOND COP  
*Er du en av gjeste-nordmennene?*

SUB: You're one of the guest Norwegians?

POLICE DETECTIVE  
In English, please.

BLOND COP  
He said he was Norwegian.

ERIK  
But, I speak Englander *greit*.

BLOND COP  
What are you doing here? You're a soldier?

Erik smiles.

ERIK  
*Nordisk warrior. At thy s'rvic.*

BLOND COP  
How did you get here?

ERIK  
On a ship, of course.

BLOND COP

You didn't fly here with the other soldiers?

ERIK

Men can't flyeth. I did see a fool tryeth howev'r once. That gent smok'd a lot of weed, did jump up and out... and then down. Splat!

BLOND COP

Okay, well what are you doing in this building?

ERIK

This is a castle and I wast fill'd with pangs of hunger.

Erik gestures to the sign advertising a Norseman eating brats.

BLOND COP

So you broke the door?

ERIK

I wast invited. Thy quaint girls hath said, "come in."

Erik gestures to the large sign with the cheerleaders holding the door open for the costumed Norsemen fans.

BLOND COP

It does say, "Norsemen welcome."

(beat)

Were you deployed here for training?

(beat)

Did you hit your head or something?

Handcuffed Erik bends over to show his warped metal helmet to the policeman.

BLOND COP

Amnesia?

ERIK

What's yond amnesia?

BLOND COP

Can you remember anything?

ERIK

Of course. I wast thirsty so I did drink.

BLOND COP

Beer?

ERIK

Aye, wond'rful beers. I did drink.

BLOND COP

And, you were hungry so you ate the brats?  
(to the detective)  
Makes perfect sense to me.

GENERAL MANAGER

Ask him if he walked from the brewery to  
the stadium last night. It was -5° F.

POLICE DETECTIVE

He did. Alcohol apparently doesn't freeze.

TEAM OWNER

This is entirely our fault. That sign was  
misleading. And this has been just a  
misunderstanding.

The police aren't ready to simply walk away. The prison  
industry must be fed and many of the officers are injured.

BLOND COP

What happened next?

ERIK

I did sleep.

BLOND COP

And then we showed up?

ERIK

Nev'r sleep a wink in a house; f'r a foe  
within doth'rs thee may view.



BLOND COP  
(gesturing to the team owner)  
We're not foes. We're friends?

ERIK  
(in medieval Norwegian)  
*Avtalt.*

SUB: Agreed.

BLOND COP  
(in English)  
He agrees.

POLICE DETECTIVE  
He agrees to what?

TEAM OWNER  
Gentlemen. Please one moment.

The BREWERY OWNER arrives and has a private word with the team owner. We only hear the end of the conversation.

TEAM OWNER  
Promotional considerations and there was never any break-in.

BREWERY OWNER  
The beer will be accounted for as simply inventory loss. But if you sign him, then I need him for a few commercials.

TEAM OWNER  
How many?

BREWERY OWNER  
A year's worth?

TEAM OWNER  
Deal.

The team owner takes the detective aside and whispers something quietly. The owner points to the owner's box. The detective whispers something back and points to the twenty sore and injured policemen.

The owner walks to where he can address all the first responders. EMTs firemen, policemen. Over twenty of them.

TEAM OWNER

Men and women, the Norsmen (the team), we need your help.

(pointing)

You know what that box is reserved for?

ROOKIE COP

The owner's box?

TEAM OWNER

It's the largest luxury skybox in the league. How would you all like to be invited?

(beat)

Bring your lady friends.

CATHOLIC COP

Children?

TEAM OWNER

If there isn't enough room, we can spill over into the next box, the second largest skybox in the league.

WILEY COP

How many games?

TEAM OWNER

Well, I was thinking of one, but since you are such a good negotiator; there are five more home games... if you'll help us out with this personnel matter...

(beat)

This is my personal secretary if you'll please give her your name...

FIREMEN

Just the cops?

TEAM OWNER

No. Of course not. Everyone who witnessed... er... I mean everyone regardless. Let's make

it a party! And autographed footballs for everyone.

The first responders all take out a business card. As the owner's SECRETARY arrives, they hand their cards to her.

TEAM OWNER

Thank you. I appreciate your doing your duty. But can someone unlock him, we have practice in an hour.

(to the general manager)

Just wait until coach hears about this.

POLICE DETECTIVE

(to the blond cop)

Can you stick around and keep an eye on this character?

The blond cop nods.

The general manager makes eye-contact with the owner and gestures to the entire group of cheerleaders.

TEAM OWNER

What do you girls want?

NORA & FRIENDS

(too frightened to ask for anything)

Nothing.

TEAM OWNER

(smiles at the loyalty)

Good, then nothing happened.

(grabbing the blond cop)

Can you help me with a bit of security.

BLOND COP

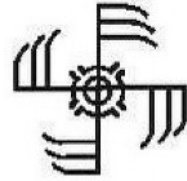
Twenty-five dollars an hour and a field pass?

TEAM OWNER

Done.

INT. FIELD - STADIUM - AFTERNOON

Erik is in a practice uniform. The blond cop is still there to translate and for security. The general manager brings a contract to be signed. The cop glances over it and points to where he should sign. Erik makes his complicated symbol in *futhark* (a type of rune).



ERIK

I'm hither to fight in thy arena?

GENERAL MANAGER

Son, this isn't any arena football; you just signed a professional football contract. Unheard off.

ERIK

I hear you fine.

The PUNTER punts the ball 60 yards. Enough with all the languages in the parentheticals; Erik speaks medieval and the blond cop speaks modern English or Norwegian. There are some misunderstandings in the languages, naturally.

ERIK

What is yond??

BLOND COP

A football.

ERIK

What?

BLOND COP

*Grisunge*. A pigskin. *Griseskinn*.

ERIK

(awed and fearful)

I've seen some butch'ry in mine own time, but nothing as cruel as kicking a bawbling pig yond far.

COACH

(to the punter)

That's what I like to see, young man! You kicked the hell out of that pigskin. Do that Sunday, will ya?

BLOND COP

(to Erik)

No. No. It's a dead pig.

The punted ball has bounced a few times and come to rest on the one-yard-line. Coach applauds the punter.

ERIK

(sad)

Well, it's dead now, naturally. It's just laying th're not moving.

Erik is about to walk over and beat the punter senseless, but the punter takes another ball and kicks it down the field. Erik winces in pain.

ERIK

(furious at the punter)

Halt! *Hundskit!!!*

The blond cop arrives to head off the confrontation. Erik is entirely a bomb about to go off until he is handed a football.

BLOND COP

No. See? It's only a pigskin. Sewn and inflated with air.

And Erik grins for the first time. He takes the football and kicks it into the rafters, it never comes down; it's lodged in the lighting.

ERIK

Oh, now I und'rstand. It's called.

(pointing down)

Foot.

(pointing up to the lights)

Ball.

The cheerleaders have finished their practice and are walking out. But Erik sees Nora. They make eye contact. Eric tells four and then six players to stand on the blocking sledge. It's built for two players but Eric stands between the two

pads and pushes it with his arms extended; he pushes it down the field to impress Nora. He's about to leave practice and talk to her, but the coach stops him.

COACH  
(almost Al Silvani)  
Son, women weaken legs.

Erik looks at the coach like he must be insane.

BLOND COP  
Women weaken legs.  
(translating)  
*Kvinner Svekker bena.*

ERIK  
That's not true. That's not true. Doth  
thee think I'm a dolt?

Erik turns to look again, but Nora has vanished into the ladies' locker room.

The Norsemen line up for a play and Erik is the right defensive end. The ball is snapped and Erik ploughs through the left tackle. The quarterback throws the ball down and is narrowly able to dodge Erik. Every coach blows their whistles but Erik continues chasing the quarterback until the blond cop intervenes.

BLOND COP  
No, that's not right. *Stopp slåss!*

SUB: Stop fighting.

ERIK  
*Ingen slossing?*

SUB: No fighting?

BLOND COP  
No. No fighting.  
(beat)  
*Øve på. A game.*  
(gesturing to the teammates)  
Friends. *Venner.*

The blond cop takes out a media book full of photos of this week's opponents and shows it to Erik.

BLOND COP

Enemy.

The Norseman's left tackle doesn't get up.

ASSISTANT COACH

Broken collar bone?

The TRAINER nods.

COACH

(awestruck and speechless for a time)

Well. That' frees up a roster spot. Next tackle get in here!

(beat)

Who is the second left tackle?

No one moves. The assistant coach looks it up on his clip board.

ASSISTANT COACH

Watson! That's you. Left tackle.

WATSON

Not today I'm not. I play right tackle. You can ask my agent.

COACH

(to the blond cop)

You speak his lingo. Coach him a bit will ya?

(beat)

Over there. Way over there.

Coach points for the cop and Erik to stand far to the side.

WATSON

(gesturing to Erik)

He's not coming back?

COACH

No. Not today.

WATSON

Okay, then I'll play.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROOM - HYATT REGENCY - MINNEAPOLIS - WEEKDAY

In the hotel room, Erik is living off room service. Large amounts of food. And Erik's watching a lot of farm television. He changes channels constantly until he finds the farming network. He has an almost child-like fascination with food production and farming.

MONTAGE: Farming television.

TELEVISION

Behind the Corn Revolution. Years of research, breeding and testing have come together to bring pioneer growers a new performance standard in corn.

Cotton. Fruit. Tree Nuts. Rice. Soybean and Oil Crops. Sugar and Sweeteners. Vegetables.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

Erik, teammates, cheerleaders, and the blond cop dish up hundreds of hotdish meals to the residents. The resident's politely clap. As the team is finished and walking out, a huge UPS shipment arrives and Eric hands out heavy winter coats, socks and hats. The resident's rage about Erik's insight and kindness.

INT. ROOM - HYATT REGENCY - MINNEAPOLIS - NIGHT

Erik has invited six-homeless guys up to winter in the hotel room. The homeless fellows want to watch football, but Erik changes the channel to farming. Who will argue with Eric; he's large and it's VERY cold outside. Still, they feel lucky to be out of the shelter.

INT. LOBBY - HYATT REGENCY - MINNEAPOLIS - WEEKDAY

The HOTEL MANAGER and STAFF seem concerned. The owner's secretary gets off the phone with the team office.



SECRETARY

(to the hotel manager)

He said, "charge it to the team."

HOTEL MANAGER

Happy to do that. He's an interesting guest; we love him.

SECRETARY

And his guests? Not your typical clientele?

HOTEL MANAGER

Any friend of Erik's is a friend of ours.

SECRETARY

Well, thank you for that.

HOTEL MANAGER

Can't wait for Sunday's game.

INT. FILM ROOM - STADIUM - AFTERNOON

Erik watches the old game tapes. The blond cop is absent. Everyone is studying the game, but rather than explain anything, the coaches and teammates have learned the Norwegian word for "war" from the blond cop. Everything is explained in terms of war.

TEAMMATES

*Krig!*

SUB: War!

And they point to the tv screen at the opposing quarterback.

COACH

(pointing to the QB)

*Hersir. Drep lederne!*

SUB. Quarterback. Kill the Leader!

TEAMMATES

*Drep lederne!*

SUB: Kill the Leader!

They show a particular play where a different right defensive end tackles the quarterback and the team stands and cheers. They all look toward Erik. Erik seems to understand his job.

INT. SIDELINE - STADIUM - GAMEDAY

The scoreboard shows, "T-Rex vs. Norseman".

The Norsemen exit the tunnel for the game. Erik has been given the number 99 jersey. Erik is amazed by the 73,000+ crowd. But he's calm. They go through their pre-game without incident.

Then the entire Norsemen team huddles up and the CAPTAINS give a pep talk.

TEAM CAPTAIN

Great victories are born out of great opportunities. And, those morons over there are nothing but an opportunity!

(beat)

They insulted your mother and your sister in the same sentence!

The uniformed blond cop translates it in to Norwegian. Erik takes everything literally. Erik looks menacing at the opposite team - the T-Rex.

ERIK

(to the blond cop)

What was said about my mother and sister?

BLOND COP

(making it up)

*De sa at moren din er en soldat og at søsteren din ikke er sjenert rundt hunder.*

SUB: They said your mother is a soldier and your sister isn't shy around dogs.

ERIK

Which one say this?

BLOND COP

(finds LT on the opponent roster)

Number 78.

Erik finds NUMBER 78 on the T-Rex sideline; the left tackle is an innocent enough guy; he's smiling and joking around before the game. Number 78 is signing autographs and having photos made with disabled children.

TEAM CAPTAIN

It's not about how hard you can hit; we can all hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and remain in the game! Thus continuing to get paid.

(beat)

But, this is not just a game; they are the enemy! It's war.

When the team captain's eyes meet Erik...

CAPTAINS

War! Understand? War!

ERIK

*Krig!!!*

The team rocks back and forth as they chant.

TEAM

*Krig! Krig! Krig!!!*

SUB: War! War! War!!!

The huddle breaks and the kickoff team runs out on the field for the kickoff. But Erik heads directly for the opposite bench; he's about to reach T-Rex number 78 but the kickoff team realizes and pulls Erik back. Erik is pointing to the opponent and speaking in angry mediaeval English.

ERIK

Thy moth'r is a reinde'r and thy sist'r is a walrus!!

The blond cop has taken his eyes off of Erik for a minute and when he sees the trouble, he must run out on the field. He's in his uniform.

NUMBER 78

Me? You talking nonsense to me?

(to T-Rex teammates)

I don't even know this fool.

(to Erik)

What did I do to you?

(to T-Rex teammates)

Is he talking to me?

TV ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, the game hasn't even begun yet and already there is an altercation.

COLORMAN

Not quite an altercation.

The crowd boos the blond cop, who is about to enter the fray.

TV ANNOUNCER

The hockey fans in the stand must have confused their tickets... they want to see a fight.

COLORMAN

Number 78 doesn't seem to know what he's done.

TV ANNOUNCER

Norseman number 99, Erik Ericson, want's a piece of him early. You are right; T-Rex number 78, he wants to know what he's done wrong.

COLORMAN

Sometimes just showing up is enough.

The blond cop arrives and helps restrain and explain things to Erik.

TV ANNOUNCER

The newest Norseman is being restrained by his teammates.

COLORMAN

I expect a thrilling game.

TV ANNOUNCER

Saying this game is a rivalry is an understatement.

COLORMAN

Look; the police are already involved.

TV ANNOUNCER

In all my years, I've never seen anything like this before a game.

COLORMAN

I would expect more trouble as the game wears on.

The blond cop and Erik return to their sideline. Proud Erik looks at Nora. Lovely Nora looks at Erik.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SIDELINE - STADIUM - SECOND QUARTER

TV ANNOUNCER

Third and long. Passing situation. Perfect time for a strong rush.

COLORMAN

And here he comes, the newest Norseman. They say this kid can't speak a word of English but they also say he sure can rush the quarterback.

Erik enters the game at right defensive end.

INT. CHEERLEADER LINE - STADIUM - SECOND QUARTER

TORI

There goes your boyfriend.

NORA

He's not my boyfriend.

TORI

Not yet anyway.

NORA

No fraternization, remember?

TORI

Oh, who cares about that? He looks so virile.

NORA

I think he's a teddy bear.

INT. ON THE FIELD - STADIUM

Erik lines up as defensive end, opposite number 78. T-Rex number 78 is shaking so badly, they penalize him for false start.

COACHES

Wait!

The ball is finally snapped. They are yelling at him from the sideline.

COACHES

*Krig!*

SUB: War!

Erik takes everything literally. Erik runs over Number 78 and then runs over a blocking back and then flattens the quarterback. They throw six flags, unnecessary roughness. The opponents all get in Erik's face, about to fight. Erik head butts one and forearms another, knocking the breath out of the opponent.

There are three unconscious players. Then four. Then five. The pushing and shoving moves over to the opponent's bench. Erik is dropping each T-Rex player that gets near him. It becomes an outright brawl. Six unconscious T-Rex players.

Again the blond cop must run on the field to restrain Erik.

TV ANNOUNCER

This is mayhem.

COLORMAN

I had an idea this might happen.

TV ANNOUNCER

I wish both teams would return to their sideline, so we can see who's down.

COLORMAN

Frank, it looks to me like at least nine players, all from the visiting team are down. I count three who haven't moved. Three are withering in pain.

TV ANNOUNCER

Three have hobbled off the field.

COLORMAN

I hate to suggest this... but we may be looking at multiple game suspensions from the league.

TV ANNOUNCER

You may get some emails about that.

COLORMAN

Well, I don't want to see that happen but let's be realistic; bones may be broken.

TV ANNOUNCER

I count nine of the T-Rex players down.

COLORMAN

Does anyone know a good lawyer? Cause this is gonna be nasty.

TV ANNOUNCER

The worst altercation in the history of the league. The longest game stoppage in the history of professional football.

The fighting continues.

COLORMAN

And it looks like we still aren't done.

Finally, the blond cop reaches Erik and he begins to settle.

BLOND COP

*Stoppe. Ro deg ned. Det er greit. Det er over.*

SUB: Stop. Calm down. It is okay. It is over.

The cop is pushed down, stepped on and Erik fights some more. Erick pushes a T-Rex player so hard the first thing that hits the ground is his butt.

Erik doesn't stop until he sees the worried look on Nora's face. The cop regains his feet.

TV ANNOUNCER

Finally, it appears to be over.

COLORMAN

Can anyone tell me what caused all this in the first place?

TV ANNOUNCER

I'm told that Leslie on the sideline has a theory?

The camera cuts to the FEMALE REPORTER on the sideline.

LESLIE

Testosterone?

Dead air.

LESLIE

I'm just saying.

The television cameras return to the field. In the fracas, the HEAD REFEREE's microphone has been accidentally turned on. The crowd can hear everything. The referee doesn't realize it. The cursing is beeped out of the broadcast.

HEAD REFEREE

Number 99, you're out of the game.  
(to the blond cop)  
Get him out of here.

COACH

What about number 78? He started it all.



TV ANNOUNCER

I can only see one Norseman down and he's receiving medical attention. It looks like an ankle.

COLORMAN

Does he know his mic is on and we can hear everything?

The referee looks at number 78, who is still flat on his back and being treated by doctors.

TV ANNOUNCER

Concussion protocol for at least six players.

COLORMAN

Are there enough doctors here for that?

HEAD REFEREE

Number 78? Coach, I think he's already out of the game.

COACH

I don't care; I want him out of the game, officially?

HEAD REFEREE

You want someone out of the game?

COACH

Yea!

HEAD REFEREE

Okay, YOU'RE out of the game! Coach, the locker room is right there!

COACH

Me? What did I do?

HEAD REFEREE

(pointing to Erik)  
You put that maniac in the game!

COACH

Really? That's all you got?

The blond cop begins to escort Erik and the coach toward the tunnel to the locker room.

INT. CHEERLEADER LINE - STADIUM

TORI

Still think he's a teddy bear?

NORA

Look, did anyone bother to even teach him the rules?

TORI

Good; that can be your job from now on.

NORA

He's not even from here.

TORI

Sounds like you're already married.

INT. OWNER'S BOX - STADIUM

LONGSHOT: The first responders are running for the door trying to leave the owner's skybox. They are elbowing each other to get through the logjam at the door.

We see the team owner with his head in his hands. The owner's family and entourage are all shocked! Jaws are dropped. The team owner recovers a bit and his wife brings him a very large whiskey. He downs it rapidly. He looks at the GM and then the secretary. They don't have any answers. The team owner looks down at the floor.

INT. ON THE FIELD - STADIUM

BLOND COP

Take your helmet off.

ERIC

I nev'r taketh mine helmet off. Nev'r.

BLOND COP

It's a signal the fighting is done.

ERIC

Thee wanteth me to surrend'r?

BLOND COP

Look at the scoreboard. Nine to nothing.

The blond cop points to the scoreboard and gestures to the nine down T-Rex players.

Erik reluctantly takes off his helmet and shows it to the T-Rex players. Every participant seems unhappy still, but the game needs to resume. The stadium's 55-foot-tall LED screen shows a close-up of Erik's handsome face. Every woman in the crowd simultaneously sighs, "He's so handsome." That many women (30,000) sighing at the same instant, it produces an eerie sound.

The coach and Erik are leaving the field. But, from the corner of Erik's eye, he spots his downed teammate. Erik veers off and reaches under his shoulder pads and pulls out a pagan religious medallion. Erik rips the leather necklace and takes his medallion in hand. He holds it up, showing it to the crowd. Some in the crowd are in shock but most of them respond by applauding. Of course many are drunk on beer and football, but they love Erik.

COLORMAN

Is that a Viking cross he's holding up?

TV ANNOUNCER

I hope so, for his sake.

Erik reaches the injured Norseman player and kneels beside him on the Astroturf.

COLORMAN

Judging from the crowd, I'd say..

The head referee is about to physically lay hands on Erik, but Erik places the medallion in the injured player's hand.

ERIK

Until Valhalla.

The referee's mic is near enough to Erik to pick the sound up. The crowd goes wild. Eric rejoins the coach and the blond cop and they finally enter the tunnel.

COLORMAN

Did he just say what I think he said?

TV ANNOUNCER

Oh, we've been had; this has been a stunt. A well-orchestrated publicity stunt. He's playing to the crowd.

COLORMAN

I'm not sure the league will tolerate something like what we've seen here today.

TV ANNOUNCER

Someone in the Norseman organization is just shameless.

COLORMAN

Well, if the Norwegian's football career is over, he certainly has a career in professional wrestling. Listen to them.

The team owner looks up from the floor. The GM and secretary try to grin and look positively on the disaster.

INT. NORSEMAN APPAREL & FAN-GEAR STORE - STADIUM

There only a few Norseman number 99 jerseys remaining. There is a fistfight for the last jersey. The COMBATANTS tackle each other and push over a rack of shirts.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - STADIUM

COACH

Son, we're both in a lot of trouble. Now get showered and get out of here.

(to the blond cop)

Get him out of there before the media finds him. Seriously.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NORA'S CAR - DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS - MONDAY MORNING

Nora is driving to work. On the radio is a morning sports talk radio show.

HARDASS TALK RADIO

The league didn't hesitate in handing down a season-ending suspension. Erik Ericson, the now infamous number 99, this morning was suspended for the rest of the year.

SYMPATHETIC TALK RADIO

That's too harsh.

HARDASS

He may never play another down of football.

SYMPATHETIC

I don't know why.

HARDASS

It was the longest game suspension in the history of professional football.

SYMPATHETIC

No one's career was ended.

HARDASS

That remains to be seen. The T-Rex are protesting the game and the injuries.

SYMPATHETIC

Protesting injuries? What babies!

HARDASS

The question for the Norseman GM and owner should be, "what were you thinking signing this guy?" And what about the other executives, shouldn't someone have stepped up to prevent this sort of embarrassment.

SYMPATHETIC

Embarrassment? It was just a misunderstanding. I'm told he doesn't speak English.

HARDASS

I'm not sure that matters to the league,  
because he's gone.

SYMPATHETIC

In a year he'll be back. He'll have time  
to have learned the game by then.

HARDASS

Maybe he should start with learning the  
rules?

Nora pulls over and parks. She too is in shock at the news.  
Her eyes are moist. The car phone rings... caller ID: Tori.

NORA

Why is it that every single time I fall  
for a guy, he turns out to be a lunatic?

And then Nora sees two blocks down the street, in front of the  
hotel; Erik and about six homeless men are being escorted to  
the sidewalk. They each have a plate of food and are trying to  
finish. It appears their ejection happened at breakfast.

NORA

(before Tori can speak)

I have to call you back.

The hotel manager wants the plates and silverware back. A  
SECURITY GUARD follows the hotel manager to the sidewalk with  
an armful of the Viking's clothing, armour and weapons. All of  
Erik's possessions are thrown on the icy sidewalk and land  
with quite a metallic sound. Erik is now homeless.

Some of his homeless friends have finished eating and want to  
fight with the hotel staff, but it's oddly Erik who calms them  
and is the peacemaker.

ERIK

This poor innkeep'r is only following his  
King. We have no beef with these men.

Nora drives up to the group of homeless men who are about to  
scatter for the day. But Erik pulls them back together in a  
huddle. One of the homeless men translates for Erik.

ERIK

Come here. Huddle up. I have a plan.

(beat)

A contest. May the best scavenger return  
with the biggest prize.

HOMELESS MAN

Brother. Erik. It's inspired.

ERIK

I'm afraid the only way to be the victor  
over Hel's winter is to divide and  
scavenge.

HOMELESS MAN

I'll flank west.

HOMELESS MAN #2

I'll cover the east.

ERIK

We'll meet here tonight and share the  
spoils.

HOMELESS MAN

Haa!

TOGETHER

Break!

Two policemen are approaching and they don't look very happy.  
It's daylight and the homeless are in a group and that's  
illegal. The homeless men see the police and begin to run in  
eight directions. But before the police arrive...

The injured Norseman player, from yesterday's game, hobbles up  
in a foot cast and crutches. He hands Erik the medallion.

NORSEMAN PLAYER

I wanted to return this.

ERIK

I thought thee w're a gon'r. And thee wilt  
feedeth thy family.

NORSEMAN PLAYER

Thank you, but it's just my ankle. I'll play again. I was touched by your kindness.

ERIK

Thanketh thee f'r returning t. T's quite precious to me.

NORSEMAN PLAYER

Thanks for the loan.

ERIK

Well, I'm just joyous thou art good now.

NORSEMAN PLAYER

Until Valhalla.

ERIK

Until Valhalla.

They shake and hug each other and wave goodbye.

Nora doesn't say anything when she and Erik's eyes meet, but she pops the trunk and she glances at the armour and weapons. He loads all his items into the boot of her car.

Erik gets into the car.

ERIK

I'm Erik.

NORA

I know. You are in the papers.

She glances to the morning's newspaper on the dash. The paper has a photo (above the fold) of Erik holding up the medallion to the crowd. The headline: Norsemen Massacre T-Rex Rivals 53-7. Erik looks closely at the photo.

NORA

(reading)

Norsemen Massacre T-Rex Rivals.

ERIK

T-Rex?



NORA

They're sort of like dragons?

ERIK

Nay, they're nothing liketh the dragons  
I've seen?

Erik contemplates. Instantly, he's leaving fighting, violence,  
and football for this lady.

ERIK

Erik of Njardarheimr.

NORA

Alexa, show me Njardarheimr.

The car's GPS mapping shows Njardarheimr (Norway) on the  
screen. A former member of the Viking war and raiding culture,  
Erik is amazed at the mapping technology and Alexa.

NORA

Alexa, what is Njardarheimr?

ALEXA

Njardarheimr is a 13th century Viking  
ghost town and archaeological site. It's  
also the home of Njardarheimr, an  
authentic recreation of a medieval Viking  
village. It's currently closed for winter.

ERIK

At the end of the one-hundred-and-  
nineteenth fiord.

NORA

That's a lot of counting.

ERIK

Finding your home in Norway isn't easy.

NORA

There are so many fiords.

ERIK

Yes, but none so beautiful as mine.

NORA  
You own a fiord?

ERIK  
Well, it's shared.

NORA  
With your family?

ERIK  
Mine own moth'r and fath'r, died of  
hunger. Alive is a daught'r who is't past  
thirteen years.

NORA  
How old are you?

ERIK  
Twenty-one years.

Nora does the math.

NORA  
How is that even...

ERIK  
M'ron's did capture h'r in England and  
hath brought h'r to our village.

NORA  
But no wife?

ERIK  
Nay wife.

NORA  
Nora of Sauk Centre. About 100 miles in  
that direction.

(beat)  
Alexa, show me Sauk Centre.

ALEXA  
1 hr 38 min (106 miles) via I-94 West.  
Fastest route, the usual traffic.

The car's GPS mapping shows Sauk Centre, Minnesota. Always a Viking at heart, Erik will never stop being amazed at the mapping technology and Alexa.

ERIK

This horseless wagon speaks?

NORA

Yes. A car.

ERIK

Magic?

NORA

Not exactly. Technology.

Erik is only confused by the modern English.

ERIK

At your service, *frid*.

NORA

Alexa, translate, *frid*.

ALEXA

*Frid* in Norwegian means, beloved.

NORA

(her heart flutters)

Oh, boy.

ERIK

I'm not a boy.

NORA

Yes. I can see that.

ERIK

I'm here.

NORA

What do you want to do?

ERIK

Whatev'r thee n'rmally doth. I'm h're to learneth *alle* about thee.

NORA  
That's healthy.

ERIK  
Thank you.

NORA  
You said in Norway everything is shared.

ERIK  
A gent that won't share...

NORA  
What will happen?

ERIK  
That gent shall likely beest high-lone and  
starve. T can beest a bleak existence.

NORA  
I see.

The homeless man who has been running from the police wants in the car (or he's just transfixed by Nora and Erik) but it's also a sports car with two seats. He can't get in. The police nab him.

Erik is about to get out of the vehicle and defend his friend, but Nora stops him; she puts her hand on top of his. He calms instantly.

NORA  
I understand the jail is warm and the  
food's better than the shelter.

ERIK  
Haply that gent doest needeth timeth out  
of the bitter cold.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARTY MATHIS CLOTHIERS - MORNING

Nora is a take charge sort of woman. Without translating a word, Nora puts Erik in business casual.

NORA

After all the trouble yesterday with the team. I think we need to find you a more civilized profession. Don't you think?

Erik doesn't understand entirely, but still; it's Nora so he nods his agreement.

She uses her smartphone to translate only when payment is due.

NORA

Do you still have the card the team gave you?

ERIK

Yes.

He hands it over.

CASHIER

I'm sorry ma'am; this card has been cancelled.

NORA

I might have known.  
(beat)  
Don't worry; use mine.

Nora hands over her personal debit card and takes the receipt.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FAR OFFICE SUITE - AGRI-BUSINESS - MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

AGRI-BUSINESS MONTAGE: NORA'S BOSS (66) is showing Erik around the office and Erik is mostly interested in the art... large poster-size photographs of crops in the field. Erik stops at each poster. Nora's boss explains what is in each poster. The boss speaks fluent Norwegian.

- Corn - Minnesota farmers planted 9.2 million acres of corn in 2021 for both grain and silage purposes. The number of cash receipts earned totaled an impressive \$9 billion.

- Soybeans- And other oil crops, including flaxseed and canola, brought in \$5.3 billion in cash receipts in 2021. These crops are typically processed into oils and may be used for frying, baking or biofuel.
- Hogs - Hog production in Minnesota experienced a significant increase from \$3.29 billion in cash receipts in 2021 to \$3.85 billion in 2022. Each market hog provides 372 servings of pork.

End Norwegian audio. Begin music and the tour continues. Erik is fascinated and appears to be asking questions.

- Milk and dairy...
- Cattle and calves...
- Poultry and eggs...
- Wheat...
- Vegetables and melons...
- Broilers...
- Fruits and nuts...

The montage ends in the boss's office with the door closed. Before the shades are drawn closed. Erik gives the boss his authentic Viking helmet as a gift. The Boss is flattered and places it on a shelf beside a signed Norseman football helmet. He's clearly honored.

The boss picks up the football helmet and an autograph pen. Erik signs the football helmet with his complicated rune.

INT. NEAR OFFICE SUITE - AGRI-BUSINESS - DAY

Nora's friend is in the elevator up. She inquires about Nora at the receptionist, and is pointed in the right direction. Nora's friend knocks on Nora's office door.

NORA

Hello.

TORI

Nora.

NORA

You found me!

TORI  
I hope that's okay.

NORA  
It's wonderful.

TORI  
On the phone, you sounded... I just wanted  
to make sure you're okay.

NORA  
I am. I think.

TORI  
Well, with all the news and drama?

NORA  
It's crazy, isn't it?

TORI  
You talk to him yet?

NORA  
A little bit.

Suddenly Nora's boss enters and he's followed by Erik. Both  
the boss and Erik are smiling like it's Sunday.

TORI  
Oh, he's here.

BOSS  
Oh, I didn't know you were with someone.  
We'll come back.

NORA  
No. no. This is Tori. She's my best  
friend.

BOSS  
You're a cheerleader too?

TORI  
I am.

BOSS

I bet I know why you're here.

TORI

Why?

BOSS

You're looking out for your friend. That's what I've been doing the last thirty minutes, looking out for Nora.

(to Nora)

Thanks for loaning your friend to me. Maybe we can talk later?

NORA

Could you make out anything?

BOSS

Should we step into the hallway?

They step out into the hall.

INT. INSIDE NORA'S OFFICE

Things are odd. Erik sits and waits with Tori. They don't entirely understand each other.

TORI

So. You pretty much like Nora?

ERIK

Thou art pretty, but I liketh N'ra.

TORI

You want to marry her?

Tori uses her phone to show him a bridal dress.

ERIK

I'm naturally a m'rry p'rson. M're the present day than oth'r days.

Erik looks out the office window at Nora.

TORI

You want to have babies?



Tori uses her phone to show him baby photos.

ERIK

I don't doubteth thee can beareth me  
children, but I pref'r N'ra.

TORI

Nora?

ERIK

Yes, N'ra.

INT. OUTSIDE NORA'S OFFICE

NORA

How is he?

BOSS

Well, we had an interesting conversation.

NORA

And he needs to see a doctor?

BOSS

Apparently, he believes that he's a 10th-  
century Viking warrior.

NORA

I was afraid of that.

BOSS

Football can be a brutal sport. Even with  
all the concussion protocols.

(beat)

My grandkids play soccer.

(beat)

But he did give me a remarkable old  
helmet. It may be authentic, a museum  
piece.

NORA

Really?

BOSS

Well, it's in my office now. And I think I'll keep it.

NORA

He's a generous man. The team fed every homeless person in the city for less than \$100. He bought them all \$300 coats.

BOSS

You asked me, so here goes. I think it's just an undiagnosed concussion.

(beat)

He probably has a minor head injury. Maybe posttraumatic amnesia; that isn't entirely rare.

NORA

But he needs a doctor, can you get him in to see your brother?

BOSS

It says these things usually resolve themselves without any treatment.

NORA

You called your brother?

BOSS

No. I Googled it.

NORA

That's not very...

BOSS

Maybe he just needs a break. Give him a week or four.

NORA

Like Christmas break?

INT. INSIDE NORA'S OFFICE

Nora returns to her office. Tori gives her the a-okay sign.

TORI  
You two are good to go.

NORA  
Good to go?

TORI  
We talked and I approve.

NORA  
You questioned him?

TORI  
I did and he's totally normal. So in love  
with you!

NORA  
Love?

TORI  
And, he wants children!

Nora politely smiles to Erik.

NORA  
My friend likes you.

This only adds to Erik's confusion. Erik politely, but uncomfortably, smiles at Tori. He thinks Tori's been flirting with him. But of course, Tori's only being a friend. Nora understands perfectly.

BOSS  
Sorry to interrupt. Can I borrow Erik  
again?  
(to Erik)  
*Det er noen mennesker jeg vil at du skal  
møte.*

SUB: There are some people I'd like for you to meet.

The boss takes Erik out to meet some clients. Erik is polite and very cordial.

TORI  
I'm a single mom.

NORA

And if you spent as much energy looking for me a husband, you'd be married already yourself.

TORI

Well... it's not that I don't try.

NORA

Are you going to ask me to babysit?

TORI

I know you have Erik now, but can you?

NORA

Yippie. I thought you would never ask.

TORI

It's just that with the Christmas shopping and I have a chance at double shifts, and I really need the money.

NORA

Don't worry. I want to see the new Christmas movie in the theatres.

TORI

I promised Anna I'd take her to the opening night of the Christmas Market.

NORA

We'll pick her up and we'll head over.

TORI

Oh. You're the best. Thank you.

NORA

I'll call you after work.

TORI

I'll call her and tell her to be ready.

EXT. CAFÉ - EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET - EARLY EVENING

ANNA (13), Erik and Nora arrive and sit at a table. Nora puts her smart phone and keys on the table. Erik picks them up the keys and hands them back to her, but she again places them on the table. Again he hands them to her. This goes on (back and forth) long enough for Anna to get out her smartphone. Erik struggles for a gentleman's explanation.

ERIK

Leaving thy keys on a table is lacking valor.

NORA

Sometimes, you are so strange. This is going to take some getting used to. But I'm willing.

Erik scans the café; a healthy number of women have their keys resting on the table. He's amazed at the number of (what he believes to be...) prostitutes in Minneapolis.

ERIK

Thy culture... with all the...  
(he gestures to the other tables)  
It's going to taketh some getting useth to as well.

Again, he picks up her keys and returns them one last time.

NORA

So, what's with the keys?

Anna has used her phone to Google, "Norwegian, culture, customs and keys."

ERIK

T means thou art a...

Erik doesn't want to speak in front of young Anna.

ERIK

We shouldn't has't hath brought your friend's issue h're.

NORA

What's wrong with this place? It's a café  
in a Christmas market.

ERIK

Well, evidently th're is a lot of gift  
giving.

NORA

And what's wrong with that?

ERIK

Nay, not f'r me. I'm a grown man, but this  
is a young pike.

Anna has already learned a great deal of Norwegian, perhaps  
from school. Anna understands *pike* (girl) before it's  
translated. And she's sensitive about her age.

ANNA

I'm not a child.

Erik gestures to the other women in the café, who have their  
keys out. Many are twirling them around their fingers,  
pitching them to their boyfriends after they've had too much  
to drink and one woman is advertising, with her keys on a  
lanyard around her neck.

ANNA

(reading from her phone)

It says, "back in the day, Scandinavian  
prostitutes would indicate their  
availability by putting their keys on the  
table."

Nora turns a bit flush and puts her keys out of sight. Her  
nose itches and she rubs it.

ANNA

(again reading from her phone)

It also says, "Someone is thinking of you  
when your nose itches or when you turn  
red. Someone is also thinking of you if a  
piece of unnecessary thread is on your  
clothes."

Nora glances down at her clothes.

ANNA

(whispers to Nora)

This guy, he really can't take his eyes off you.

NORA

(whispers back)

This is going to be the best Christmas, ever.

EXT. VILLAGE - EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET - NIGHT

ERIK

*Thurid!*

(beat)

Can we live in this beauteous village?

NORA

Alexa, translate, *thurid*.

ALEXA

I'm sorry; I don't understand this word? This word is in Norwegian?

NORA

Yes.

ALEXA

I'm sorry. Perhaps it's an ancient dialect or a different language.

Anna picks up on the mystery and uses her smartphone as they walk.

NORA

This village, it's like your home?

ERIK

Wint'r celebrations aye. Oden, aye. But not liketh this. And th're isn't a lass as *thurid* as thee. Or as charming as Anna.

ANNA

There's that word *thurid*, again. Alexa doesn't know it but it's online in the medieval Norwegian dictionary. It means beautiful or handsome.

Anna's suspicions are being confirmed. Erik doesn't speak modern Norwegian. Erik IS a real Viking!

NORA

He thinks I'm beautiful and you're charming. That's interesting.

There is a Christmas castle in the market.

ERIK

How many chinks to buyeth yond castle?

NORA

Chinks?

ANNA

He means coins.

NORA

I don't know. I think they build that castle and take it down each year.

Erik is puzzled; he can't fathom the stupidity and waste. They pass the Santa Claus and the long line of children.

NORA

The kids look pretty excited to see Santa.

ANNA

Yeah. They sure are. Too bad he's not real.

ERIK

What?

(long beat)

What didst the lassie say?

NORA

I didn't hear. What?



ERIK  
(stubborn)  
Odin is real. As real as wint'r.

NORA  
Oh, we just call him Santa. And he's real.  
She was just kidding. He's right over  
there, plain as day.

Erik looks suspiciously at Santa as they stroll past. Nora and Anna look at each other puzzled. Does he really believe in Santa, still?

Three TEENAGE GIRLS recognize Erik (as number 99) and are staring. They are debating approaching him. Nora notices the girls and waves them over. She gestures to Erik.

GIRL #1  
We just want to take a selfie?

NORA  
Sure. Knock yourself out. There's plenty  
of him.  
(to Erik)  
But dear, you'll have to bend over. These  
girls are tiny.

Nora signals for Erik to bend lower for a better photo. Erik doesn't move. Nora takes his waists and reaches up and pushes his shoulders down. Erik is malleable, but only for Nora.

The teenage girls snuggle up close to Erik and he's very nervous. Erik looks at Nora who seems to approve. He'll do what Nora asks of him, but he doesn't know how to pose. Anna doesn't like it. Everyone is territorial except Nora. They take the photo and the teenagers walk away giggling.

GIRL #1  
He's married, didn't you see her bending  
him for the selfie?

GIRL #2  
That mean's they're married?

GIRL #1  
What girlfriend is going to do that?

Nora ponders that issue.

GIRL #2

I don't care. I'd like to see him beat up  
Santa Claus and then we could... in the back  
of the castle..

GIRL #1

What?

GIRL #2

Is that too kinky?

GIRL #3

Oh, my god. You are so naughty.

The girls are ten yards away, but it's clearly overheard.

NORA

(to the girls)

Merry Christmas.

Erik, Nora and Anna walk farther.

NORA

(to Anna)

What would you like for Christmas this  
year, young lady?

ANNA

Maybe Santa will bring me a new bike.

ERIK

Asketh Oden f'r an iron helmet.

They pass the German Beer Garten.

ERIK

*Forspill.*

NORA

(to her phone)

Alexa, translate, *Forspill.*

ALEXA

*Forspill* in Norwegian means, foreplay.

Nora's cheeks turn red and it's not the cold.

NORA

No. No foreplay!

ERIK

Foreplay? What is that?

ANNA

It means kissing before you know...

NORA

Anna!

ERIK

(chuckling)

Nay. Thy technology is a laught'r. In N'rwegian *forspill* means drinking!

Anna freezes.

NORA

What's wrong?

ANNA

I'm glad my mom isn't here. That's all I can say.

NORA

It's that man? The one who cheated on her?

(beat)

Which one is he?

Nora nods toward an overly affectionate couple.

ANNA

Yep, that's the one.

ERIK

That gent disrespect'd thy moth'r? and he's parading 'round a hoer.

ANNA  
Alexa, translate, *hoer*.

NORA  
Alexa, never mind.

ANNA  
It's probably another ancient word that's  
NOT in the dictionary.

NORA  
I think we can figure out what it means,  
don't you?

ERIK  
Tramp, tart, trollop, strumpet.

Anna understands *tramp* without further explanation.

NORA  
Okay, we all get the picture.

ERIK  
Picture?

NORA  
I mean the couple... a man and woman.

ERIK  
Haply I should speak with the *kleykir*.  
That gent looks also weak.

Anna uses the phone to look up *kleykir*. She's reading and walking.

NORA  
Oh, no. No violence.

ERIK  
W'rry not. I've been bann'd from *ulykke*.

Anna uses the phone to look up *ulykke*.

ANNA

I'm pretty sure he means football. It translates from the old language as *calamity*.

NORA

You mean football? And are you upset about this... I mean...

ERIK

Nay, not very much. I wast 'rd'r'd to changeth by the highest auth'rity.

NORA

God?

ERIK

The King.

ANNA

He means the commissioner.

NORA

So, no more fighting? By law! That's nice.

ERIK

But in mine own culture, it's sore not to beat the hell out of men liketh yond.

NORA

(finally realizing)

You're not a Viking; you're a knight.

SHORT PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL MONTAGE

A short sequence of images play in Erik's mind.

- A football magazine; the images come to life.
- Knight mascot on the field.
- Ladies in Waiting cheerleaders.
- Knoxville Knights run onto the field ready for battle.

BACK TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET - NIGHT

ERIK

And thee enjoyeth the company of knights?

NORA

I like farmers.

ERIK

What wouldst a farm'r doth to a rakish man  
liketh yond? Has't a duel with him?

NORA

Well, here in Minnesota, farmers just let  
things slide.

ERIK

Slide?

NORA

You know... slide like... on the ice...

She gestures to the ice rink.

ERIK

We're going on the ice?

NORA

Good idea.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ICE RINK - EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET - NIGHT

Ice skates were invented in 3000 BCE. Erik has seen skates and Nora and Anna are the ones who struggle. He's a Norwegian and is at home on the ice. Erik is a marvelous ice skater but he falls badly when a jumbo jetliner passes low overhead.

Anna and Nora race over to pick him up. Erik is in a daze, and trying to get one last look at the airplane that's probably already landed.

ERIK

My sword?

NORA  
It's in my car, honey?

ERIK  
*Honning?*

NORA  
Yes.

ERIK  
A dragon! Fire coming out four anuses!

A ELDERLY WOMAN overhears Erik.

NORA  
I'm so sorry. I think he hit his head.

ANNA  
He didn't hit his head.

NORA  
How about some hot chocolate? Let me help you up.

EXT. COFFEE SHOPPE - EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET - NIGHT

ERIK  
I'm very much so s'rry. I thought that's what I did see.

NORA  
It's okay. No harm done.  
(beat)  
That's was some very impressive skating.

ANNA  
Athletic.

Tori is on the other side of the market.

NORA  
There's your mom.

ANNA  
She's done with work, finally.

They wave to Tori and she starts in that direction.

NORA

Erik. Look. Tori's here.

ERIK

(reading a poster)

M'rry Christmas.

NORA

Do you know what that means?

ERIK

I has't nay idea.

NORA

Baby Jesus?

ERIK

From... Mother Mary, blessed art thou  
amongst women and blessed is the fruit of  
thy womb?

Erik points to the Catholic church directly across the street.  
Nora is a bit disappointed but at the same time, it's good  
he's not a entirely a pagan.

NORA

Yes. From there.

Erik looks curiously in the direction of the church.

ERIK

Well, Merry Christmas, Nora.

NORA

Merry Christmas, Erik.

Tori arrives at the table.

NORA

Glad you finally made it.

(beat)

Anna told me what she wants for Christmas?



ANNA

Yeah. I told them I want a bicycle.

TORI

Bicycles can be dangerous.

ERIK

The lassie needeth a solid metal helmet.

TORI

What's with you and helmets?

NORA

You know, it has been proven helmets can save your life in an accident.

ERIK

Wanna see?

Erik pulls back his hairline and we can see a nice scar, probably from the rock cast down from the cliff in England. Tori doesn't look. She's looking at the BARISTA.

TORI

Don't I know that guy?

NORA

I don't know, but he makes a mean hot chocolate.

TORI

I think I went to high school with him.

Tori leaves the table to speak with the barista. Nora and Anna smile at each other. Hoping. They watch Tori and the barista as they visit. When they look back to Erik, he's gone.

NORA

(to Anna)

Go whisper to your mom, we're going to look for Erik.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Erik is sitting in a pew. Looking at all the wealth. Gold cups, plates and statues. He's been accustomed to raiding churches and monasteries. Nora and Anna arrive.

NORA

I don't know why, but I thought we would find you here.

(beat)

You have churches in Njardarheimr?

ERIK

I've nev'r seen anything like this. Not in Scotland 'r England 'r in Gaul.

NORA

Pretty, isn't it?

ERIK

Art thee a Christian, my lady?

NORA

I am.

ERIK

Then I am, as well.

NORA

Well, that's sweet but it's a bit more complicated than that.

A PRIEST is walking toward them.

NORA

Do you speak Norwegian?

PRIEST

No, but Father Halfdan does. Please wait a moment.

The priest turns to find help.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH STEPS - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Anna and Nora sit on the step and wait for Erik to exit.

ANNA

You are letting the priest do it? Why don't you explain?

NORA

Well, frankly. We're Lutheran. And he walked into a Catholic church. And I'm not very good at that sort of thing. And well... you think I should have asked Alexa to explain.

ANNA

About religion? Alexa already has enough power, don't you think?

NORA

What if there was a mistake? Wouldn't we all be messed up?

ANNA

I can see that happening. He speaks some sort of old English and medieval Norwegian. It's like trying to read Chaucer... but even worse.

NORA

How do you know?

ANNA

Teachers and the dictionary. He used the word *kleykir* when he means "person of disgrace."

NORA

You're mom's bolter.

ANNA

It's not in the modern Norwegian-English dictionary. Neither is *frode*, *gorm*, or *troels*.

NORA

We didn't learn anything like that in school.

ANNA

And I think he really IS a Viking.

(beat)

They found his boat.

NORA

No?

ANNA

Sure. Tied to a tree at Castle Danger beach.

NORA

What?

ANNA

See? It is on the internet. Archaeologists are freaked out by it and say it's legit. Carbon dated it; 1000 years old and still holds water.

FLASH TO: Sizable university museum/laboratory. A half-dozen scientists are photographing and documenting the boat.

NORA

I find that hard to believe.

ANNA

Still, it would explain a lot.

(beat)

He doesn't know how to play football. Who doesn't know how to play football?

NORA

He tried.

ANNA

He tried but it didn't work out so well. Aunt Nora, he needs to be a banker or a baker or a pizza guy; anything but a football player.

NORA

You know for a young person... you're pretty bright.

Eric and FATHER HALFDAN exit the church.

Eric holds up his new cross on a necklace to thank the priest.

The priest holds up the pagan medallion to thank Erik.

NORA

(to Erik)

You made a trade. I see.

ANNA

Aunt Nora, what if that medallion is 1000 years old? It's value!

ERIK

I regard t a *hyggelig* trade.

Raised by a single mom, Anna is focused on money, value and wealth. Erik shares everything and Nora has never been hungry.

ANNA

Whatever.

(to Nora)

He thinks he made a "nice" trade.

NORA

Out with the old and in with the new is what I say.

Nora looks at Erik's cross and smiles.

EXT. CANDY SHOPPE - CHRISTMAS MARKET - NIGHT

Eric signs the morning newspaper (with his front-page photo) with his complicated rune. The TRADER gives them all candy in exchange.

NORA

You don't have any more coins?

ERIK

It's normal.

He glances at all the men paying for the food and items sold.

ANNA

My mom never lets me eat candy.

NORA

How is it?

ANNA

It's really good.

ERIK

I loveth technology.

Erik pulls out a toothbush from his pocket. Long beat.

NORA

What? Technology?

ERIK

Some new.

(to Anna)

This is technology; it makes your teeth  
inside your head not rot and fall out.

NORA

I'm so proud of you.

Nora hugs his huge arm. Anna is impressed.

NORA

(to Anna)

Yeah? You're gonna brush your teeth later?

ANNA

Yeah.

NORA

Promise?

ANNA

Okay.

NORA

Well, I think we should go find your mom.

Nora spots a shop with hand knitted Christmas sweaters.

NORA

Take Erik and find her; I'll meet you at  
the car?

EXT. CHRISTMAS SWEATER KIASK - CHRISTMAS MARKET - NIGHT

Nora choses an awfully sentimental Christmas sweater for Erik.

WOMAN

I knew this sweater would find a home.

NORA

Size 3X.

WOMAN

That's sure a lot of man.

NORA

You're not a kidding.

Tori arrives just as she's paying for the sweater.

TORI

For Erik? Perfect. He'll love it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

Nora and Erik are shopping. Nora is walking the aisles. Erik  
wanders away to the frozen turkeys. He weighs the ten largest  
of them. Erik brings two frozen turkeys to Nora's cart for her  
approval.

NORA

Two? Wow. Okay. And you picked out the  
very largest two?

Erik happily nods.

Nora is in the flowers and picks some heather. At arm's  
length, Erik puts the heather back on the shelving.

NORA  
You're allergic?

ERIK  
Heather brings death! So if 't be true  
thee think a nice bunch of heather shall  
brighten up thy Christmas, t won't.

Nora choses a different flower bouquet.

NORA  
Will this work for you?

Erik shrugs, okay.

INT. NORA'S SPORTS CAR - MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

Nora has no clue what Erik's talking about.

ERIK  
I don't think thy king is v'ry wise. Or  
p'rhaps he's just easily bor'd and doth  
feel the need to move from one lodging to  
anoth'r.

NORA  
I'm not sure what you mean.

ERIK  
Why doesn't the king build one respectable  
castle?  
(beat)  
Or p'rhaps our king hast many mistresses  
and he doesn't wanteth them all under the  
same roof.

NORA  
(she trying very hard to understand)  
In that case a king would be very wise to  
own a few castles. But we don't really  
have kings anymore.

NORA  
They're too bawbling, easily burn'd and in  
locations castles aren't very much in  
need.



NORA

What?

ERIK

At nay point in time hast anybody ev'r did  
need to attacked 'r defend Painter's Park.

(beat)

See th're is anoth'r one.

They pass a White Castle restaurant. Erik studies it closely  
as they drive past it. Nora chuckles. The mystery of what Eric  
was so concerned about is now solved.

NORA

White Castle?

(beat)

Harold & Kumar.

ERIK

Not very military minded.

(beat)

And, what tyrant paints his castle white?  
I've nev'r seen a white castle until I  
came to Minnesota.

(beat)

If 't be true I hadn't meet thee I'd have  
sacked a few of those folk, or perhaps  
haply burn'd a few.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NORA'S SPORTS CAR - HWY 94 - MIDDLE SPUNK LAKE - DAY

ERIK

What is that?

NORA

Middle Spunk Lake.

ERIK

A building on a lake? At which month the  
snow melts 'twill drop in the lake?

NORA

No, it's ice fishing. For two or three days. So you can fish and not be cold.

ERIK

(sarcastic)

V'ry cunning, buildeth a fire in a wood house he hath built on ice. So much f'r technology.

NORA

No, it's cool... they lock themselves in there...

ERIK

And cook the fish they catch?

NORA

No. That would melt the snow.

ERIK

What do they eat?

NORA

Potato chips, root beer schnapps, granola, and sunflower seeds.

ERIK

It's not about catching fish. It's about being in a place where your wife and kids will never follow you.

INT. NORA'S SPORTS CAR - HALFWAY TO SAUK CENTRE FARM - DAY

ERIK

May I speak with thy h'rse. Her name is Power?

NORA

My horse? Alexa? Sure.

ERIK

Hey, Alexa, how can I findeth a nice pork sandwich half the way to Sauk Centre??

ALEXA

You're having a stroke. I'm calling 911.

NORA

No, don't call 911. He wants to know if we can buy a pork sandwich in St Cloud.

In the background, we hear Alexa has dialed a second telephone number. And they pass a sign: Ham Sandwiches Three for \$5. Nora pulls over and Erik exits the car and goes into the café.

ALEXA

I'm calling your mother; she has a ham in the oven. It will be done when you get there.

NORA

Cancel that call.

ALEXA

Too late; she's 2.3 meters away.

MOTHER

Hello?

NORA

Mom. I just wanted to tell you we're halfway there.

ALEXA

No, she wanted to tell...

Nora hits a button on her dash and Alexa goes silent.

NORA

Mom, you still there?

MOTHER

What?

NORA

That's just my car. Eric's hungry but he said he's waiting until we get there.

MOTHER

He likes ham?

NORA  
Loves it. Bye, mom.

Erik returns to the car with a sack of sandwiches.

INT. NORA'S SPORTS CAR - ROAD TO SAUK CENTRE FARM - DAY

Erik notices the GPS map in the car. He remembers what Sauk Centre meant to Nora.

ERIK  
Your home?

NORA  
Where I grew up. Yes.

Suddenly, Erik is worried, or even a bit terrified.

ERIK  
Your mother and father?

NORA  
Yes, but it's okay. I told them we were coming. When we bring the turkey... turkeys, Christmas will be all ready.

ERIK  
Thy entire family?

NORA  
Tori and Anna are behind us.

Erik struggles to open the glove box... inside there isn't a comb or brush. He's nearly panicked he begins to comb his Viking hair with his fingers. Nora pulls a hair brush out of her purse and he's relieved. He brushes his Viking hair. He's now content.

NORA  
I think it's adorable that you're worried. I know you're worried about fitting in with my family.

ERIK  
How big is this house?

Erik sneezes.

NORA

You're getting sick?

ERIK

The first sneeze is good, the second is lacking valor, the third represents good f'rtune (maybe a coequal in marriage), and the fourth means you're sick!

She keeps glancing over for some more sneezes. There aren't any. She pulls into the farm's drive. But then there are the second and the third sneeze (maybe a good marriage).

EXT. FARM HOUSE - SAUK CENTRE FARM - DAY

Nora's FATHER exits the house and waves at everyone. Nora's father is a 50-year-old copy of Erik (same size) - a big and strong Norwegian-American.

On the porch there is a hand-painted sign: Welcome to the Hansen Farm.

Nora pops the trunk on the car and Erik without any trouble at all, picks up two 30 lb. turkeys. He carries them like basketballs.

FATHER

Great, now we'll have three!

Erik places one turkey under the arm of his jacket. And shakes hands with Nora's father. Nora's mother arrives; she wasn't aware of Nora was bringing two extra turkeys.

Erik and Nora's father enter the house. Tori and Anna are bringing in Christmas packages.

Nora's mother gives Nora a puzzling look about the turkeys.

NORA

Mother, just don't ask. Let's just cook them and you'll see why.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM - NIGHT

Erik and Nora's father are anxious for the other's approval and sit immediately down.

FATHER  
(thick Midwestern accent)  
Did you bring some batteries?

ERIK  
Bad trees?

FATHER  
No. Batteries?

ERIK  
Big trees?

Erik crains his neck to look out a window; it's all farmland and not a decent tree in 30 miles. Erik is flustered, worried and looking about for Nora.

FATHER  
You know; batteries for the clicker?

NORA  
(from a sack in the kitchen)  
Dad, here are your batteries.

Nora hands a set of batteries to her father. It's not a great start for the future son-in-law. Nora walks behind Erik and runs her fingers the width of his shoulders.

NORA  
Christmas is a long holiday.

Nora leaves for the kitchen and Erik wishes she hadn't.

FATHER  
So how do you like Minnesota?

ERIK  
I don't speak thy language.

FATHER  
You seem to be doing okay.  
(beat)

How was the trip up? Catch some black ice?

Erik ponders it all. Ice is white. I've never seen black ice. Black ice = Black magic? Eric has no idea what Nora's father is saying so he nods often.

FATHER

I'm sorry.

ERIK

Why doth thee apologizeth f'r the weather?  
But I think a witch is NOT responsible.

FATHER

We had the worst winter on record last  
year.

ERIK

And, nay one did notice.

FATHER

No. You're right. No one ever mentioned it.

ERIK

We liveth in lands wh're humans aren't  
suppose to wend.

FATHER

It's too cold to even put the beer  
outside.

ERIK

I was invited on a church bar crawl.

FATHER

Well, that's Minnesota people.

ERIK

Here's what I learn about Minnesota people  
they're really nice until you put them  
behind the wheel of a snow plough. That's  
when they get possessed by Hel, the she  
devil, and want to kill you for fun so I'm  
running and I can hear her laughing.

FATHER

What happened?

ERIK

Well, t wast the first time I felt mine own heels...

FATHER

Your heels?

ERIK

Yes, on the back of my head.

(beat)

I fell down. Snow under my eyelids.

FATHER

Uff da.

ERIK

She stopped the plough. And yelled to me, "How ya doing out there?"

(beat)

I didn't go like...

(Erik gives the thumbs up sign)

Isn't that what you do when you survive death?

FATHER

You betcha. And then?

ERIK

She got out and helped me up. Gave me some coffee, asked me where I came from and cursed the football commissioner for 30 minutes.

FATHER

What can I say? That's Minnesota nice.

ERIK

I felt nice... to be alive. But I'm still a bit confused.

INT. KITCHEN - SAUK CENTRE FARM - DAY

Nora's MOTHER drops a plate and it shatters. Quickly before mother can sweep up the pieces, Anna is there. But instead of



throwing them away in the trash... Tori, almost immediately, brings an empty shoe box.

MOTHER

The trash is right there, dear.

ANNA

I need them for New Years.

Anna puts the pieces in the box and takes it upstairs. Mother is curious but it's Christmas and the kitchen is busy, so she lets it go. Mother is a cooking, hosting and entertaining Freya!

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM - NIGHT

The extended family is sitting around the fire, drinking hot chocolate. They are watching Farm TV, naturally. The only one really paying attention is Erik.

ERIK

(warm and with a full stomach)

I love Minnesota.

TORI

(to Nora's mother)

He means he loves your hot chocolate.

Erik is focused on the farm network.

FATHER

I think he likes farming a bit too much.

(beat)

Is he going to ask me something I'll reluctantly have to agree to?

NORA

Dad? Reluctantly?

(beat)

Dad, just agree.

Erik gets up during the commercial and leaves the room for the kitchen. Nora looks at her father for an explanation.

FATHER

During commercials he goes to check the oven. He likes turkey.

In the kitchen, Erik stares into the oven. He looks to Nora's mother, and mom smiles that it's okay. Eric gives mom the thumbs up sign.

Anna's reading from her phone. Her eyes enlarge and she's realized something to worry about.

ANNA

(to Nora)

Listen to this. A Norwegian woman should not knit a sweater for her boyfriend, because then he will leave her.

TORI

Any indication it 'll work if you knit a sweater for some guy you wish would leave?

FATHER

Maybe it depends on the sweater.

NORA

Dad, can Tori and I borrow the 4-wheel-drive tomorrow? I need to go into town.

A light bulb goes off in Tori's head, she understands the Christmas sweater for Erik may have been a mistake. She chuckles at Nora. They grin.

Eric returns from the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM - CHRISTMAS EVE - DUSK

More Farm TV.

ERIK

Father?

Nora and mother's eyes widen. Father doesn't mind it at all.

FATHER

Yes, son.

ERIK

May I borrow the tractor?

FATHER

Really? You just wanna drive it for fun?

NORA

Ya think you can?

FATHER

Sure he can.

(to Nora)

Show him where the keys are.

INT. BARN - SAUK CENTRE FARM

It's a giant tractor with a cab. Nora shows Erik the controls. Not entirely smoothly, Erik drives out of the barn and up the road to the highway. She watches for a bit but it's cold so Nora returns inside the house.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM

Father has changed the channel to a football game. The door begins to open, and father hits the "previous" on the remote and the farm channel comes back on.

NORA

Thanks for not watching football this weekend, dad.

FATHER

I guess he had his heart set on playing football?

NORA

I think we're over that, but no sense taking chances.

FATHER

No problem, child.

NORA

An ounce of prevention, dad.

FATHER

I understand, girl. Before you were born,  
I wanted to raise hogs, until they got out  
and ate the neighbor's corn and another  
neighbor's soybeans and probably their  
cat. But I learned.

Father glances at the door and changes back to the football  
game.

FATHER

You'll give me the heads up when he's  
coming back, and I'll change the channel.

NORA

Love you, dad.

FATHER

Love you too.  
(beat)  
Everything okay, out there?

NORA

I'm sure he'll just drive up to the  
highway and back.

FATHER

Well, get ready for church. We'll leave  
when he gets back.

INT. 4-WHEEL-DRIVE FARM TRUCK - SAUK CENTRE - NIGHT

Mother, Nora, Father, Tori and Anna are driving toward Sauk  
Centre looking down each farm to market road.

MOTHER

Where in the world did he get to?

FATHER

He could be in Canada by now?

Then in the city, they drive slowly and look down each side  
street.

EXT. CHURCH - SAUK CENTRE - NIGHT

In the church parking lot, they find the tractor oddly parked. But the family is relieved that they've found Erik.

INT. CHURCH - SAUK CENTRE

Nora turns off her phone. It's the children's program. There is a nativity scene set up and everyone is ready for the Christmas play. The children are all nervous waiting. Erik is sitting in a row calmly waiting for it to begin. The family fill the row next to Erik, who is very happy to see them. Erik gestures to all the icons, on the alter and at the stained glass window. Mother Mary is missing.

ERIK

(leaning over to whisper to Nora)  
Where is the mother of Jesus?

NORA

(gesturing to the choir loft)  
Uh, I think she's the tall girl on the end.

The three wisemen stand in the choir loft and a light falls on them. And then the angel stands. The wisemen shiver in fear.

Erik loves the story and he must share it with someone. He leans over and whispers to Nora again

ERIK

(in medieval Norwegian)  
Those art the three wisemen. And yond is the angel inf'rmng them about the location of baby Jesus.

Nora can't help but grin and she nods. He takes her hand.

NARRATOR

The angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel drops her arms and the three wisemen stop shivering.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM - LATER CHRISTMAS EVE

Tori and Nora's mother bring cookies and milk and it's put out for the night's visitor. Nora and Erik are holding hands and he is watching Farm TV, but the cookies interest him.

ERIK

Lucky Oden.

NORA

Lucky Santa.

FATHER

Lucky me!

(Anna might still believe in Santa)

Oh, uh. Lucky, Santa.

Erik studies the goodies... and then goes to the kitchen. He brings back a small single serving of butter.

ERIK

Without the butter, the farm will not thrive.

Everyone looks at Anna, but she can only shrug. Anna looks at Nora for guidance. Nora looks back positively, signaling Anna in a way girlfriends garner support.

ANNA

Oh, yea. Sure. Gotta have the butter. It's a Viking thing... or so I'm told.

NORA

Yes. It is. Well done, Erik.

Nora's mother brings everyone a slice of Christmas cake. As she hands Erik his cake, the slice falls over. Erik reacts badly but then shows his stubborn side.

ERIK

I WILL be married.

Everyone is puzzled trying to figure this one out...

FATHER

Is that a proposal, son? Cause let me give you some advice...

ANNA

Apparently, if someone cuts a cake and the slice falls to the side as you accept it, you'll never be married.

NORA

I'm sure glad you're here to explain things.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DARK HOUSE - SAUK CENTRE FARM - VERY LATE NIGHT

All through the house not a creature is stirring... except Nora, who can't sleep. She sneaks down the hall to Erik's assigned bedroom and he's not there. She's furious for a short moment and she opens Tori and Anna's door. Mother and daughter are sound asleep. Tori is a beautiful woman, but she snores like a John Deere tractor.

Nora searches the entire house. The television is on, tuned to the farm channel, but Erik cannot be found.

Nora puts on her shoes and heavy coat. She walks outside. She walks all around the house and then she walks to the giant barn.

INT. THE BARN - SAUK CENTRE FARM - VERY LATE NIGHT

Minnesota farmers are the most organized and neat farmers on the planet. Everything is easily found, polished, and laid out perfectly. In the barn, there are three smaller rooms - one for mechanical tools, one for wood tools, and one for garden tools.

Nora opens the door of the machine shop and turns on the light. Erik is not there but she spots a project on a work table. It's looks list someone is building something out of aluminum triangles. There is styrofoam and glue and metal rivets. And there is a bicycle helmet there; perhaps it's a pattern. Nora turns off the lights and leaves.

She opens the wood shop door, and turns on the light. No one is there.

Nora opens the garden room door, and the light is already on. Erik is sitting in a chair, in awe of the hundreds of packages of seed.

NORA

They're heirloom. They'll come up...

ERIK

And keep coming up? Next year and the year after that?

NORA

Yes. You know about the seed companies?

ERIK

And their villainous sorcery. Yes. They extract payment each year. It's a sin.

She moves very close to Erik.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM - CHRISTMAS DAY

Everyone is arriving at the table for Christmas dinner. Nora's father is wearing the famous hand knitted Christmas sweater that was originally bought for Erik. Erik is wearing a nice new suit and Christmas tie. They both look entirely proud.

NORA

Well, look at you, dad.

FATHER

Thank you, daughter, for the sweater.

MOTHER

It looks hand knitted.

NORA

It was.

MOTHER

And look at you, Erik. How nice you look.



TORI  
(winking at Nora)  
Yes, you do look very handsome.

Erik reaches for Nora's hand at the table.

ERIK  
Thank you. I feel like I might buy some  
corn in these clothes.

Midway through the meal...

MOTHER  
So, Erik what's in your future?

ERIK  
Your daughter; I believe our fates are  
entwined.

Everyone thinks that's marvelous and romantic. Erik takes it  
as a fear of tempting fate. So he knocks three times under the  
table.

ERIK  
(one number per knock)  
Seven. Nine. Thirteen.

There is an odd silence.

FATHER  
My grandfather used to do that. He said  
the numbers were a way to "play it safe."  
I'm sure he brought that with him from the  
old country.

Erik points to father and confirms the origin or the  
superstition.

ERIK  
Mine own grandfath'r as well. That gent  
said, "seven is lucky, th're art nine  
N'rse w'rlds, and thirteen is unlucky." It  
puts N'ra and I in balance then  
ev'rywh're. We should be togeth'r in  
whatev'r w'rd.

Again, everyone believes that Erik is marvelous and romantic.

EXT. HALLWAY - SAUK CENTRE FARM - BOXING DAY

NORA

You had better start saying, "goodbye."

TORI

Long goodbyes?

NORA

You better. I'm sorry. It's just that it's winter and Christmas is over. Mom and Dad need something to do.

TORI

Well, it is so rude to say, "we got to go," and bolt out the door.

NORA

Let's see its around 1:30 and you said you need to be on the road by 2:00.

TORI

Maybe I'll have a final cup of coffee before going.

BEGIN LONG GOODBYE MONTAGE:

Before she's off she needs to turn down additional food politely about three more times. Cover the kids next week's sports and talk about the weather so there aren't any surprises.

TORI

(to mother in the kitchen)

A sandwich before I go? I can't... Tots? I love them, but I'm still full from lunch... Oh, more pie? No, I just can't.

TORI

(to father in the family room)

Anna? She has a basketball game... YMCA... Tuesday and Thursday... She plays shooting guard... They're the Boll Weevils... Odd name

for a basketball team, I know... But she loves it... A scholarship? I hope.

TORI

(to mother in the kitchen)  
Leftovers? Here let me help you... Oh, I don't want to take your Tupperware... Okay, I can give them to Nora?

TORI

(to father in the family room)  
Mr. Hansen, what's the weather look like out there? That cold huh? Well, it could be worse... Black ice... I'll be careful.

END LONG GOODBYE MONTAGE:

Tori and Anna reach their car, loading it with tons of new clothes and food. And they have a final chat. There is a bicycle and Anna is wearing homemade bicycle helmet. Inside looks like a store-bought helmet but the outside is reinforced with aluminum so that it looks like a Viking helmet.

Erik and Father notice the helmet and glance at each other. Perhaps they've built the helmet together, in the metal shop out in the barn. It's not entirely explained. Perhaps Santa/Oden left it for Anna under the tree.

It's cold but father and mother are out in the drive to say goodbye to Tori and Anna. Also helping load the car are Nora and Erik.

TORI

I wish I could stay but work...

MOTHER AND FATHER

(to Anna)  
We've been meaning to get into town to see you play basketball.

TORI

Well, come on. I left a schedule on your refrigerator.

NORA

We loved having you.

Hugs all around.

Anna hands Nora the shoebox with the broken plate. Anna whispers in Nora's ear. Nora nods that she understands. She winks at Anna.

Father is busy checking oil, water and the inflation on Tori's car tires. He smiles and gives her the okay.

NORA

Looks good.

TORI

Thanks, dad.

(beat)

Thanks, for the leftovers, mom.

(beat)

We're gonna go now.

Tori looks at the clock on her car dash. It's 2:10 pm.

FATHER AND MOTHER

Bye.

TORI

Thanks for the wonderful Christmas.

Tori and Anna get in their car. Both Tori and Anna wave from the moment they put their car into drive until we can no longer see the house. Mom, Dad, Erik and Nora wave until they can no longer see the car.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM - NEW YEAR'S DAY

Father and Nora are watching the Rose Bowl Parade. Sleepily Erik comes downstairs. He looks marvelling at what is on the television.

FATHER AND MOTHER

Happy New Years.

Erik remembers the custom and opens the front door. He looks down and there ARE broken dishes on the porch. Erik is delighted. Nora brings him the shoe box and he places the pieces carefully inside. Out of sight, they have a very long

passionate kiss for good luck. He and Nora return to the family room.

NORA

People save old and broken dishes throughout the year to be thrown at their friends and families doors on New Year's Eve.

ERIK

It's thought good luck.

MOTHER

I don't think we do that here.

FATHER

Good way to get shot-gunned around here.

NORA

Mom, I think we that here too. For good luck.

MOTHER

Oh. I see.

Mother glances at Erik. She speaks to her daughter.

MOTHER

Who taught you to be so clever, dear?

SUPER: One year later...

EXT. CAMP VAERNES - NORWAY - NOVEMBER, ONE YEAR LATER

Norwegian television...

NORWEGIAN REPORTER

Minnesota National Guard Soldiers took part in a flag ceremony immediately after arriving in Norway yesterday. And here is some footage of our American guests deboarding the plane that brought them here for winter training. The Norway-Minnesota Exchange program allows for both armies to learn from their counterparts in an environment not unlike home.

Eric is in full National Guard battle dress. He debarks an American C-17, smiles and waves cheerfully to the camera. Without stopping in perfect modern English he says...

ERIK

Hello, Nora. Mother. Father. I'll be back soon.

NORWEGIAN REPORTER

During the Minnesota Guards' stay in Norway, they will be receiving winter training such as skiing techniques, avalanche training, food/emergency food rationing, bivouac routines, digging snow caves and how to build and light a fire.

The gates of the camp are opened and Eric (with a huge backpack) runs out. At least 100 other soldiers, both Minnesotan and Norwegian watch him. They study him as he disappears in the forest.

NORWEGIAN REPORTER

All the soldiers will be given the opportunity to participate in a "lost weekend." This is a special war game where the most physically fit and survival savvy soldier is given an hour's time to disappear. Then the remaining soldiers must track him in winter conditions.

From the trees Erik looks back at the camp and his pursuers.

NORWEGIAN REPORTER

There is no doubt that the 40th Annual Norway-Minnesota Exchange will probably create memories and friendships that none of the participants will soon forget.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NORWEGIAN FOREST - DAY

It's a foggy day in November. It's a chase and Erik is nearly captured. The lieutenant stops to look at a map.

LIEUTENANT

(into radio)

We almost have our rabbit. There's nothing ahead of him but a ghost town; the map says it's an old Viking village. Nowhere to run. He's cornered.

The lieutenant signals to continue the search. They are using military tracking dogs, but Erik has a medieval looking jug (eternally glowing green). He takes it from his backpack and takes what seems to be the second to the last swig. He sloshes it back and forth. There seems to be only a bit remaining.

The fog in front of him turns green and Erik disappears into it. When the dogs reach the fog, they lose the scent. Erik escapes back into the 10th-century.

EXT. VIKING VILLAGE - NJARDARHEIMR - 981 CE

The Viking men seem to be out at sea, but Erik finds the English girl, in his old home. It has Erik's *futhark* on the door still.

ERIK

You don't look so great.

ERICDATTER

I'll survive.

ERIK

Any word from your family in England?

ERICDATTER

Nay, and a bacon's chance I'll ev'r be returned.

ERIK

I'm sorry.

(but)

But I brought you something.

He dumps out his military backpack on a table. It's seeds, thousands of seeds. And more than a few saplings.

ERIK

The Americans call them heirloom seeds.  
And also, there are saplings, grapes,  
apples, berries, etc.

Erik plants the saplings inside the house, relatively far from  
the fireplace.

ERIK

Move them outside in the spring and this  
village will never go hungry. The  
Minnesotans know what they are doing.

She nods.

ERICDATTER

Minnesotans?

From the pile of seeds Eric pulls out a book and a globe.

She takes the book from Erik and opens it.

ERICDATTER

(she sounds out the letters)  
Modern agricultural techniques.

ERIK

That's right.

ERICDATTER

What s'rt of drawings...

ERIK

Pictures they call them. It shows  
everything.

ERICDATTER

I can maketh out some w'rds, but not all.

ERIK

It's the language of the future.

She picks up the six-inch toy globe, the type they sell for \$5  
in a toy store.



ERIK

(gesturing to the globe)

Girl, you can do what you want, but... I wouldn't marry any fellow, unless they're interested in this. This toy is your dowry.

ERICDATTER

A dowry? For a poor girl like me? Thanks be!

ERIK

Don't just give this map away or let someone take it from you.

ERICDATTER

There is a Viking boy I liketh.

ERIK

Which one?

ERICDATTER

Leif.

ERIK

Really? He's my cousin.

(beat)

I'm not your true father, but you should hold off on marriage for a while.

ERICDATTER

At which day doth thee think I will have thy p'rmission??

ERIK

Maybe when you're thirty-four years?

ERICDATTER

Haha. V'ry comical.

ERIK

(gesturing to the globe)

Leif will know what to do with it when he's older. You have my permission as soon as he works up the courage to broach the subject.

ERICDATTER  
Grant you mercy, father.

ERIK  
Did you just call me...

ERICDATTER  
Thank thee f'r the book and map. I'll  
protect these well.

ERIK  
(pointing tiny spots on the globe)  
England, Greenland. Newfoundland.  
Minnesota.  
(beat)  
I have to go back.

ERICDATTER  
No, please stay.

ERIK  
I need you to stay and look after Leif and  
this house. Please.

ERICDATTER  
You can help me do that. Stay.

ERIK  
I'm married and she's waiting.

ERICDATTER  
Really? Well. That's good.  
(beat)  
Thank you.

Erik leaves the village and when he reaches the trees, he takes the last swig from the jug and throws it down. He looks back into the village and spots Ericdatter and the seiðkona. Ericdatter waves. Erik waves at them and steps into the green fog toward the 21st-century.

EXT. NORWEGIAN FOREST - DAY - 2024 CE

The training exercise grinds to a halt. Everyone is dismayed. The dogs are confused.

LIEUTENANT  
(into the radio)  
I don't get it. He's gone.  
(beat)  
Proceeding into the village.

EXT. VIKING VILLAGE - NJARDARHEIMR - DAY

As the National Guard soldiers enter the ghost village, they find nothing but a village for cruise ships and other tourists. It's closed for the winter. However, behind the search party, we see Erik just emerging from the forest and a greenish fog. He ducks back into a gray fog.

INT. OFFICE SUITE - AGRI-BUSINESS - DAY

Several high-ranking Minnesota NATIONAL GUARD OFFICERS inquire at the receptionist and are pointed to Nora's office.

In Nora's office and on her desk are several photos of Erik. One photo is their wedding portrait. Another of Erik driving a big green combine at harvest time. The final photo we see is of Erik in his Minnesota National Guard gear.

The guard officers arrive and close the door behind them.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

NEWS ANCHOR  
A Minnesota national guardsman is feared missing on a training mission in Norway. It's the largest search and rescue mission in the history of Norway. Perhaps you remember Erik Ericson, who played exactly one down for the Minnesota Norsemen last season before joining the National Guard.  
(beat)  
Corporal Ericson was chosen to lead a winter survival training exercise and is feared lost in a sub-freezing winter storm. Our well wishes go out to his friends and family as the search continues.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SAUK CENTRE FARM - DAY

Nora's mother and father are watching the newscast. Mother looks worried. Nora is there, but she's just looking out the window at three feet of snow and ice. The wind is at 30 knots.

FATHER

He'll be alright.

(beat)

He's making sport of them all, both armies. He'll be back when he gets hungry.

There isn't a reaction from the women. The women aren't panicked, and they aren't calm either. They suspect Erik's always been a real Viking, or perhaps it's the midwestern stoicism.

Make this movie!!! Culture clash and it's MAGICAL REALISM, a different Christmas romance.

EXT. CAMP VAERNES - NORWAY - DAY - TWO WEEKS LATER

Norwegian television...

ERIK

Well, no one told me when to emerge from the forest.

REPORTER

What did they tell you?

ERIK

They told me to disappear, and they said, "don't worry; we'll come find you."

REPORTER

And they never found you?

ERIK

I waited and waited. No one came.

REPORTER

Your survival. What an extraordinary story!

ERIK

No, it's normal. I have Viking blood you know.

REPORTER

I'm told you actually gained weight. You went into the forest weighing 280 and now you are over 290.

ERIK

Yes.

REPORTER

How did you manage not only to survive but thrive?

ERIK

Training. Guard training, ma'am.

REPORTER

What did you eat?

ERIK

It's amazingly cold but there are wild turkeys here, same as in Minnesota.

REPORTER

Are either easier or more difficult to catch?

ERIK

I don't know; both turkeys are a bit dumb.

REPORTER

You speak fluent Norwegian.

ERIK

I grew up here.

REPORTER

And how did you come to join the Minnesota national guard?

ERIK

I met a pretty girl in Minnesota, of course.

REPORTER

Isn't that what always happens?

ERIK

But for me it was like a Hallmark movie.

REPORTER

It was a Christmas romance?

ERIK

It happened to me and I was like, haven't  
I seen this on television before?

INT. AIRPORT - MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

Traditional airport greeting for a soldier return from overseas deployment. Nora (wife) is waiting. Nora's mother, father, Tori and Anna are there. But for Erik there are also a dozen football fans, three journalists and three cameramen. Only three groupies want a selfie with him.

Erik emerges from the gate in his fatigues. Nora runs and hugs him. The family, friends and fans applaud.

NORA

You had us all worried sick.

(beat)

What were you doing?

Erik shrugs. Nora hugs him tightly.

ERIK

Running around in the forest trying to  
stay warm, of course.

NORA

My gosh, you've gotten fat.

She pokes him in the stomach with her forefinger.

At the same time Erik arrives, the Norsemen are leaving for an away game. The team is walking through the terminal. Many of the players come over and hug Erik. It's almost a one-year reunion.

PLAYER

Suit up and come with us.

ERIK

Oh, I would love to.

(beat)

But I'm a farmer now.

REPORTER

How do you like that?

ERIK

It's frankly, better for me.

Erik hugs Nora and pulls her in front of the camera. He gives her a married-type kiss.

ROLL CREDITS

FADE OUT