

A Conversation

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A Conversation

by [stingingcake](#)

Summary

Thorfinn and Gudrid have an awkward conversation, and then reflect.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Thorfinn

Thorfinn had his eyebrows furrowed either in great thought or confusion. It was an expression Einar had seen on his friend's face before, but never with what looked like a blush.

Einar smiled in greeting, but Thorfinn only made brief eye contact before staring off into the setting sun.

“You look like someone with something on your mind.” Einar said, joining him in looking over the water.

Thorfinn muttered something that sounded like ‘more like someone’ before freezing in realization.

No, it couldn’t be... Could Thorfinn have finally-

“Einar, back on Ketil’s farm... The reason you acted so... strangely sometimes was because you were in love, right?” Thorfinn asked, “She made you feel things, and those things made you act weird.”

“That’s a strange way to put it.” Einar said, sobered by the thought of Arnheid. It may have been a while ago, but dreams of a future with her, no matter how impossible, made the toughest days livable. “And it's rather insensitive of you to bring her up you know.” He wasn’t actually all that upset, but Thorfinn needed to learn some semblance of how to talk to people.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to-”

“But if my dear friend finally wants to talk about women,” Einar said cutting his friend some slack, “How could I possibly refuse.”

After a few moments Thorfinn said, “So?”

“So what?” Einar asked before remembering his oddly worded question, “I acted that way because of her, yes.”

“Why?”

“What do you mean why? Because I loved her.”

Thorfinn furrowed his brow, “But my mom and dad loved each other and they never-”

“That’s because they were married.”

“So?”

“So what?” The gaps in Thorfinn’s knowledge about life always struck Einar as either amusing at the best of times, or borderline annoying at other times.

“How does marriage change things?”

“Once you’ve had kids together, you don’t get all excited the same way.”

“Kids?”

“You do know how babies are made, right?” Einar challenged.

Thorfinn turned red, “Yes. I know that. So why does-”

“Okay so before we keep playing the question game,” Einar said, “There are two women on board and I’m assuming it’s not the one who keeps threatening to kill you.”

Thorfinn groaned and lowered his forehead to the rail. “I was just talking to her and all of the sudden everything changed.”

“Just like,” Einar snapped his fingers in clarification.

“Yes.”

“Wait, and how do you mean, ‘everything changed’?”

“Just that, I just realized how pretty she is and wanted to touch her.” Realizing his words, Thorfinn tried to back up, “Not in a weird way- but like-”

“You don’t need to explain yourself.” Einar said. “But it is kind of weird for this happen so late.”

“For what to have happened?”

“This! Your affinity towards women.”

“I mean, I never disliked them.” Thorfinn argued, lifting his head.

“But you never really liked them.” Einar thought back, “By the time I was 14 I was thoroughly distracted.”

“I guess in those terms, when I was 14 all I worried about was killing-” Thorfinn clammed up, “All I thought about was revenge. I wasn’t interested in much else.”

“That makes sense.” Einar said. “And you’re lucky it’s Gudrid.”

“Why’s that?” Thorfinn asked, unconsciously perking up at the mention of her name.

“I’m pretty sure she’s inclined to you as well.”

“She is!?” Thorfinn exclaimed shooting up from his slouched position. “I mean,” He said quieter, “She is?”

“Pretty sure, yeah.”

“So what am I supposed to do now?” Thorfinn pondered, “I said I wasn’t a bride thief, but here I am.”

“I’m sure at this point Sigurd wouldn’t mind.”

“I don’t know anything about courting, Einar, you should know that, what am I supposed to do?” Thorfinn asked, “I mean I’m no good at poetry, and what else is there? I can’t imagine her family will be pleased.”

“Well she likes you are the way to you are now, so maybe just keep doing that.” Einar smiled, “And Leif’s her family and he likes you well enough. Just don’t do anything stupid.” He added.

“Oh, if that’s all.” A smile found its way to Thorfinn’s lips as well.

“By the way, what were you two talking about?”

“Oh, ya’ know, marriage.”

The Conversation

They were attempting to mend an extra sail, Gudrid doing marginally better at the task despite her dislike of needle work, and Thorfinn doing his best. After toiling for the lesser part of an hour, the pair took an impromptu break.

“You’re not bad at that.” Gudrid commented, lightly tracing her fingertips over his uneven stitching. “You’ve mended things before.”

“I may have not done much of worth when I was younger, but it wasn’t like I had a lot of extra money for clothes.” Thorfinn responded, embarrassed of his younger self. “I didn’t care much what I looked like, but in the winter you really started to notice holes in things.”

“I never had much patience for it myself.” Gudrid admitted. “Patching things up, that’s necessary, and making new clothes is important to, but I was never good at it.” She let out a sigh, “I was never able to get it to look pretty.”

“I mean it’s not coming apart, is it?” Thorfinn asked, tugging slightly at the seams, “I’d say that’s the most important part, not how it looks.”

It started with a little talk, and after a while it turned into something a little closer to home.

“Too be honest,” Thorfinn was saying, “I still find it hard to imagine that you’ve been married twice. I mean, you’re younger than me.”

“Yeah,” Gudrid huffed, “I guess that just proves how different men and women are. I’m sure if you needed to secure an alliance, or trade routes, or property it would’ve happened already.”

“That’s probably true.” Thorfinn conceded. “All my family has to offer are some sheep and a closet full of skeletons.” He thought about it for a moment, “Actually, I think my parents were some sort of nobility, but since my dad faked his death, and-” Thorfinn stopped himself from going any further down memory lane. He was trying to be light hearted, but the thought of his father always weighed heavy in his heart. “Well, I guess all of that hardly matters now.”

“You know,” Gudrid said, realizing how the mood had shifted down, “I think being no one is sometimes better than being someone.”

“And why's that?” He found himself asking.

“It means you have some choice because your choices only affect you. Your marriage is because you want to get married, and you have some choice as to who. I think you being a man must also factor in.”

“And you’re a runaway bride, on a merchant ship, with an ex-mercenary. Gudrid, as long as you’re with us you can make your own choices.”

“If that’s true than I think I’ll never get married.” Gudrid declared, “What about you?”

An uncomfortable smile made its way to his face, “I never really thought about it until my sister mentioned it. I guess I might if I meet the right person. And If you could choose who,” He shot back, “Why wouldn’t you?”

“Now that I’ve had my taste of adventure I don’t want to go back.” Gudrid said, “And what husband would ever let his wife go sailing?”

“I know my mother never had any wanderlust, but the biggest reason my father wouldn’t want her to travel, the reason he didn’t want me to come with in the first place, was that it’s dangerous and he wanted to protect the ones he cared about.”

“I...see.” Gudrid said, trying to not let her disappointment show despite herself. What he said wasn’t untrue, but-

“I wasn’t finished,” Thorfinn laughed gently, “I was just thinking that if a husband cared for his wife that much, I’d think I’d want to be around her as much as possible, and if she wanted to travel then that would just be another perk.” He stroked his chin as a thought came to him, “Although we’d have to be careful not to be too distracted in each other or else it’d just be a hindrance again... so maybe- but if the whole point was safety, I’ve attacked enough ports to know that they aren’t necessarily safe- I mean-” He blushed at the confession. He knew she knew some of his past, but he didn’t want to scare her. Without thinking much about the words coming out of his mouth, more preoccupied with what he just said moments ago, Thorfinn continued, “I think the safest place would be with me, since I could protect you.”

Realizing what he just said, Thorfinn corrected himself, “At least, hypothetically.” He was blushing for a whole other reason now.

When Gudrid didn’t answer, Thorfinn looked up from unconsciously averting his eyes to her. He was not prepared for what happened next.

She was watching him with wide eyes, face rosier than normal. Her dark hair shone with a brilliance he hadn’t noticed before and the short strands fluttered almost delicately in the breeze. In fact Thorfinn was noticing a lot of things he hadn’t, like how pretty she was, and how much he liked to be around her, and how-

They had drifted much closer over the course of the conversation and now he was leaning in ever so slightly, not much since he wasn’t all that much taller than her. She tilted her face up, eyes drifting close- and something was about to happen, something important. He couldn’t tell what yet, but he didn’t much care, and let the moment sweep him away.

Suddenly the boat lurched, causing Gudrid to accidentally head butt him in the mouth and for Thorfinn to fall backwards onto the floor. Gudrid landed unceremoniously on top of him. Unconsciously he had grabbed her forearm (for his sake or hers he had no idea), which he let go of quickly.

“Sorry.” She said immediately, pushing on his chest to sit up slightly.

“No problem.” Thorfinn said, sitting up and feeling where she’d hit him. He could taste a little blood in his mouth, but after inspecting it with his tongue, Thorfinn could tell it was just a small cut on the inside of his lip. And apparently a small bruise on the outside.

Looking up at her, Gudrid was gingerly feeling her head. There was a small bruise off center of her forehead, her bangs covered it for the most part. She looked down and gently pressed her thumb to his bruise lip.

The touch surprised him. For multiple reasons, one of which being how nice it felt. And why was that the first thought to jump into his head?

“Are you okay?” They both asked at the same time, “I’m fine.” They said together again.

The pair burst into laughter and then sobered up almost immediately because Gudrid was practically sitting in his lap still.

“Sorry, I have to- um-” Gudrid said, obviously flustered. She stood up hurriedly. “-Go.” She finished lamely.

“Yeah,” Thorfinn said, lying as well, “Me too.”

He stood up and there was a moment of confusion as they almost ran into each other again. Stepping to the same side to go past each other, and then the other, Thorfinn finally put his hands on her shoulders to keep her in place and stepped to the side of her.

They both wanted to say something, but neither knew what, so they went off, trying to process what (almost) just happened.

Gudrid

“Hild, do you think Thorfinn is handsome?” Gudrid asked as nonchalantly as she could.

“Wide-eyes?” Hild asked, having a feeling it wasn’t. Please, she thought, let it be Wide-eyes.

“I mean in an unique way, I suppose-”

“No!” Gudrid exclaimed, “Um- I mean you’re not wrong, but I was thinking-”

“No.” Hild responded coldly. “If you mean the man that killed my father, than he could be the prettiest man alive and I would still only see the ugliness of his soul.”

“I don’t really think he’s all that pretty, more of a rugged good looks sort of thing going for him.” Gudrid said, conveniently missing the point either on purpose or not. “But I do suppose his eyes could be considered pretty.”

“Don’t go falling for him.” Hild warned. As much as she hated Thorfinn, she really didn’t mind the rest. Hild could tell that Gudrid really hadn’t seen his bad side yet, the side he claimed to be trying to atone for. The normal everyday him wasn’t so bad, but she had seen cracks, and everyone knew scars tended to reopen.

“Psh-” Gudrid waved her off, “As if.” But her cheeks were growing red. She started to fidget.

“I thought you didn’t want to get married.” Hild said, “You did run away from one.”

“It’s not that I never want to get married.” Gudrid corrected, “I just, I want to sail. Most husbands wouldn’t let me do that.”

“Most.” Hild noticed, “You think he would be different.”

“I- I have no idea what you mean.” Gudrid turned around arms crossed.

It was like pulling teeth with her. “You think Thorfinn would let you keep adventuring even after you married. You think he’s different.”

“He is different than most men.”

“We finally agree on something.” Hild muttered.

“And he would.” Gudrid declared, “He said so himself.”

Hild blinked, “He asked you to marry him?”

“What?” Gudrid exclaimed, “No, no, he just- hypothetically if we were married, he said if he had a wife who wanted to go with him he would want her to come with him.” She said in one breath. Gudrid looked down, “I’ve never had someone say something like that to me.”

Seeing her vulnerability, Hild couldn't help but relent. Gudrid wasn't stupid, and if Thorfinn really was repenting, well it would do him good to have a woman like her by his side. So despite herself, Hild found herself relenting.

"If what you say is true." Hild said, "And if he wasn't the man who murdered my father... then I would say..." She forced the words out, "He is not ugly."

Gudrid's face lit up in delight.

Another Conversation (about babies this time)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“He’s getting so big.” Thorfinn said, sitting down beside Gudrid as she fed Karli.

“Babies grow really fast.” Gudrid answered, “My mom said they were like grass.”

He lifted an eyebrow in confusion.

“You could practically watch them grow.” She explained.

“When do you think he’ll be able to actually do stuff?” Thorfinn asked, petting the dog.

“Stuff?”

“Like walk and talk, stuff like that.”

“I don’t know.” She smiled, “You should ask Hild, she knows a lot about a lot of things.”

“I mean, I would but...” Thorfinn looked across the boat to where Hild was oiling down parts of her crossbow. “I don’t think it would please her.”

“Probably not.” Gudrid agreed with a giggle.

“Why’d you suggest it then?” He asked incredulously.

She shrugged, “I’m sure if she actually got to know you she’s stop threatening to kill you. It’s like, baby steps.”

Her bright opinion of him and her blushing cheeks made him blush as well. What little ego he had left was undeserving of the praise, but that didn’t stop it from feeling good.

“No, she’s fair.” He sat back, “I understand how she feels, I just hope she doesn’t have to go through what I did to fix it.”

Karli spit out his food, which Gudrid spooned back into his mouth.

“Don’t spit it up, little guy, you need it,” She glanced at Thorfinn, “So you don’t stay short like Thorfinn.”

“What’re you saying that for?” Thorfinn argued, albeit with a grin. “I’m taller than you.”

“I’m a woman, and we’re near the same height.”

Truthfully, he didn’t care about his height much, but he was taller than Gudrid. Probably. “So what that you’re a woman, what’s that got to do with anything? I’m still taller than you.”

“You know, we could just stand up and solve this once and for all?”

“We could...” But Karli’s Momma had laid it’s head in Thorfinn’s lap, “But I have to pet Karli’s Momma and you have to feed Karli.”

“I say we switch; he wants nothing to do with me.”

Karli was starting to fuss.

“Hand him over.” Thorfinn smiled good naturedly. He really didn’t know much about babies, but he was trying to learn. What he did know was that Karli was really cute in a pudgy way. Different of course from how Gudrid was cute, but-

Gudrid seemed surprised at how easily he relented. “You really like him.” She stated, handing him the squirming baby.

Thorfinn shrugged, “I guess.” He then started that task of trying to feed Karli. “C’mon bud, you really do need to eat.”

...

Gudrid felt like her heart was about to burst. There was something about Thorfinn taking care of Karli that made him extremely attractive to her. Not many men would step up to a task that was so ‘womanly.’ And sure the other crew members helped out to and were men, but she didn’t have crushes on them!

It also made her wonder how he would treat their- his kids. He was a bit of a kid in some ways that made her think he probably had some growing up before they- he even thought about children.

Oh who was she kidding, she was totally imagining her future with him, and in that case, she probably needed some time before she wanted kids. It was a ‘someday’ goal for sure. Maybe at their colony, that might be the perfect time to settle down (quite literally in their case.)

She wasn’t sure how many kids she wanted, and that wasn’t exactly one could control once married. Well, she thought, not without sacrificing martial duties. But two seemed like a good number. Maybe three. She also wasn’t sure if she wanted a boy or girl. She wasn’t sure she could raise a conventional girl considering herself, but she did know a bit more about girls from being one. However, her daughter could potentially be sold into a marriage like she was, not that Thorfinn or her would allow that, but anything could happen. Gudrid didn’t know as much about boys, but they did have a bit more freedom. While pondering this, Gudrid hadn’t realized she started to stare dreamily on Thorfinn and Karli.

“Midgard to Gudrid.” Thorfinn said, breaking Gudrid out of her thoughts.

“What?”

“You were spacing out something bad.” Thorfinn said, eyebrows knitting in concern, “Is everything alright?”

“Would you rather have a son or daughter?” She asked, surprising both Thorfinn and herself. Gudrid blushed, “I mean, uh- never mind.”

She was seriously embarrassed; what if he figured out what she was thinking about?! It was one thing to flirt, and bring up hypothetical marriages, it was another to plan a whole future!

To her surprise he just chuckled.

“I honestly don’t know.” He answered. “I’ve never put much thought into those sorts of things.”

Of course he didn’t.

“And it’s not the sort of thing that you can control, is it?”

“I’ve heard some things...” Gudrid blushed again, recalling the ‘positions’ that supposedly would produce a male heir. “But I don’t think they’re very true.”

He pushed another spoonful of porridge into Karli’s mouth, who was still trying to spit up everything.

“So what about you?” He asked, not looking up from his task.

“Me?”

“Do you have a preference?”

“I don’t think so.” She answered, “And you made a good point; you can’t exactly decide these types of things.”

After a moment of quiet, Thorfinn said, “My sister has like three kids now. She even told me I was a bit old to be unmarried. Isn’t that a strange thought?”

“Yeah...”

“Uh, Gudrid...” Thorfinn started, the hint of a blush in his cheeks, “Do girls think more about this sort of thing more often or...”

Gudrid was confused at his embarrassment until she realized he was wondering if this was another form of his ‘hollowness.’ Then she felt a strong urge to wrap her arms around him and reassure the fool, but she restrained herself.

“I guess so. Men probably think about their legacy, which would probably include children, but there’s not as much of an emphasis like for women.”

He seemed relieved. “I don’t really know how that aspect of my life looks. My sister suggested I get married into a fisherman’s family, but I have to get to Vinland and establish the colony.”

“So you don’t want to get married because it would distract from getting to Vinland?” Gudrid asked, feeling her heart involuntarily drop.

“Not exactly, just that, I don’t really know how to go about it. Do you?”

Hela yes, if she had anything to do with it.

“I have an idea.” She admitted.

“So I changed your mind about never marrying again?”

Oh did he. Did he even know what he was doing? How did she know more about these things than him, when he was a few years older than her and had traveled!

“Perhaps.” She answered half truthfully. Ultimately she had changed her own mind, but he had got the ball rolling.

...

Internally, Thorfinn was freaking out.

Okay, just because she was open to the idea of getting married didn’t mean she would necessarily want to marry him. But it was more information than yesterday. Yeah. He was so good at wooing.

Well, no. He wasn’t. But she knew that now, so maybe she could pick up his slack. Except she was a woman, so he was supposed to do the work, right? Maybe he should just hint that he really wouldn’t mind a more masculine woman who liked flirting with him, sailing and wanted to go to Vinland! Yeah, that seemed like a good idea, then she would know it was her that he liked!

Except... He was pretty sure calling a woman masculine under any circumstances was an insult. Darn, why was this so hard?

“Perhaps?” He insisted, enjoying talking to her, even if he was bad at flirting.

“Well you yourself said you weren’t sure you would get married.” She shot back.

“Got me.” Thorfinn said. He went to continue feeding Karli, pleased to note the bowl was over half empty and most of it had gotten into the baby’s stomach and not on his clothes. As it was, Karli’s momma was licking at some porridge had gotten on him.

“Babies are a lot of work though.” Gudrid said with a huff, “You think newborns are worse or easier?”

“Maybe a bit easier since they just suckle.” Thorfinn said, “But I don’t know if it’s be easier for the mom then.”

“But what about toddlers?” Gudrid said, “They can move around, but they still don’t listen and need lots of help still.”

“I guess it isn’t until they’re kids that it gets any easier.” Thorfinn mused, then becoming a bit down cast said, “Although I think I caused my parents the most trouble when I was a kid.”

“Tell me about it, I couldn’t do anything decently except herd sheep and kept trying to stowaway on ships, must’ve gave them a headache.”

“That’s us then, a pair of useless stowaways.” Thorfinn teased.

“You’re not useless!”

“Not useless?” He couldn’t help but laugh. “What would you call a warrior who doesn’t want to fight?” Not that he wanted to want to fight, but as much as he hated it, it was what he was best at.

The made eye contact and Thorfinn was surprised at the intensity behind her eyes.

“The best kind.” She said softly, but with conviction.

Yep, no doubt about it, this was the woman he was going to marry, Thorfinn thought. So he said as much.

“Gudrid, marry me.”

“Pardon?”

“Marry me.” He repeated, setting down Karli’s mostly empty bowl to grab her hand.

She laughed, “Sorry, it just sounded like you said you wanted to marry me.”

“I did.” He said, “I do.”

Gudrid flushed deeply. “You’re just saying that. You don’t actually mean-”

“Gudrid I’ve never felt this way about anybody before and I’ve been trying to figure out what to do about it, and I think I want to marry you.”

“But why me? I can’t do anything right!”

“You want to go to Vinland, you want to sail, and try your best at everything. You...” He looked down at their joined hands, “You believe in me even though you probably shouldn’t. It makes me want to be what you think I am.”

He looked back up to her eyes, but they were focused intently on their hands still. She looked close to crying and Thorfinn realized he may have messed up big time. Just flat out asking someone you marry you was a weird thing to do, how was he still so stupid?

He quickly let go of her hand and averted his eyes, “Sorry, that’s probably too sudden. I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable. I totally get if you don’t want to-”

“I do!” She exclaimed, “I do want to marry you.” She wiped a tear from her eyes, “This is just so, sudden, yeah. I thought I was going to have to wear you down over a period of months, or even years!”

“Hey, I’d like to think I’m not that dense.”

Karli was calm at this point, ready to be put down for a nap.

“I never thought a guy would like me for me.” Gudrid confessed, “I’m really happy.”

“So that’s why you’re crying?” Thorfinn let out a sigh of relief, “I thought I ruined everything.”

“But I’m still officially married.” Gudrid said, “I mean, Sigurd did say he didn’t consider us married, but legally I think I still am.”

“Oh, I didn’t think of that.” He started to get Karli ready for his nap. “And my mom and sister would be really disappointed if they missed it. Well, I think my mom would understand, by my sister might kill me.”

“So I guess we have to wait until we get back to Iceland...”

“That’s, that actually is probably better, right? Courtship is supposed to go before marriage anyways and we haven’t even really courted all that much.”

“Yeah! I mean, we are good friends, but husband and wife are more than just good friends ideally.”

“Cool.”

“Yeah...”

Thorfinn found himself hot in the face, his heart beating fast, “I feel really nervous now.”

“Me too.”

They both let out awkward chuckles, making eye contact before looking away.

Gudrid pushed a lock of hair behind her ear, “It’s probably a blessing that we have a few months before we get married, how will we fair the marriage bed if we can’t even look at each other.”

“Baby steps, yeah?”

Gudrid reached to hold one of his hands in both of hers, eyes shining. “Baby steps.”

Yeah, I don't know what I'm doing. Hope you all like it.

End Notes

I've never written for Vinland Saga before, so I hope everything is good and in character, haha.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!