

Valhalla Girl  
By James Thomas  
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Having played the last song of the night, Christian glanced up from his guitar case, scanning the club patrons' sweaty faces. His attention focused on a stunning blonde haired woman, who stood apart from the crowd. Or rather the crowd is standing apart from her and with good reason Christian thought. He took mental stock of the woman. Her waist length hair shimmered beneath the club lighting effects, but not as brightly as her metal bustier and chain mail skirt, not to mention the spear. Christian turned and nudged the bass player, Vic.

"Dude, check out Xena the Warrior Princess over there."

Picking up his gig bag, the bass player surveyed the mingling crowd. "Which chick are you talking about?"

"The babe sporting the brass bustier, dumbass!"

Vic frowned. "Where the hell are you looking?"

"What are you blind she's right -" Christian stopped mid-sentence. She was gone.

"Dude! I'm telling you she was right over there; all decked out like a Lord of the Rings action figure."

Vic shook his head. "Whatever dude. Let's get rolling. Hey, you still down for skiing tomorrow?"

"Huh, oh yeah, definitely." Christian scanned the club one more time thinking, How did she disappear so fast?

\* \* \*

Christian and Vic stood on the snow-covered mountain top at the head of a ski trail, their breath pluming in the crisp December air. Christian eyed the warning sign with more than a bit of trepidation. The trail was clearly rated as black diamond.

"Dude, I'm not sure this is such a good idea. I mean it's not like we're experts or anything"

Vic snorted. "Funny, I didn't think that it was cold enough to freeze someone's balls off."

Bristling at the insult, Christian flipped his friend the bird, lowered his ski-goggles and pushing off with his ski poles, sped off down the treacherous slopes. Letting out a whoop, Vic followed after.

The icy wind buffeted the skiers as they raced along the expert track, dodging trees and the occasional rock. Halfway

down the slope, a brilliant gleam caught Christian's eye. Standing ahead and to his right was the woman from the club, still attired in her battle gear. Surprised by her presence, Christian's diverted attention caused him to miss a crucial turn. His left ski caught on an exposed root, sending the hapless skier tumbling through withered scrub brush, battering different parts of his anatomy. Ahead loomed a drop and Christian barely had time or the wherewithal to realize that he was no longer in contact with the ground.

The earth sped up to meet Christian, exploding the air from his lungs upon impact. Christian lay stunned and gasping for breath. His eyes remained closed as he took inventory of any possible injuries.

"Oh muh gawd, that was so-oo gnarly-I didn't mean to startle you-are you 'kay-did you hit your head-that is so-oo not cool."

Christian opened his muddy brown eyes and found his gaze locked by a pair of intense cornflower blue ones. A dazzling white smile beamed at him, making the surrounding snow muted by comparison. Struggling to a sitting position, wincing at the pain in his lower back, Christian rested against the bole of a tree and contemplated the apparition before him. This can't be real, he thought.

"Well-are you going to say something or just sit there like a fallen snowman-you know it's rude to stare like that."

"Er, who are you?"

"My name is Mindy."

Still wincing from the pain in his lower back, Christian shifted to a more comfortable position. "Um, why are you dressed like Red Sonja?"

"Uh-hello-o, Red Sonja has red hair, duh I mean like does this look like it came out of a bottle?" Mindy said, lifting a strand of her luxurious, blonde hair. "I'm a Valkyrie, you know like from history."

"Don't you mean mythology?"

"Uh hello, do I look like a myth to you?" Mindy said, giving a little twirl.

Christian noted the slight inflection to her voice, Valley girl, he thought.

"You're from the valley aren't you?"

Mindy giggled. "Fer sure-I used to live there, but now I live in Valhalla-I'm like a Valhalla girl now." The Valkyrie laughed at her own joke.

Unable to keep a note of disbelief out of his voice, Christian asked, "Valhalla?"

"Yeah, Valhalla, you know like the home of the Norse gods and stuff. That's where Brynhild, that's my mom-not my

California mom Monica-she's the one that adopted me when I was little-which was soo-oo cool of her, I mean like oh muh gawd to raise a child you didn't give birth to-she is like such a good mom even if she never let me go to Cabo. . .

Christian just sat in stunned silence while Mindy rambled on.

". . . but anyway she adopted me 'cuz Brynhild wasn't supposed to have a child in Valhalla, maybe she went to Cabo (Mindy giggled) and so then she comes to visit me right and I'm like wow you're my real mom and so now I'm like the daughter of like one of the most powerful Valkyries of all time which is soo-oo totally awesome and she's like-I want you to come to Valhalla with me and I'm like Valhalla, New York? but I mean like duh, who wants to go there when they die, right. Anyway so like Brynhild takes me to the Rainbow Bridge and then we cross over to Valhalla. And there's this old guy, only don't call him old to his face 'cuz he has like no sense of humor, and when I hear his name is Odin, I laugh 'cuz I thought they said his name was Odie (Mindy giggled some more) you know like from Garfield and he's like sitting on this huge throne covered with this like ancient writing I think its like those whatchacallit Bruins or prunes or. . ."

"Runes," Christian offered.

". . . maybe it's like that other writing colic, garlic. .  
."

"Gaelic," Christian interjected, but Mindy did not seem to notice.

". . . anyway, there was like two wolves at his feet, I thought they were stuffed until one of them passed gas and boy did that reek, Oh and he had two ravens on either shoulder and they must have been trained real well 'cuz they didn't poop on him or anything and he had an eye patch which is so not even cool, so I says to him like you should get a glass eye or maybe even a collection of designer eyes and like you could where a different one everyday to brighten things up 'cuz this really is a drab looking place and it probably explains why you don't have a sense of humor and then . . ."

Christian waited for Mindy to draw a breath . . . and waited . . . and waited.

". . . and then he told Brynhild to instruct me in the ways of the Valkyrie, which is so totally awesome 'cuz she gave me a shield and this radical spear, but the armor plated brassiere is like soo-oo eighties Madonna, and Do you have any gum?"

Christian blinked; the shift in topic gave him a headache. He reached into his jacket pocket and handed Mindy some chewing gum.

Popping a stick of gum into her mouth, Mindy continued her tirade. "Oh that's soo-oo cool thanks, I just love chewing gum. They don't have any gum in Valhalla; all they got is mead and shanks of beef I mean like hello what about us vegetarians? Hey, do you want to see my Pegasus?"

"Uh, sure."

Placing two fingers to her full lips, Mindy gave a piercing whistle and smiled as a white horse trotted into view. Christian stared at the wingless Pegasus. "Aw, I get it now; this is some kinda joke right. I mean if that's a Pegasus, where are its wings?"

"Duh, his wings are magical, they aren't always needed-I mean like do you have any idea how big wings have to be to lift a full grown horse," Mindy replied, running her hand over the heavily muscled flank.

"Okay fine, say I buy all this, why are you here? Aren't you supposed to be out collecting soldiers' souls or something?"

Mindy smiled and replied, "My mom and her clique take care of all that, I'm still in training-anyway I heard about your band *Valkyrie's Cry* and I'm like oh muh gawd I've got to go hear them play and you guys rock and then I started thinking like maybe I could get you guys to play at this major rave we're having. I think you guys would totally rule."

His interest piqued, Christian asked, "Major rave huh, where?"

"Oh, it's going to be all over and I think that even though your music will be different than what they said that they would have you'll totally rock anyway."

"What kind of music are they looking for?" Christian said while thinking, Dude this is one weird chick.

"I think they said something like Reggae-Rock, Rag Rock or some junk."

"Reggae-Rock? Rag Rock? Do you mean Ragnarok?"

"Fer sure, that's it, Ragnarok." Then thrusting one hand high, making horns with her fingers and thrashing her head back and forth, Mindy chanted, "Rag-na-rok! Rag-na-rok! Rag-na-rok!"

Christian stared in awe for a moment. "Um, you do know that Ragnarok is about the end of the world, right?"

Mindy stopped mid-thrash, becoming solemn. "Dude no way that is so bogus."

"Yeah."

After a few seconds of seriousness, Mindy perked up again. "Well not to worry, I mean it's not like it's going to happen anytime soon."

"Well that's a relief."



"So I guess I'll be going then but don't worry, when the time comes I'll make sure your band is there 'kay close your eyes, I have to change."

"Change?"

Mindy huffed. "Metal bras and cold air don't mix and riding a Pegasus gets a bit chilly."

Complying, Christian shut his eyes and was startled when he heard a male voice.

"Dude, are you alright?"

Christian opened his eyes and looked into the face of a very worried Vic. Mindy was nowhere in sight. Man, what a weird dream he thought.

Vic helped his friend to his feet. "Dude, I thought I'd find nothing but a splash down here."

Pushing up to his feet, Christian replied, "Nah, I'm good. Hey, did you see anyone else?"

"Like who dude, we're way off the trail."

"You didn't see a woman and a horse?"

"Dude, how hard did you hit your head?"

Christian remained silent. Vic and Christian headed back to the main trail, trudging through the snow. Only their footsteps marred the soft white blanket. A dark shadow swooped over them causing both skiers to look up.

Vic gasped, "Dude, did I just see a girl riding a flying horse?"

Christian smiled. "Fer sure."

End.