



FJORN THE SKALD

Academic Resources

This open-access document is meant to serve as an aid to personal study and research.

Ideally, it should be used alongside the book or article it was originally produced to accompany. Furthermore, the ideas expressed in quotes or summaries belong to the original author(s), while any annotations, commentary, and/or reflection belong to [Steven T. Dunn \(aka Fjorn\)](#). That supplementary material should not be taken as peer-reviewed scholarship, especially since many of these documents were made when Fjorn was still studying and therefore had not yet received his Master's. Please take care if using this document to aid your own research. Always be considerate and mindful to the original source of any ideas expressed in this document.

Document: Fjorn's Notes on *Njal's Saga* as translated by Robert Cook (2001)

Creation date: August 28th, 2016

Find more resources, including interactive digital maps and podcast episodes, at
fjorntheskald.com

Book Notes

Robert Cook trans., *Njal's Saga*
(London: Penguin Books, 2001).

Table of Contents

Introduction Notes	1
Overall Summary	3
Chapter Summaries	7
Quotes	53
Segments of Poetry	71
Other Commentary	79
Revisiting the Saga: September — November 2016.	86

INTRODUCTION NOTES

Background

Many of the events in Njal's saga are supported in external sources (*Islendingadrapa, The Saga of the People of Eyri, The Book of Settlements*). The attack on Gunnar and the burning of Njal are two principal climaxes of the saga. However, keep in mind the oral filter it had undergone. It exists within a family of sagas, in which many characters overlap. Consistency is formed by a long tradition of oral transmission, common body of narrative motifs, and social setting. Characters not present in others sagas stand out and may be viewed as a later creation of the author or a non-historical figure, but not always. This level of consistency could not have been created by a single author alone, and can therefore be suggested as an aspect of the society itself (the one at the time it was written, most likely).

Many sagas (although not this one) set their historical 'stage' by referring to Harald Fair-hair, another means of consistency between this family of sagas. As part of this common story of flight from Norway are the institutions that were brought with them to Iceland (law, Althing, etc.). Two major events referred to are the Conversion and the Fifth Court. This was also paired with detailed genealogies. This inclusion of genealogies must have made this saga a rich shared experience for the Icelanders who shared in much of this ancestry. These sagas were written partially for a need for identity, both personal and national.

The Saga

Something to keep in mind is that this saga was a carefully orchestrated work in which historical sources, among many others, were used for the author's purpose. The final line of the saga was in mind when writing the first. Njal is not very heroic, rather normal but skilled and respected (also he cannot grow a beard — quite unvikingesque). Gunnar on the other hand is the very model of a Viking hero. These two figures form a great pair, strength and wisdom. Njal's role as the central figure notes that the focus of the saga is not on the masculine powers of heroism. Much of the blood shed in this saga is seen as shameful and not heroic or glorifying. Spiritual aspects take center stage - intelligence, wisdom, honor, etc. "Those who plot evil, invent and pronounce gratuitous insults and envy the honest virtues of others are stupid" (xv).

There are over fifty proverbs attributed to characters in this saga that emphasize the importance of wisdom. There is also emphasis in telling truth versus lies, which relates to the spreading of news and information. "Proof of the power of words" (xix). Most of the talk in this saga are lies though (gotta have that drama). A particular type of lie to note was regarding a man's own manhood, or effeminacy. For women, lechery. Sexual defamation was apparently good cause for blood revenge. This includes men weeping. Gender roles play an interesting role in this saga as well - women also play a major role in the events that unfold. There is also ambiguity within the theme of wisdom, which is that the good, intelligent people cannot avoid disaster. Also that the most intelligent often plant the very seeds of disaster they would wish to avoid. Also, most of the characters are not simple, they are complicated combinations of good and bad, with flaws and a sense of real humanity. Fate is also a word that comes up when discussing this story. It is perhaps as a product of prophecy, since events are foreseen that, in a way, makes them unavoidable and assured. The audience is aware that advice will be broken and the prophecies will prove to come true. Yet, free choice is often stressed.

Law

Law is a more central topic in Njal's saga than most. Many 'textbook' phrases of law are included into the saga by the author, even if they do not entirely pertain to the case at hand. Remember, these aspects reflect the author's time and knowledge of law, not the time of Njal. The Althing is also a major feature of this saga. This was the most likely place that a feud could be settled or regulated. Three main ways to settle a case: courts, arbitration, or blood feud. Still, not one legal case is concluded in this saga. This is perhaps a deliberate irony. Also, there is an increasing emphasis on the blood feud.

Old hostilities also play a key role in violence within the saga. They do not fade and often surge violence forward into action. Also broken agreements cause problems. A great anxiety is in the failure of the law and the Althing to prevent this violence, and in the end, even falling victim itself to violence. "With law our land shall rise, but will perish with lawlessness" (xxvii).

Christian and Pagan

Honor, courage, and the blood feud are all well illustrated in Njal's saga. However, the strain to avoid picking up a weapon or contributing to violence is another theme. Hall of Sida is the voice of peace and conciliation: a spokesmen

for the Christian side. He introduces a new kind of honor by addressing himself as a 'man of no importance'. After chapter 100, many religious terms referring to Christianity are used (this is after the conversion of Iceland to Christianity is decided upon in the saga). The battle of Clontarf is used as a Christian versus pagan theme. However, in many ways these Christian elements are not meant to oppose pagan values, but rather to complement it. One could argue that these Christian values do not actually alter the story too much, since those values existed within pagan values as well. Things only end once the feud has run its course. The author wrote with respect of their pagan forebears. Many characters convert, but that does not change their nature.

The Two Parts

The two parts of this saga are Njal's story and Gunnar's story. Both are about the hero being attacked and killed in their homes followed by vengeance on their behalf. The contrast between the two lies in the narrative line and dimension of each hero's story. Gunnar's is more complicated and entangled whereas Njal's is more straightforward with a single plot line. The increased seriousness is also a major aspect.

OVERALL SUMMARY

Of Hrut and Hoskuld

Hoskuld wishes for his brother Hrut to find a wife. They seek out Mord, a notable chieftain skilled in law, and ask for Unn to marry Hrut. This is agreed upon, but Hrut gains an inheritance in Norway and must go retrieve it. Gunnhild, the mother of Harald Grey-cloak (king of Norway) aids them, and eventually Hrut is able to claim his inheritance. Hrut leaves for Iceland, but Gunnhild casts a spell on him for his lie. Hrut and Unn get married, but the spell takes affect and soon Unn is displeased with their marriage. Mord makes a plan and Unn divorces Hrut. Hrut challenges Mord to a duel, thinking this unjust, but it is refused. Hrut leaves and the episode between them ends.

A man named Thorvald seeks Hoskuld's daughter, Hallgerd, in marriage. This is done without including Hallgerd and she becomes upset by this, feeling ill-matched. Thjostolf, a wicked man, decides to help Hallgerd find a way to be marriage a second time. After Thorvald hit Hallgerd for taunting him, Thjostolf confronted Thorvald (insulting him and egging him on) and kill him. Thjostolf

runs off to the magician Svan and Osvif, Thorvald's father, chases after him but is unable to get past the fog of Svan's magic. Osvif seeks of Hoskuld and asks for compensation. This is eventually agreed upon (to prevent further dishonor) and Hrut mediates their agreement.

A man named Glum decides he wishes to marry Hallgerd despite the terrible events surrounding her past husband. Glum does not fear this and seeks Hoskuld to talk of marriage. This time, they include Hallgerd in the discussion (after already discussing it). They respectfully ask if she is satisfied with the terms and she is happy that they included her and agrees. Their marriage goes well until Thjostolf gets kicked out of Hoskuld's stadir and seeks residence with Glum. This is accepted, due to the sincerity of Hallgerd's request. Eventually, Thjostolf and Glum get in a dispute and Hallgerd tries to defend Thjostolf. Glum gets upset and hits Hallgerd, and so Thjostolf seeks vengeance even against Hallgerd's wishes. Thjostolf kills Glum and goes to Hallgerd at what he should do next. She sends him (to what seems to be a trap) to Hrut, who kills him on the spot knowing Hallgerd was innocent this time.

Of Gunnar

Gunnar is introduced, a relative of Unn's. She seeks her property back from Hrut and asks Gunnar to help her. She sends him to his friend Njal to come up with a plan, which he does. The plan goes well and things work in Gunnar's favor for now. Valgard marries Unn. Njal's sons are introduced: Skarphedin marries Thorhild and Grim marries Astrid. Helgi marries Asgrim's daughter, Thorhalla. Njal becomes foster-father for Thorhall Asgrimsson, who becomes a skilled lawyer as a result.

Gunnar sets off for Iceland to gain prestige and to raid. They go to the Baltic region and get great fame and treasures. Gunnar is accepted well by the courts of Bluetooth and also of Earl Hakon of Norway. He returns home very wealthy and with great honor. Gunnar marries Hallgerd. Hallgerd and Bergthora have a dispute. This leads to a cycle of killings to start up between Bergthora and Hallgerd, who use slaves and servants to get back at one another. Njal and Gunnar abuse the compensation system by paying compensation and then essentially giving it right back after there is another slaying. More slayings, now carried out by Njal's sons.

Otkel comes into the saga and there is a great famine in Iceland. Gunnar goes to him and seeks food, which he was giving out. He refuses, based on Skammkel's advice, but sells him a slave, Melkolf. Hallgerd had Melkolf burn

their food shed since they would not give Gunnar food. Gunnar finds out and is upset. Gunnar offers settlement, but Skammkel refuses. They seek Gizur and Geir's advice, of which Skammkel lies about what they said. Instead of settlement, things are taken to the Thing. Gizur and Geir find out about the lie and make peace with Gunnar, but there are tensions from all this. Later, Gunnar is hit in the ear by Otkel's spur by accident. However, Skammkel causes trouble by saying Gunnar cried over this encounter. Gunnar gets angry and he goes to meet them with his halberd. There is a fight between them and Gunnar kills them, along with Kolskegg. This is taken to the Thing and eventually it is peacefully settled.

There is a horse-fight arranged between Egil and Gunnar, however, Egil's sons cause trouble and Gunnar is attacked during this event. Gunnar beats up the sons and these events cause a grudge with their kin. Later, Starkad gathers men to attack Gunnar, which fails but leads to a lawsuit regarding the slayings. Gunnar eventually finds peace with them, but Mord and Thorgeir Starkarsson were not satisfied and look for an opportunity to get back at Gunnar. They use broken settlements to justify this and set Gunnar up to kill twice in one bloodline with Thorgeir Otkelsson. The Thorgeirs attempt to kill Gunnar, but fail. However, they ambush Gunnar later once more and Gunnar kills them, breaking the first warning of Njal to not kill twice in one bloodline. Following this, Gunnar was unfairly sentenced to three years as an outlaw, but he is stubborn and decides not to leave, despite Njal's second warning. Gunnar is slain, but fights his foes off heroically. Hallgerd refuses to help him when his bow string breaks due to the slap earlier on.

Of the Burning of Njal

Skarphedin and Hogni decide it is their job to seek vengeance on Gunnar's death. A settlement is paid, and the saga returns to those abroad. Kolskegg enjoys a life abroad, ending up in the Varangian guard. The Njalssons (Grim and Helgi) find fame in the Orkneys and Scotland and next move on to Norway. The events involving Hrapp occur in Norway, Thrain saves him and the Njalssons are shamed by the earl for this, even though they were mostly innocent. Tensions between Thrain and the Njalssons are high once they return home. Thrain is slain, compensation is made though. Thrain's son Hoskuld becomes foster son to Ketil and then to Njal.

Njal seeks a wife for Hoskuld, deciding on Hildigunn. However, he must become a Godi in order to marry her. Things are not going well for lawsuits, and

so Njal suggests the establishment of the Fifth Court. This involved more Godis and Hoskuld becomes one. They then marry one another. Thangbrand comes to Iceland to convert them to Christianity. After a good deal of tension between sides, Christianity is eventually chosen at the Althing as the new faith of Iceland.

Mord becomes envious of Hoskuld Thrainsson for the loss of his thingmen who were now in favor of the Fifth Court and Hoskuld's Assembly. Mord plans to turn the Njalssons against Hoskuld, which eventually succeeds. Hoskuld is slain. Many are saddened by this. Both sides gather support for the Thing that is to follow this action. Njal foretells that this will be the cause of his death and the death of his sons. The Althing regarding this goes well at first, for a settlement is made and it is decided that triple compensation be paid for Hoskuld to Flosi. This was fine until Njal placed a silk robe onto the compensation pile. This insults Flosi and Skarphedin mocks him. They exchange insults and Flosi now refuses any peaceful settlement. This leads to the burning of Njal's home, of which only Kari escapes (along with women and children). What follows this are the attempts to hunt down the Sigfussons responsible.

Of Kari's Vengeance

Each side begins to gather their support in preparation for the Althing. The procedures begin along with a competition to invalidate the prosecution. Eventually the Thing breaks out into a fight. A new settlement is made in favor of the prosecution, but Kari and Thorgeir refused to be a part of this. Thorgeir and Kari seek further vengeance and do so. Kari convinces Thorgeir to make a settlement when Hall of Sida asks him. This is done and Kari alone seeks vengeance, now for his son Thord. Kari meets a man named Bjorn and together they slay more of the burners. Kari then goes alone abroad to hunt down the other burners. This takes them to the Orkneys, where Flosi and his men ended up after bad weather. Things go on so that Kari goes to Scotland while some of the burners go to Ireland and battle at Clontarf. After this, Flosi (who had paid his dues of the settlement) and Kari reconcile once they both return to Iceland.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

1...

Mord Gigja son of Sighvat the Red, live at Voll in the Rangarvellir district. Powerful chieftain and extremely skilled in law. Had an only daughter named **Unn**, who was very beautiful. **Hoskuld** son of Dala-Koll and Thorgerd. (See Genealogies — related to Ragnar in a way). He lived at Hoskuldssadir in the valley of Laxardal. Had a daughter named **Hallgerd** whose brothers were Thorleik (father of Bolli) and Olaf (father of Kjartan) and Bard. **Hrut** was Hoskuld's brother, same mother but father was Herjolf. Hrut and Hoskuld's house, asked how he cannot like the beautiful Hallgerd, some tension sparks between them thereafter.

2...

Hrut and Hoskuld go to the Althing together. Hoskuld wishes for Hrut to marry, and so they seek after Unn, Mord's daughter. They discuss this over with Mord and it is agreed that they must find a large sum for Hrut. Hrut already owned quite a bit. They agree to allow them to wed, which is set to take place two weeks after midsummer, at Mord's farm. They head to Hallbjarnarvordur after the Thing.

Thjostolf, son of Bjorn Gold-bearer from Reykjadal, rode to meet them. He told them that Hrut's ship had come to the Hvita river with **Ozur** (Hrut's uncle). They then went to meet with him. Ozur brings news of Hrut's brother Eyvind's death. Eyvind willed property to Hrut and he must go to claim it before his enemies do. Hrut goes to consult Mord, since this will delay the wedding. Unn was to stay pledged to him for three years. Sailed for three weeks to Hern Islands and then to the Vik (Oslo Fjord).

3...

Harald Grey-cloak ruled over Norway at that time, son of Eirik Blood-axe, son of Harald Fair-hair. Harald Grey-cloak's mother was **Gunnhild**, daughter of Ozur Toti. Stayed at Konungahella in the east. A man named Soti had already taken to Hrut's claims. Gunnhild tells her servant **Ogmund** to invite them to stay the winter with her and she shall put good word in for them with the king. They agree to this.

They had to meet with the king before Gunnhild would help them. He tells the king why he came and asks to be one of his followers. The question of

his cleverness is asked as Gunnhild pushes for the king to accept. They must wait a half a month. They go to Gunnhild's hall and Hrut is allowed to sit in her throne. Gunnhild sleeps with Hrut. This is meant to stay a secret. Hrut is accepted among Harald's followers.

4...

In the spring, Hrut heard that Soti went to Denmark with the inheritance. Gunnhild gives him two longships and send with him Ulf the Unwashed to lead the men, but they must first speak with the king. the king also gives him two longships.

5...

Atli, son of Earl Arnvid of Gotland. Great warrior, based in Lake Malaren, fleet of eight ships. His father had withheld tribute from Hakon, foster-son of King Athelstan. This is how they fled from Jamtland to Gotland. Atli sailed to Denmark landing in Oresund. He was outlawed in both Sweden and Denmark for his plundering and killings. Hrut sailed for Oresund. They see the ships of Atli, decide to continue onward. They get into a naval conflict. The battle is eventually aboard Hrut's ship. Ulf is killed by Atli. Hrut kills Atli and takes his booty and best two ships.

Soti said by them to Norway lading at Limgard. He met with Ogmund. He stays for three nights but plans to leave for England. Gudrod, son of Gunnhild, was told to go kill Soti. This is successful. Hrut returns and goes to the king, offering as much of a share of his booty as they wished. The king took a third. Gunnhild told Hrut about killing Soti, he thanked her and gave her half of the inheritance.

6...

Hrut prepares to leave for Iceland. Gunnhild asks if he has a woman waiting for him, he says no and she knows this is a lie. She casts a spell on him that he will not have sexual pleasure from that woman he will marry (and just her), because he did not tell the truth. He returned to Iceland and went to Hoskuld's house after arriving. The wedding then took place, Unn had a sad look upon her face. There was little intimacy between them.

The all go to the Thing together, even Unn decided to go so she could see her father. She told her father that she was miserable with Hrut. They all

discussed this together with Mord. No charges were brought up and Hrut's neighbors gave good word of how he treated her. Things were well during the summer but difficulty between them returned the following winter.

7...

Unn asked Sigmund Ozurarson (possibly the son of Ozur, Hrut's uncle) if he would take her to the Thing while Hrut was journeying to the West Fjords again. He only agreed if she promised to come back and have no secret plot. Unn meets with her father in private. Her reason for divorce is that she gets no pleasure from sexual intercourse with him. Mord comes up with a plan for her to divorce him without Hrut being aware. The plan worked and divorce was officially declared. This was seen as a big event to the people.

8...

Hrut returned and "his brows shot up" in surprise when he found out. He kept his temper and waited until the following summer to speak to Mord at the Thing. Hrut challenges Mord to a duel, seeing this affair as unjust and out of greed and aggressiveness. Mord refused the challenge, taking advice that he would surly lose, and he was disgraced from this. They go to visit Thjostolf in Reykjadal in Lund. Thjostolf's children were playing an pretended to be Hrut and Mord in play. Hrut remained calm and was thought of well for this. **Here ends the episode of Hrut and Mord.**

9...

The story turns to Hallgerd, Hoskuld's daughter. Nicknamed Long-legs for her height and beauty. **Thjostolf** was her foster-father, a Hebridean by ancestry. He was a great warrior and paid no compensation for his killing of many men (a wicked thing). **Thorvald**, son of Osvif, lived at Fell out on Medalfellsstrond. It was decided that he needed a wife, and so he sought after Hallgerd. He was warned this would be a challenge, for she was strong-minded and him unyielding. They spoke to Hoskuld and agreed to the marriage without consulting Hallgerd.

10...

Hallgerd was upset but had expected this. She considered herself ill-matched. Hallgerd tells Thjostolf, who says he will carry out her every wish (which

obviously just can't be anything good). Hoskuld asks for Hrut to come over, they discuss and a large feast takes place.

Svan, who lived in Bjarnarfjord at a farm called Svanshol, was skilled in magic and was the brother of Hallgerd's mother. She invited him to her wedding, although vicious. Svan and Thjostolf became instant friends (no surprise there). Hallgerd was a very happy bride and talked much with her friends, this was seen as somewhat suspicious. The marriage was complete.

11...

Thorvald and Hallgerd (with Thjostolf) ride home. Thjostolf apparently stays with them (which I do find a bit odd). Hallgerd did not hold back and drained Thorvald's resources, particularly the flour and dried fish. She taunts Thorvald and makes him angry, he hits her causing a cut on her face. Thjostolf returns and notices this and says he will avenge it. Thjostolf goes to find Thorvald who is loading a skiff and immediately begins to insult him (here we go again). They start to fight, Thorvald with a sword and Thjostolf with an axe. Thorvald is slain.

12...

Thjostolf sank Thorvald's skiff, and with it the body. Hallgerd noticed the bloody axe, but she doesn't seem to be bothered by this once Thjostolf mentions "I've done something...which will permit you to marry a second time" (23 — note the contrast here with the divorce of Hrut and Unn). She made a plan for him and sent him to Svan. Svan thinks it was a great thing he did. Hallgerd asked Ljot the Black (a kinsman but of unknown origin), to take her to her father. Hoskuld hears that Thorvald has died, he suspects Thjostolf and Hallgerd does not hold back in saying it to be true.

Meanwhile, Thorvald's companions go to Osvif and tell him of what unfolded. Osvif decides they should gather men and go after Thjostolf. Svan knew they were coming (seeing their spirits with his second sight, accompanied generally by sleepiness) and cast a spell. Soon the fog befell Osvif and his followers and began to wander and get lost. They kept trying, but the same result occurred three times.

Osvif decides to turn back and seek compensation from Hoskuld. He is understanding of this wish, but notes he had no part in the killing of his son. Hrut urges that they should aid him and close this case to restore their honor. It

was agreed the Hrut should arbitrate the case. Hrut says for the compensation to be two hundred ounces of silver (considered a good amount) to be paid by Hoskuld, and he does this. Osvif thanked them with a gift and will now be out of the saga. Thjostolf was allowed to return. Thorvald's slaying was a great talk amongst the people. Hallgerd's property grows in value.

13...

Three brothers are now brought into the saga: **Thorarin** (nicknamed Ragi's brother), **Ragi**, and **Glum**. They were the sons of Oleif Hjalti and were of high esteem. Thorarin held the position of lawspeaker after Hrafn Haengsson, he lived at Varmalaek, owning a farm there with Glum. Glum journeyed often to trade, but had decided to give this up and seek a wife. Glum decides (of all the women in Iceland) Hallgerd is the one he wants to marry. Thorarin warns Glum of her former husband and how she had him killed. Glum feels certain this won't happen to him.

They went off to see Hoskuld and Hrut about the matter. The consult each other over the matter before it is brought up with them. They make an agreement that if they are to marry, Thjostolf must not come with and must not stay for more than three nights, unless Glum allows him to be. If this is broken, Thjostolf may be slain as an outlaw. Hallgerd must be let aware of these terms and must also be allowed to have word in these matters before agreeing to marry Glum (to avoid that issue again).

Hallgerd is sent for and asks of the news. They tell her of their conversation prior. Hallgerd is pleased that they included her and agrees to the terms. Were to share property equally. They would have a feast back home. Things were quiet until time to set out to the feast.

14...

They had the feast with many people present, Hallgerd behaved wonderfully. Thjostolf lurked around suspiciously with his axe, but no one took notice of this. Hallgerd declines to take charge over the household but behaves well that winter. Glum and Hallgerd have a child, a baby girl, that summer. She is to be named Thorgerd after Hallgerd's mother, whom is descended from Sigurd Fafnisbani (yes, *that* Sigurd). News comes that Svan was lost at Veidilausa bay, rumors surrounded it but he was never found, dead or alive. Hallgerd saw this as a big loss (her uncle on her mother's side after all).

15...

Thjostolf was sent away by Hoskuld for beating a servant of his. He then rode to Varmalaek (where Glum and Hallgerd live), where he was received warmly. Hallgerd asks Glum, respectfully, if Thjostolf could stay with them. Glum agrees, since Hallgerd was sincere, but that is he causes trouble he must leave (note that he just broke the advice that was given to him). Thjostolf behaved for a little while, but eventually was disrespectful to all but Hallgerd. Glum followed to his own consul and ignored his brother's further warnings.

16...

Glum's servants (not slaves, mind you) were having trouble getting the sheep brought in, so Glum asked if Thjostolf would help. Thjostolf said he would not follow the steps of slaves (again, they weren't slaves, but Thjostolf is a jerk so he calls them that). They quarrel and Glum went to Hallgerd of it. Hallgerd tries to defend Thjostolf, but Glum gets upset and hits her. Thjostolf finds out and gets upset, but Hallgerd said that he must not take vengeance. But, being the jerk he is, he walked away grinning.

17...

Glum and his men go to get the sheep, Thjostolf goes with. Eventually Glum and Thjostolf are alone and Thjostolf starts the slandering again. Thjostolf killed Glum in their quarrel (This guy is getting super annoying). Hallgerd laughed upon hearing this and sent him off to Hrut. Upon arriving, Thjostolf told Hrut of the killing. But, since it was Hallgerd who sent Thjostolf, Hrut knew she had no part in this and they immediately began to fight. Hrut slays Thjostolf. Hoskuld felt Glum was a great loss, but was glad that Hrut had slain Thjostolf. Thorarin heard of Glum's death and rode to Hoskuldsstadir. He asked for compensation, but no one was at fault except Thjostolf who was dead. The brothers gave Hoskuld gives, for that was the most honorable thing to do. Things were settled peacefully then. Thorarin is now out of the saga.

18...

Mord Gigja had taken ill and had died, a great loss. Unn inherited his property (as was said she would earlier). She was not very good with her holdings, and so they dwindled away.

19...

Gunnar, related to Unn, whose mother was Rannveig, daughter of Sigfus, who was the son of Sighvat the Red (Unn and Gunnar's shared relative). His father was Hamund, son of Gunnar Baugsson (from whom Gunnarsholt gets its name). Hamund's mother was Hrafnhild, daughter of Storolf Haengsson, who was the brother of Hrafn the Lawspeaker, and who had a son who was Orm the Strong. Gunnar lived at Hlidarendi in Fljotshild. He was an amazing and skilled warrior — all the traits of a great hero. He had brothers who were Kolskegg, Hjort, and Orm Skogarnef (a bastard brother, but not in this saga).

He had a sister named Arngunn and she was married to Hroar the Godi of Tunga, son of Uni the Unborn (non-natural birth, C-section), who was the son of Gardar who discovered Iceland. She had a son named Hamund the Lame (well, that sucks), who lived at Hamundarstadir.

20...

Njal, son of Thorgeir Gollnir. Njal's mother was Asgerd, daughter of the Norwegian hersir Askel the Silent. Her son was Holta-Thorir, father of Thorlief Crow, who the people of Skogar are descended, and of Thorgrim the Tall and Thorgeir Skorargeir. Njal lived at Bergthorshvol in the Landeyjar with a second farm at Thorolfsfell. He could not grow a beard. He was wise, skilled in law, and prophetic. Many sought his advice. His wife's name was Bergthora, daughter of Skarphedin. They had six children, three daughters and three sons — only the sons play a part in this saga.

21...

Unn goes to Gunnar to ask advice about her money situation. She wants to reclaim property from Hrut. She tells Gunnar to go see his friend Njal, who can surly help since he is so skilled in these matters. Njal comes up with a plan for Gunnar.

22...

Njal tells his complicated plan. Gunnar must dress up and pretend to be a rather difficult character known as Peddler-Hedin the mighty from Eyjafjord. He must go to Hrut and speak with him and talk of pronouncing a summons for a suit. Then, he must make it official without Hrut knowing of it and make away. Gunnar thanked him and went home.

23...

Gunnar goes home and then carries out Njal's plan perfectly. Hoskuld had a dream of a bear and two cubs going to Hrutsstadir the same night. The bear was the personal spirit of Gunnar. And so they go to Hrutsstadir. Hoskuld tells Hrut that it was not Peddler-Hedin but Gunnar that had come. They know Njal must have been behind this. Gunnar returns to Njal without being found.

24...

Gunnar went to the Althing and so did Hrut and Hoskuld. Gunnar was making his case. Legal proceedings begin. Hrut tried to nullify the case, Gunnar decides to challenge them to a duel. Hrut must refuse the duel and give Gunnar the money, since it is likely he would lose. Hrut and Hoskuld speak of vengeance, but Hrut notes it will not be done by them but someone else later on. Gunnar receives honor and future support from Unn.

25...

Valgard the Grey, son of Jorund the Godi...see the beginning of the chapter for the rest (a lot). He lived at Hof on the Ranga river. His brother was Ulf Aur-Godi. They went to seek the hand of Unn (here we go), and she married Valgard without the advice of her kinsmen. Gunnar and Njal thought this was not a good thing, Valgard was a devious and unpopular man. But, nonetheless, they had a son named **Mord Valgardsson** (to be in this saga for a long time). When he grew old, he was a jerk to all, especially Gunnar. Cunning and malicious in counsel.

Njal's sons now come into play: the eldest was **Skarphedin** (pretty heroic), **Grim**, and **Helgi**. They were all unmarried. Hoskuld is another son of his, though born out of wedlock. His mother is Hrodney, daughter of Hoskuld and the sister of Ingald at Keldur. Skarphedin wished to marry, and so Njal arranged this with Thorhild, daughter of Hrafn from Throlfsfell. Though, he continued to live with his father. Grim married Astrid at Djuparbakki, but also stayed with Njal.

26...

Asgrim, son of Ellida-Grim. His mother was Jorunn. His brother was Sigfus. His foster-brother was Gauk Trandilsson, but bad blood rose between them and

Asgrim slew him (referred to later — also a saga was to be made about this brother, but was never copied down). Two sons both named Thorhall. Also another son named Grim and a daughter named **Thorhalla**, who was capable in every way. Njal seeks Asgrim's daughter Thorhalla to marry his son Helgi.

27...

Njal went off to speak with Asgrim of this marriage. Asgrim was more than pleased to have this be arranged. Njal became foster-father for Thorhall Asgrimsson, who loved Njal more than his father. He became the greatest lawyer in Iceland thanks to Njal.

28...

Hallvard the White from Vik comes by ship. Stayed with Gunnar and urged him to go abroad. He asks Njal if he should and Njal says that it would be a good idea. He asks Njal to watch over his property while he is gone. And so Gunnar went.

29...

Gunnar and his brother Kolskegg went abroad to Tunsberg (Norway). Now Earl Hakon Sigurdarson ruled over the land (Harald and Gunnhild had died). Gunnar does not wish to join Earl Hakon's court. They decide to go raiding, heading for Hising. They go find a kinsmen of Hallvard's named Olvir. Olvir gives them ships and men. Trouble was near though, two brothers, Vandil and Karl, are blocking the river.

30...

Gunnar wishes to avoid these brothers, but they are attacked almost immediately. Intense battle follows. They defeat the brothers (getting much loot) and head south to Denmark and then Smaland, where they were quite successful and stayed the winter. Went to the island of Osel. There they met a man named Tofi, who wanted to see Gunnar.

He tells Gunnar of two brothers on the other side of the headland, Hallgrim and Kolskegg. They are mighty. They have a hidden treasure and Tofi knows where it is. Gunnar decides to face their attack. Gunnar slew Hallgrim and kept his weapon. The two Kolskeggs fought, Gunnar came and killed the

other Kolskegg. Gunnar gave peace to the other Vikings. Tofi shows Gunnar to the treasure. Tofi only asks to be returned home to Denmark for reward.

31...

They sailed to Hedeby; King Harald Gormsson (Bluetooth) was there. Gunnar was requested by the king upon hearing of his greatness. Bluetooth asks Gunnar to stay and offers wife and land, but Gunnar wishes to first go back to Iceland. Gunnar returns to Olvir in Hising and then wishes to see Earl Hakon. And so they go to Trondheim to see him. Gunnar falls in love with Bergljot, the earl's kinswoman, of whom the earl would have married to him if Gunnar had asked.

32...

Gunnar, Kolskegg, and Hallvard return to Iceland. They remained cheerful and did not become arrogant after their journey. Gunnar goes to see Njal. Njal warns him of becoming an envied man. Gunnar wishes to go the the Thing, Njal advises against this, Kolskegg urges Gunnar to do so though.

33...

Gunnar and his company were dressed much better than all others, which drew attention towards them. Later, Hallgerd, also dressed well, runs into Gunnar and talks with him. Marriage gets brought up. Gunnar seeks out Hoskuld afterwards. (Remember that Gunnar is the one who took some of Hrut's wealth away for Unn). Hrut tells Gunnar everything about Hallgerd's character. Hallgerd was summoned and a marriage was worked out. Upon learning of this, Njal was upset, for she will bring trouble.

34...

Thrain, son of Sigfus, son of Sighvat the Red. Lived at Grjota on Fljotshild. Gunnar's uncle. His wife was Thorhild the Poetess. Ketil, second son of Sigfus. Lived at Mork. Married to Thorgerd Njalsdottir. Thorkel, the third son, Mord the fourth, Lambi the fifth, Sigmund the sixth, Sigurd the seventh. All uncles to Gunnar and great fighters.

Hrut and Hoskuld come to the feast, with them their company and Hallgerd with her daughter Thorgerd (now fourteen). Thorgerd and Helga, Njal's daughters, come as well. On one side are the Sigfussons, on the other Njal's family (foreshadow of future conflict?). (Notes the seating of people,

come to this chapter later). Thrain eyed Thorgerd, his wife, the poetess, notices this and says insulting verse (see Poetry Segment 2). At this, Thrain immediately called for a divorce. He would not stay unless she was sent away, and so she was (kind of can't blame her though, for what she said). Thrain immediately asks Hoskuld for Thorgerd in marriage. Apparently this was not big deal for Njal and Hrut, who both advised it as a good thing. Both became good wives, controlling their respective households.

-35-

Gunnar goes to Njal's for their winter feast custom. Hallgerd and Bergthora don't get along very well. Gunnar stands up for Hallgerd and they go home. Hallgerd makes it known that they are not finished yet (grudge remains).

-36-

Gunnar makes ready to go to the Thing. He tells Hallgerd to behave but she does not seem to listen. Gunnar and Njal shared some woodland. Kol was Hallgerd's overseer but was the worst sort of person. Svart was Njal and Bergthora's servant, whom they were quite fond of. Bergthora sends Svart to collect some wood (he would stay for a week collecting). Hallgerd sees this as robbing. She asks Kol to go kill Svart. Kol did the deed and before he had a dream that his life would be the cost of it.

Gunnar is notified of the slaying. Him and Njal discuss. Njal remains calm, but notes the troubles that lie ahead between them if Gunnar allows Hallgerd to do as she pleases. Njal set the terms for 12 ounces of silver and they agree Gunnar will not set a price higher if the occasion arises later. Hallgerd boasted of her slaying of Svart.

Bergthora hires a man named **Atli** to help on the farms. Bergthora suggests he will be asked to kill Kol. Njal doesn't think he will be a good worker (in a moral sense, I believe). Skarphedin took a liking to Atli.

-37-

Bergthora tells Atli he shall find Kol and kill him. Atli doesn't seemed bothered by this. Atli kills Kol — which wasn't too difficult. They do not tell Njal, wishing Kol's death to be left uncompensated. Njal, once Skarphedin told him of the laying, paid Gunnar the same price that was paid for Svart. The exact same 12 ounces, mind you.

-38-

Njal urged Atli to leave in the spring, worrying that Hallgerd would have him killed. But Atli liked it with them and instead of leaving he joined the household as a free man. Hallgerd sends for her kinsmen Brynjolf the Brawler, a very bad sort (We know where this is going then, eh?). Gunnar knew nothing about this. Bergthora sends Atli to work somewhere else for a little, but Hallgerd knows of this and sends Brynjolf to do the slaying deed. Hallgerd taunts him by using the memory of Thjostolf. Brynjolf kills Atli (though it is interesting, different rather — page 65). Gunnar learns of this and goes to Njal to seek a price of compensation, but Atli was a free man and so the price is higher (100 ounces of silver — a high price, even for a free man). Bergthora insists on more killing.

-39-

Thord, called Freed-man's son, son of Sigtrygg — he was a slave freed by Asgerd. He also drowned in the river Markarfljot and was with Njal after that (wait....what?). He was in love with Gudfinna Thorolfsdottir, Njal's kinswoman. She was pregnant. Bergthora says he must kill Brynjolf (How dare she?! We just met the lad!). He is no killer but accepts anyway. Thord kills Brynjolf. He announces his slaying and returns home. Bergthora is ecstatic.

-40-

News reached the Althing of this. Njal's speaks with Gunnar. The compensation is set at 100 ounces. (Yet again, the system of monetary compensation is pointless).

-41-

Sigmund, son of Lambi, son of Sighvat the Red. A great seafaring merchant and well-mannered. He longed for fame and was a good poet. (He has an interesting personality, in comparison to others). His companion was Skjold, a Swede, but a bas character. He goes to Gunnar, they are kinsmen through Sighvat the Red. He will stay only if Skjold can as well. Gunnar warns them of Hallgerd. (Gunnar sounds like Njal with his advice).

Hallgerd take a sort of liking to Sigmund. Gunnar tells Kolskegg to go warn Njal that Thord should keep guard since Hallgerd still seeks vengeance.

Hallgerd goes to Thrain Sigfusson to ask him to kill Thord. He is hesitant, but Hallgerd convinces him. Sigmund and Skjold get pulled in as well. They make up a plan to kill Thord.

-42-

They find out where Thord is and go after him. They all attacked him, outnumbering him. They fear Njal's sons, but Hallgerd is pleased. The slaying is reported and Bergthora is upset.

-43-

Gunnar tells Njal of this. Njal comes up with the compensation at 200 ounces of silver. Gunnar does not see this as too high a price and agrees (double compensation). Njal urges his sons to not break this settlement, but the hostility will remain nonetheless.

-44-

Gunnar warns and confronts Sigmund. He also makes note that he gets along so well with Hallgerd because they have more in common. Some itinerant women come to Gunnar's place. They were talkative and rather malicious. They talk somewhat badly of Njal's, since they had just been there the night before. They said that Njal's sons were fixing up their battle equipment. The servants were carting dung up to the hillocks (good for hay). Hallgerd did not seem to like this. Hallgerd comes up with satirical names for Njal and his sons — "Old Beardless" and "Dung-beardlings". She then has Sigmund make up a poem about them. (These terms cannot be exaggerated, an insult to Njal's strongest point, his wisdom, and an insult to their manhood). (Not that Sigmund failed to follow Gunnar's advice). Gunnar strikes fear into them, to the point that they do not repeat the words.

The itinerant women decide to go tell Bergthora all of this that they heard. Njal is upset that they are even considering any malicious deeds. That night, Njal's sons head out with their weapons. This wakes up Njal and he is not fooled by their cover-ups. Even Bergthora slips that she would be glad if they came back with news of Sigmund's slaying.

-45-

Njal's sons find Sigmund and watch him from afar. Sigmund is wearing colored clothing, and that makes him easy to see (also to make fun of by calling him a red elf — the malicious ones though). After a rather fierce fight, Skarphedin kills Sigmund. Grim and Helgi kill Skjold. Skarphedin cuts off Sigmund's head to be sent to Hallgerd (they are taking this to the next level). the Shepard they gave it too did not bring it though, not sure of what Hallgerd would think. Hallgerd wishes he had so she could use it to get Gunnar to seek vengeance.

Once Gunnar was told, he said that Sigmund had this coming for the words his poetry contained. He did nothing about the whole affair. Even as Hallgerd prodded him about it, he kept strong and left the issue alone. Three Things had gone by and Gunnar still had yet to pursue the case, which many were waiting for him to do. But eventually, Gunnar felt this was a problem (I suppose from pressure from society) and sought Njal for advice. They talk and agree on 200 ounces of silver for Sigmund and none for Skjold.

-46-

Gizur, son of Teit. His mother was Olof. He had a son named Isleif the bishop (the first of Iceland). (Note that Gizur's genealogy is impressive, see genealogies for more detail).

Geir the Godi. His mother was Thorkalta, daughter of Ketilbjorn the Old from Mosfell (making him related to Gizur). He lived at Hlid.

Mord Valgardsson (from chapter 25) lived at Hof those days. He was cunning and malicious. His father abroad at the time, and his mother had died. He was envious of Gunnar. Well off but not liked.

-47-

Otkel, son of Skarf. He is related in some way to Gizur and Geir. He lived at Kirkjubaer. His wife was Thorgerd. He had a son named Thorgeir, who was still young but promising. **Skammkel**. He lived at another Hof. He was a bad character. He was a friend of Otkel's. Otkel's brother was Hallkel and lived with Otkel. Another brother was named **Hallbjorn the White**. He had an Irish slave named **Melkolf**, but he is quite unlikeable. Melkolf wanted Otkel for a master. Otkel was good to Melkolf and Melkolf worked hard for Otkel until he was actually sold to him, then his work got lazier.

A great famine at this time. Otkel was giving food to people who needed it. Gunnar ran short on food as well. He goes to Otkel to ask for food. Otkel refused to give Gunnar food at the advice of Skammkel. A little arguing, but eventually Otkel randomly asks Gunnar if he wants a slave, which Gunnar does not refuse. Njal is unhappy when he hears that Gunnar was denied food, but Bergthora says that he himself should share supplies with Gunnar. Njal says to never go to anyone else, for he will always provide for Gunnar.

-48-

Gunnar, Njal, and Njal's sons go to the Thing, it is a quiet one. Hallgerd tells Melkolf to go steal food from Otkel and to set their storage on fire so that they will think it an act of carelessness. Hallgerd eggs him on and threatens him if he does not do this. The dog knew him when he got there, and so it did not bark to alarm anyone. He killed the dog though, so he really is a terrible person. He had to fix his show and left behind his knife and belt (the same things given to him by Otkel). Hallgerd was pleased to hear the deed had been done. They saw the damage and Otkel was notified, but for the time being everyone thought it was an accident since the storage room was so close to the kitchen.

Gunnar returned from the Thing and Hallgerd laid out food that he knew they should not have, and so he asked where it came from. She avoided the question, but Gunnar is no fool. He got angry and slapped her on the face. Hallgerd said she would remember that and pay it back one day. Honest food was brought out to be eaten.

-49-

Skammkel finds the knife and belt. Otkel recognized them and they went to show others to get confirmation. They go to Mord Valgardsson and bring it up with him. Mord knows about the food incident at Gunnar's home. They ask Mord to take over this matter — three marks of silver. He comes up with a plan for women to give housewives gifts and see what they are given in return, since people tend to get rid of stolen things first. They were given the most at Hlidarendi and that Hallgerd was most generous. Hallgerd gave them cheese, a whole cheese. This was seen as key evidence.

Gunnar is advised to go to p and make a good offer, since he is responsible for his wife's actions. He goes with Thrain and Lambi. Skammkel advises Otkel to act with authority. Gunnar acts respectful and offers to pay double the amount of the damage, but Skammkel advises against it. Otkel is advised to

discuss the matter with Gizur and Geir. Hallbjorn criticizes them giving difficulty to Gunnar. Skammkel offers to go in Otkel's place, but must promise to tell things exactly as they went (this just can not go well). Hallbjorn knows this was a bad choice. Otkel and Hallbjorn argue over these matters.

-50-

Skammkel goes to Mosfell to speak with Gizur and Geir. They say Gunnar's offers were good and wonder why he did not accept. They decide to do what is best for all (not known to the audience) and have Skammkel report the story once more. Skammkel goes back and says that it is the will of Gizur and Geir to have no settlement in this matter and to go serve a summons of Gunnar. (Gizur and Geir note that Skammkel is a wicked man, and based off of other remarks the audience is likely supposed to suspect he lied in reporting their advice — Hallbjorn says it too).

The twelve of them rode to Hlidarendi to enact the summons. Hallbjorn notes this will be regretted. The encounter Gunnar outside and thunder out the summons. (This affair seems quite improper, such as the three-fold process, and aggressive). Gunnar warns that this visit will not bring any of them honor. Otkel and his troop ride to the thing.

-51-

Gunnar and all the Sigfussons ride to the Thing, as well as Njal and his sons. Gunnar seeks out the men of Dalir, Hrut and Hoskuld, on Njal's advice. Hrut comes up with the plan. the advice is for Gunnar to challenge Gizur to a duel and Kolskegg to challenge Geir. Hrut mentions they have men to back him up, a support against Otkel and his men. Gizur hears of this plan and knows that Skammkel has lied. Skammkel laid sickly in his booth.

Gizur and Geir go to Gunnar to tell him the actions that happened were the result of a lie. Gunnar needs proof and asks them to swear and oath. Gunnar says that there is more to judge now, so he cannot simply accept self-judgement again so easily. Njal advises he take self-judgement, and he says he will. He said he would not pay for anything, since the payment for the shed was cancelled out by the aims to disgrace him. They all agreed and settled the matter. Gunnar refused to be friends with Otkel and advised him to not provoke him again. He also returned Melkolf to them.

-52-

Runolf, son of Ulf Aur-Godi. He lived at Dal and stayed with Otkel on his way back from the Thing. Otkel gave him a nine year old black ox, and so Runolf extended an invitation for Otkel to come to his home. Otkel has two horses that always ran with each other. A Norwegian named Audolf was staying with Otkel and was in love with his daughter Signy.

-53-

Otkel decides to finally go and visit Runolf with company. He rides his horse, and the other runs beside him. They get excited and run off the road. Gunnar was outside to sow grain, in fine clothing too. Otkel's horses ran into Gunnar's field and the spurs on Otkel's shoe hit Gunnar in the ear, causing him to bleed. Skammkel eggs Gunnar on, the halberd is mentioned to be coming next time they meet. (Tensions were high due to the previous treatment of Gunnar by them).

Once Kolskegg is told he advises Gunnar to tell more people of this so that they have witnesses. Otkel and his company arrive at Runolf's house. They tell him what happened. Skammkel is still making matters worse by saying Gunnar would have cried if he were ordinary. Runolf says he should accompany them when they go back, since Gunnar will not harm him. Otkel did not want this. They departed, Runolf did not go with them.

-54-

A Shepard comes and warns Gunnar of Otkel's men coming. He also tells Gunnar of what was said about him by Skammkel. Gunnar prepares for combat. Gunnar sets off without saying much, but the sound of his halberd gets everyone's attention. Hallgerd seems pleased that he is going to fight. He arrives at Otkel's place and they begin to fight — Gunnar heavily outnumbered. Hallbjorn led the charge, Gunnar did not wish to kill him, but Hallbjorn was honor-bond to help his brother. Gunnar cuts his hand off. Skammkel was slain intensely. Audolf is killed in a similar fashion as when Gunnar fought with Vikings abroad. Otkel is slain next. Kolskegg arrives and kills Hallkel. A woman told Mord of all this, but he refused to do anything. He was very spiteful. Gunnar and Kolskegg ride home.

-55-

The news spread far and no one was surprised, in fact they thought it was bound to happen. Gunnar goes to Njal to discuss what will come next. Njal mentions that this will be the beginning of Gunnar's career in killings. He gives Gunnar terms of who and how he should not kill (see quote 46). Gunnar wonders why it is he who will do such killing. Njal says that if he follows his advice, he will live to be an old man. Njal also tells Gunnar that he knows how he will perish, 'something that people would least expect'.

Gizur and Geir were told of the events and it was decided that this case be prosecuted by law. They drew lots to decide who will bring up the case. Geir was to do this action. They went to the site of the killings and dug up the bodies and called witnesses to the fatal wounds. (See quote 47 for more on this procedure). They did not want to go to Gunnar's home, even with greater numbers. Talk was that this thing would be a stormy one as word spread about the suit.

-56-

(See this chapter for a very detailed passage of legal procedure)

Skafti, son of Thorodd. A great chieftain and well versed in law like his father. Thorodd was devious and cunning. *(from the footnote — Skafti Thordsson is usually spoken well of, but not in this saga, perhaps due to a line in *The Book of the Icelanders*)*. They supported Gizur in all matters. The two sides met at the Thing. Geri and the men went to the Law Rock to give notice for the many killings against Gunnar, and also one against Kolskegg. Gunnar aims to invalidate Geri's claims, but Njal advises that this course of action will only bring further dispute. Njal seems to have some leverage over Geir. The case is to be arbitrated by six men. Skammkel was to be without compensation and Otkel's death compensation was cancelled out by the spur wounds (does not seem to be balanced, but perhaps due to social standing differences?). The other killings were to be paid for, and so they were. Peace was pledged between Gizur, Geir, and Gunnar. Gunnar returned home with much honor.

-57-

Skarkad, son of Bork Black-tooth-beard. His wife was Hallbera. Their sons were Thorgeir, Bork, and Thorkel. Their daughter was Hildigunn the Healer. The brothers were very prone to violence, mean-spirited, and overbearing and had no respect for others.

-58-

Egil, son of Kol. Brother named Onund of Trollaskog. He lived at Sandgil. His sons were Kol, Ottar, and Hauk. His wife was Steinvor, Starkad's sister. Egil's sons were trouble-makers. He had a daughter named Gudrun Night-sun, well mannered. Egil took in two Norwegians, Thorir and Thorgrim (their first trip to Iceland, wealthy and well liked).

Skarkad had a great stallion, no one dared challenge their horse to fight against his. Some say Gunnar's horse would be a match though. Gunnar agrees, though humbly, but only as long as it is for pleasure of others and not trouble for themselves. They returned and spoke of Gunnar as if he was inferior and wanted to get out of it (a clear lie). Njal warns that this will lead to further trouble.

-59-

Gunnar learns of Hoskuld's death. Thorgerd, Thrain's wife and Hallgerd's daughter, gives birth to a boy. Hallgerd decides his name should be Hoskuld — **Hoskuld Thrainsson**. Gunnar and Hallgerd had two sons: Hogni and Grani. Hogni is described well.

Everyone goes to the horse-fight. Things went well at first, but then Egil's sons began to plot to had Gunnar knocked down by the horses. Gunnar turns this around on them and beats them up, but his horse is maimed (the eye somehow pops out from a blow) and they have to kill it (poor horsey). Things get pretty violent, but Gunnar remains calm and controlled while the brothers get more aggressive towards him verbally. At the Thing, Gunnar meets with his brother-in-law Olaf Peacock (prominent in Lax. saga). He gives Gunnar great advice.

-60-

An inheritance case between Asgrim Ellida-Grimsson and Ulf Uggason. A flaw in the case leads to Asgrim have difficulties. Gunnar aids (due to strong ties Asgrim has with Njal) by challenging Ulf to a duel. Eventually, Ulf was made to pay the whole amount. Njal warns Gunnar to not travel with light numbers, for an attack is imminent. Also, to not let anyone be aware of his travel plans. They agree that Njal's sons should always accompany him, but Gunnar does not follow this since he does not want to bring them trouble because of him.

-61-

Gunnar, Kolskegg, and Hjort ride together to Asgrim's home (to Tunga). A man named Sigurd Swine-head, who lived at Thjorsa, promised to spy on Gunnar. He notifies Starkad that now is the perfect time. Thorgrim tells Thorir to leave and not avenge him.

-62-

Gunnar gets sleepy on the journey home and falls into a deep sleep. They allow him to dream (knowing it is important). Gunnar tells of his dream, saying that many wolves attacked him (page 105 for the full dream). The dream proves to come to reality.

-63-

The fight between Gunnar and the 'wolves' rages onward. Kolskegg kills Kol, who wanted to fight him one on one. Egil, in rage of his son's death, charged at Gunnar and was also slain. Thorir kills Hjort. Gunnar kills Thorir and Bork. A total of fifteen had died in this battle.

-64-

Steinvor (Egil's wife, now a widow) asks for Thorgrim to stay and not leave as his brother wished for (since Thorir knew Thorgrim would be slain by Gunnar if he stayed). Gudrun was married to Thorgrim. Gunnar rides to speak with Njal. Njal comes up with a plan. (See page 108 for more detail on this plan). Skarkad is to be charged with a sentence of outlawry for the attack.

-65-

Valgard the Grey returns and Thorgeir Starkardson seeks him and Mord over Gunnar's claim that all he had slain were outlaws. He asks for their help and eventually they come up with a counter-plan. Mord was to marry Thorkatla, daughter of Gizur. Mord urges Thorgeir and Onund to start a lawsuit against Gunnar. Gunnar hears news of this and seeks Njal's advice. Njal said to choose Kol as the slayer of Hjort. Also a case of seduction against Thorgeir.

-66-

At the Thing, this lawsuit was the focus of attention. (See this chapter for more details of the proceedings — another example of such a process). Hjalti intervenes and discusses with Gunnar a deal for peace between the two sides. Many charges cancelled out. Otherwise, many were to be given half compensation. Gunnar received honor from this case, but his enemies were envious of this.

-67-

Thorgeir Otkelsson had now grown up well. Thorgeir Starkarsson went to see his kinsmen Mord. Thorgeir was displeased by the outcome of the lawsuit. They plan to wait for a moment where Gunnar has broken a settlement to get back at him. Thorgeir Starkarsson was to go see Thorgeir Otkelsson about this broken settlement and to attack Gunnar. Mord knows of Njal's prophecy to Gunnar about killing. They plan to have Thorgeir Otkelsson killed, since it would be a kill within the same bloodline, followed by a settlement for that slaying.

-68-

The Thorgeirs talk and make a friendly alliance. Gunnar breaks a settlement with Thorgeir's kin due to claiming Moeidarhvol. The Thorgeirs patiently plot and grow closer to one another. This is suspicious and Gunnar is warned, but speaks that if he is to die it is fate. Things happen so that Gunnar is home alone with only the women. The Thorgeirs muster up the courage to attack Gunnar, justifying it with the broken settlements.

-69-

The two Thorgeirs head to Gunnar's home to attack, but fall asleep in the woods on their way. Meanwhile Njal was restless and could not sleep. As Njal explains his uneasiness, a Shepard comes and tells of twenty-four men sleeping in the woods. Njal asks the Shepard to go warn Gunnar to muster up men while Njal goes to frighten the men off. Njal told them that Gunnar was not to be messed with and that he was gathering men as they spoke. This terrified them. Njal wishes to try to make a settlement.

-70-

Njal was to arbitrate peace between them, which they had agreed upon. However, the Thorgeirs go to Mord after this, who criticized them for this. At the Althing now: Njal notes that no settlement had been broken since it was through lawful means that Gunnar acquired the property. The Thorgeirs felt deceived by Mord upon hearing this. Peace followed.

Gunnar visits Olaf Peacock, who gives him three gifts: a gold ring, a clock once owned by King Myrkjartan of Ireland, and a dog from Ireland. This dog was named Sam and was very intelligent. He would bark at enemies but not at friends and was extremely loyal.

-71-

The Thorgeirs were upset with Mord now. Mord advises that Thorgeir Otkelsson should seduce Gunnar's niece, Ormhild, to spark hatred with Gunnar. Mord says he will spread rumor and warns them to not attack Gunnar at his home because of Sam. This plan starts smoothly. They make a plan to ambush Gunnar when he rides to Eyjar. Gunnar and Kolskegg are together.

-72-

The ambush occurs. Thorgeir Otkelsson, after being taunted by the other Thorgeir, charged at Gunnar and actually managed to pierce his arm. Gunnar pierced him with his halberd and thrust him into the ford — known as Thorgeir's ford because of this (reminds me of the Táin). Kolskegg tries to urge Gunnar to kill more of them as they run in fear, but Gunnar does not do this. They ride home and tell of the news. Hallgerd praises them. Rannveig expects bad will come of this.

-73-

News travelled quickly, and Thorgeir's death was lamented by many. Gizur and Geir gave notice of the slayings and began legal procedures. Njal warns Gunnar to be careful from now on, for he killed twice in the same bloodline. At the Thing, Gizur presses for Gunnar to be an outlaw, making it out to seem that Gunnar attacked Thorgeir. Separate witnesses for the killing and the wounds (or at least named again). (Lots of legal procedure).

-74-

Njal speaks now. (Note that a panel of nine men for the prosecutor can be reduced to five by eliminating four to now serve for the defense). It is settled that Gunnar should pay the payments set and go abroad for three years, and that if he did not take the opportunity to leave, Thorgeir's kinsmen were allowed to kill him. This was unfair, but Gunnar went along, for Njal thought this course would be best for him. Njal urges Gunnar to abide by this settlement.

-75-

Thrain Sigfusson decides to go abroad that summer with Hogni. Gunnar and Kolskegg go abroad with Arnfinn from Vik. Grim and Helgi, Njal's sons, also ask to go abroad, despite Njal saying this will lead to trouble possibly. Gunnar says goodbye to everyone, but on his way to the ship he falls and sees a beautiful view, and so he decides not to leave (footnote mentions a connection with the author of Alexander's saga here). Kolskegg tries to change his mind, but cannot do so, but Kolskegg still leaves. Gunnar sort of becomes a bit stubborn.

Gizur and Geir declare Gunnar a full outlaw, all of Gunnar's enemies are called forth. Njal goes to Gunnar and tells him of this. Njal has his sons help defend Gunnar. Gunnar does not want this, but Njal mentions that his sons will be the target of trouble once Gunnar is dead. Gunnar asks Njal to keep an eye of Hogni, but not so much on Grani since he is not so good. For awhile, no one dared to attack him, and so for the time being it was as if he was not an outlaw.

-76-

Gunnar's enemies make their plan to attack. They capture a farmer loyal to Gunnar, Thorkel, and threaten him so that he will take Sam and run off. Sam was smarter than that though, and knew Thorkel had turned from friend to foe. Onund killed Sam (a wicked man!).

-77-

Gunnar, along with Hallgerd and his mother, slept in a loft above the hall to hide a bit from the attackers. Thorgrim the Norwegian goes in first to check if Gunnar is home, he is killed by the Halberd. Fight breaks out. Gunnar fights viciously with his bow. They have difficulty fighting him, Mord suggests the burn him alive inside his home (foreshadow to Njal?), this plan is not taken though. They make a plan and pull off the roof of Gunnar's home using rope.

Mord once again wants to burn Gunnar, Gizur says that shall never be. Gunnar's bowstring is cut. He asks Hallgerd for hair to restring his bow, she refuses remembering that slap from long before. Gunnar fought them off heroically, but eventually he fell.

Geir was to stay behind and keep hold of their new possessions and to guard them from the Sigfussons. Geir had a son named **Hroald**, born out of wedlock, whose mother was Bjartey, sister of Thorvald the sickly (later slain, according to the footnote). Hroald boasted that he had given Gunnar his death blow. The slaying of Gunnar was spoken badly of all over the land.

-78-

Njal and the Sigfussons were distressed over Gunnar's death, but could do nothing of it. They rose a burial mound for Gunnar. Rannveig said the halberd should not be buried with him, but should only be wielded for someone who sought to avenge Gunnar. Rannveig was extremely upset with Hallgerd and blamed her. Hallgerd and Grani flee to Grjota.

A Shepard and a servant woman reported that, upon passing Gunnar's mound, that Gunnar seemed to be in high spirits and was reciting verses in the mound. They told Rannveig of this. They then tell Njal. Skarphedin and Hogni go to visit Gunnar's mound one night and hear his verse (see quote 62). They take this as a lesson (to act in the footsteps of the bloodfeud, to stand up against enemies rather than accept peace — something like that). Skarphedin and Hogni form a close friendship.

-79-

Hogni takes the halberd, and Rannveig tells him that he must avenge Gunnar before returning it to him. The two went to Oddi with two ravens following them and found Thjorvi and Hroald. They kill them both. They also kill Starkad and Thorgeir. Next they went to Hof and Mord asked them for peace and offered full reconciliation. Hogni was to be given self-judgement.

-80-

Njal worked out a settlement between Mord and Skarphedin and Hogni. Geir made a suit against Hogni over the slaying of Hroald, of which they agreed to a settlement. Geir is now out of the saga. Njal arrange a marriage between Alfeid (Veturlidi the Poet's daughter) and Hogni. They had a son named Ari

who went to Shetland and married there. Hogni is now out of the saga (but not quite, according to the footnote).

-81-

Kolskegg had gone to Norway and stayed at Vik for that winter. He then went to Denmark and served under Svein Fork-beard, receiving great honor. Kolskegg has a dream of the Christian God. He is baptized in Denmark and goes to Russia and then to Constantinople. There he became the leader of the Varangian guard and married there. He lived there until his death and is now out of the saga.

-82-

Thrain goes to Norway and goes to Earl Hakon. Hakon finds out he is kin to Gunnar, which is a good thing. He stayed with the Earl that winter.

Kol, a Viking, son of Asmund Ash-side of Smaland. He raided Vestfold. Earl Hakon made him an outlaw. Thrain accepts the duty to kill Kol, since it is what Gunnar would have done. The Earl's son Eirik helped them out. Kol had a dream about Earl Hakon. The battle between them began. Kol was wearing a golden helmet. Thrain slays Kol, keeping the head. The Earl gives Thrain a ship with a griffin head on it — called the *Griffin*. Thrain stayed with Earl Hakon for a while, especially after hearing of Gunnar's death.

-83-

Grim and Helgi had also left, but their ship gets lost in travel and ends up in Scotland. they encounter Grijotgard and Snaekolf, sons of Moldan of Duncansby in Scotland and kinsmen of the Scottish king Melkold (possibly Malcolm II, according to the footnote). They decided to fight them and defend themselves. (They travelled with merchants, the Vikings wanted their cargo).

-84-

The Njalssons kicked butt and the Icelanders vowed to not give up. More ships show up, they are from the Hebrides and help the Njalssons. Kari, son of Solmund, was one of these Hebridians. Kari kills Snaekolf and Helgi kills Grijotgard. They had won the battle.

-85-

Sigurd, ruler of Orkney at this time, son of Hlodver. Kari was a follow of his. They go to the mainland (Hrossey, the main island of Orkney). They are brought to his court and accepted into his following. Helgi becomes concerned of an event that is to come, saying the Scots have killed the man Sigurd had in charge there (Havard was the name of this person).

-86-

The earl sends an army to Scotland to reclaim his lands. A great battle takes place. Helgi and Grim are fierce and key in this battle. They hear of Melkolf raising an army in duncansby and decide to not face them. Gifts were given to Kari, Grim, and Helgi. Much more raiding followed. The Njalssons decide to go to Earl Hakon in Norway, Kari goes with.

-87-

Kolbein Arnjotarson, from Trodheim, comes to Iceland. A man named Hrapp, son of Orgumleidi, comes to him and asks him to take him abroad. He says he has killed Orlyg, son of Olvir. Kolbein agrees, though only sue to Hrapp have loads of money. Hrapp is a bit of a scammer, situation with food on the voyage. Kolbein gives him advice to not betray his lord while in Norway.

Hrapp goes off with his weapons to Gudbrand of Dalarna, a friend of Earl Hakon's. He owns a temple, the second largest in Norway (the largest being at Lade). Hrapp somewhat blackmails himself into Gudbrand's court. Hrapp starts 'seducing' Gudrun, and Gudbrand does not like this. Asvard is to be with Gudrun at all times to make sure this does not happen. Asvard find the two in the bushes together. Hrapp and Asvard fight, and Asvard is slain. Gudrun says she is with child. Hrapp decides to tell Gudbrand all of this himself. (Some humor in this section). Gudbrand gets enraged and Hrapp runs off into the forest.

In the forest, Hrapp finds a house owned by a man named Tofi. Tofi was far away from other men due to having run off with a woman, who is now his wife. Hrapp uses this to con his way into staying with them. Hakon made Hrapp and outlaw, but little was done to catch him.

-88-

The Njalssons travel to Norway from Orkney and trade there. Thrain was nearly ready to return to Iceland. Earl Hakon goes to Gudbrand's temple. That night, Hrapp goes to this temple and steals the precious objects and burns it to the ground. Hrapp ran into a little trouble, even ran into Thrand (Gudbrand's son I think), and refused to kill him, since he was technically an in-law now. Hrapp hid in bushes since there were too many men.

Earl Hakon and Gudbrand find the temple burned and find out it was Hrapp. Hrapp had fled though, but a search party begins. They find hrapp but he gets away and runs off to Lade. Thrain and the Njalssons were there about to sail off. He goes to them for help and Thrain agrees with some strain. No one told the Earl once he came asking. the Earl searched about and grew even more angry. Thrain had not told him, but now the Earl comes for a second time, suspecting the barrels. The Earl cannot find Hrapp still (they had moved him) and leaves, but he soon comes back for a third time. Each time The Earl left he knew where Hrapp was hidden, but they moved him each time before the Earl came back (quite humorous). Thrain gets a good wind and they sail off before the Earl can return again. The Earl does not blame his lack of insight, but the friendship between Thrain and Hrapp.

Thrain returns to Iceland. Hrapp stays with Thrain is eventually given a farm. Some say Hrapp and Hallgerd grew close. Thrain was viewed as a chieftain by his kinfolk.

-89-

Earl Hakon decides to go after the Njalssons and kill them, since they must have been in on this with Thrain. His son Svein advises against this. Grim and Helgi decide to make a stand. Helgi took charge. They fought well, but were captured in the end. The Njalssons are tied up for the night, to be killed in the morning. They manage to escape. They find Kari and go to him. Later, Kari goes to the earl to give him the tribute money. Hakon asks for the Njalssons, but Kari says he will not do that. Eirik says that the Njalssons should be given gifts for their poor treatment. A settlement is then proposed by the earl to the Njalssons. Helgi would only accept the settlement from Eirik, and they then stayed with him.

Next they went to Earl Sigurd. They went raiding in anglesey and the Hebrides. They fought with the king of the Isle of Man, King Gudrod. They were victorious and killed his son Dungal in the process.

-90-

Kari and the Njalssons return to Iceland. Kari spent that winter with Njal. In the spring, Kari asked for Helga's hand (Njal's daughter). This was done near midsummer. They bought land and had men work it while they remained with Njal.

-91-

Thrain was good to Hrapp, although everyone else thought he was terrible. The Njalssons tell Ketil (Thrain's brother) of what happened and Ketil plans to talk of this with Thrain. That conversation apparently did not go well, so Helgi and Grim go to their father for advice. Njal gives his advice and warning of events to unfold. Next they ask Kari to go speak with Thrain of this, as Njal advised, but this also does not go well.

Thrain constantly surrounded himself in fighting men and kept himself equipped with extravagant fighting gear. Grani and Hrapp were closest to him and also spread the most abuse about the Njalssons and prevented compensation.

The four Njalssons, with Kari as the fifth (married in), go to Thrain themselves. They were not greeted well, followed still be ill-treatment (tense atmosphere). Hallgerd revives the terms 'Dung-beardlings' and 'Old Beardless'. All are guilty of using these words except Thrain, who tries to hold back. The Njalssons return home and have a long talk with Njal.

-92-

Thrain and eight of his men go to Runolf and Ketil. Runolf and Ketil suggest he make peace with the Njalssons, but Thrain refuses this. Runolf points out that no one but Gunnar was a match for them, but Thrain is not fearful. Thrain leaves in bad weather to display his lack of fear. The poor women who had helped them cross the river earlier had come to Njal and told him of what happened and things that were said.

Njal wakes to find out his sons are preparing to 'find sheep' once again. Thrain sees their shields shine in the sun from afar, they suspect an ambush. The Njalssons see they changed their course and pursue them, Skarphedin does some impressive feats. Skarphedin hits thrain in the head with his axe before Thrain could get his helmet back on. Helgi cuts off Hrapp's arm. Grim finished

Hrapp off. Kari slays Thjorvi. Skarphedin cannot kill Gunnar Lambason or Grani, since he had helped Hogni. They tell Njal of these events. Njal suspects the death of one of his sons will come from this, if nothing worse.

-93-

Ketil marries Thorgerd, Njal's daughter. Now he is in a hard position, kin to both sides. Ketil goes to Njal to seek compensation for Thrain, to hopefully bring peace. Njal agrees, but Ketil must persuade his brothers. This went over well and compensation was made. Peace followed for a while. It is agreed upon the Ketil be the foster father of Hoskuld (Thrain's son).

-94-

Njal rides to Mork again and offers Hoskuld a ring as a gift. Njal asked for him to be his foster-son, this was agreed upon and Hoskuld went with Njal. He grew up very well.

-95-

Flosi, son of Thord Frey's Godi. (Noteworthy genealogy). He lived at Svinafell and was a great chieftain. He had a brother named Starkad but did not share the same mother. His other brothers were Thorgeir, Stein, Kolbein, and Egil. Hildigunn was the daughter of Starkad's. she was skilled and tough for a woman, but acted finely when she needed to.

-96-

Hall of Sida, son of Thorstein Bodvarsson and Thordis. His wife was Joreid. His brothers were Ketil Thrym and Thorvald. (See genealogies, related to a Norwegian earl). Hallkatla was the sister of Joreid and the mother of Thorkel and Thidrandi Geitisson. Thorstein (Broad-belly) was Hall's brother. His son was Kol, whom will be slain by Kari in Wales. Hall's sons were Thorstein, Egil, Thorvald, Ljot, and Thidrandi, whom, it is said, the *ðvir* killed (see the footnote for this, interesting background).

Holta-Thorir. His son was Skorargeir, whose brothers were Thorleif Crow (the people of Skogar descend from him) and Thorgrim the Tall. (They were mentioned in chp. 20).

-97-

Njal wishes to find Hoskuld a wife. Njal picks Hildigunn. Flosi and Njal discuss this matter, but Flosi is unsure since the settlement for Thrain could be broken, of which Hoskuld is stuck in the middle of in a way. Flosi decides to let Hildigunn have a say. She says she is not meant to be married to someone who is not a godi. If they can find a godord for Hoskuld, she will marry him. They agree to give him three years. Also, Hildigunn says, if they are to marry, they must live in the east. It was difficult to find a godord one was willing to sell.

At the Althing, Njal was unable to give helpful advice as usual, in fact, many were left unresolved since it ruined both sides. People began to be reluctant to press lawsuits, for they'd rather settle matter by their blades than have their cases go amok. Njal appeals to Skafti Thoroddson for the creation of a Fifth Court to settle these difficult cases. (See page 166 for more detail on Njal's idea of the Fifth Court). Skafti set this into law and they set up the new godords needed for this. Njal asks that Hoskuld can be given a godord (Godi of Hvitanes).

Hoskuld and Hildigunn are married. They live at Ossabaer (not in the east). Things went well for a while.

-98-

Lyting. He lived at Stamsstadir. His wife was Steinvor Sigfusdottir, Thrain's sister. He was vicious to deal with. He held a feast with the Sigfussons, Hoskuld Thrainsson was there as well. Hoskuld Njalsson had a son named Amundi. He was blind from birth, but still big and powerful. Lyting had two brothers, Hallstein and Hallgrim. They were troublemakers.

Hoskuld Njalsson rode by, he was called a show-off and annoyed the Sigfussons. Lyting tried to tell Hoskuld Thrainsson to kill Hoskuld Njalsson, but he refused and left upset with him. Grani also refuses to break the settlement. He complains about not receiving settlement (he is the husband of Train's sister, not a direct kinsmen), saying he will not be content until there is blood revenge. Lyting got his brothers and a few servant and ambushed Hoskuld. He put up a good defense, but was eventually slain.

A shepherd saw this and went to Hrodney, Hoskuld's mother. She was led to his body and said he was still alive and that Njal could heal his wounds. She wakes Njal and they come out with their weapons. Njal determines he is too far gone. Bergthora urges for vengeance.

-99-

Skarphedin and his brothers go to seek Lyting and his brothers. They fight, Hallkel and Hallgrim are slain, but Lyting runs off to Ossabaer. Lyting asks Hoskuld to arrange a settlement. Particularly one so that he can keep his farm. Hoskuld goes to Njal and tells him of this. Njal agrees, but Lyting's brothers are to be seen as outlaws (killed without need for compensation) and that Lyting receive nothing for his wounds and pay full compensation for Hoskuld. Njal suggests he sells his land and moves, but to avoid other danger, not Njal and his sons. And so Njal also says he can stay with him. This settlement was kept.

-100-

Earl Hakon passed away and so Olaf Tryggvason takes his place over Norway. With him, Norway was converted to Christianity. Many in Iceland said this was absurd, but Njal thought it would be better and said he would support it.

Thangbrand comes to Iceland, sent by Olaf Tryggvason, to preach the faith. Icelander Gudleif, son of Ari, was with him. Two brothers named Thorleif and Ketil forbade trade with them. Hall of Sida hears of this and offers them to stay with him. Hall converts after learning of Michael, under the condition that he becomes his guardian angel.

-101-

Hall and Thangbrand travelled and preached the faith. Thorkel, a man who preached most strongly against this new faith, challenged him to a duel and lost (note the crucifix rather than a shield). (This chapter recounts the course of Iceland's conversion, at least a version of it). Hedin the Sorcerer was paid to put Thangbrand to death and made a great sacrifice for this. Later, the earth split open beneath Thangbrand's horse, but he leapt off before falling along with his horse, thanking God for this.

-102-

Gudleif kills Hedin. More traveling and preaching of the new faith. Veturlidi the Poet spoke out against the new faith the strongest, and for this reason they killed him. (See poem 6 for this account). Njal accepts the new faith. Mord and Valgard fought hard against it. Thorvald the Sickly wants Ulf

Uggason gather men to attack Thorvald. (See their conversation in poems 7 and 8). Still, Thorvald plans an ambush. Thangbrand and Gudleif kill Thorvald. Hjalti denounces the old gods (See poem 9). Thangbrand's ship, the *Bison*, was wrecked. Steinunn, the mother of Ref the poet debates with him and tells him of how his ship was wrecked (See poem 10).

-103-

Gest Oddleifsson, a wise man who foretold people's fates. He held a feast to welcome Thangbrand and his men. Two hundred heathens were there as well. A berserk named Otrygg was also expected, and greatly feared. Thangbrand makes a plan involving three fires to see if they will accept the new faith. Otrygg did not dare walk through the first blessed by Thangbrand. (Another example of the crucifix defeating the old ways here). Otrygg was killed by Thangbrand and Gest converted. Gest tells Thangbrand to try the Althing to have the faith made law. His ship is repaired and the heathens call it *Iron Basket*.

-104-

Hjalti was outlawed at the Thing for mocking the gods. Thangbrand tells Olaf of the trouble, he gets angry and wants to imprison and kill all of the Icelanders. Gizur and Hjalti tell him they will go preach the new faith, this calms him down. Both sides gather in large numbers at the Thing.

-105-

(Read this chapter for the final decision regarding Christianity)

Thorgeir the Godi of Ljosavatn, son of Thjorvi and Thorunn. His wife was named Gudrid. His brother was named Orm Box-back.

Great commotion at the Thing. Both sides declared they were not bound by law to the other. Hall of Side was lawspeaker for the Christians, but he went through Thorgeir, who was a heathen. He also paid Thorgeir money and he sat with a cloak over his head for a whole day. Thorgeir decides Christianity shall be the new way, and that heathen practices are only permitted if in secret. This eventually changes over time and all pagan ways become prohibited.

-106-

Amundi, the blind son of Hoskuld Njalsson, seeks compensation from Lyting (although he is an illegitimate child). Amundi is given sight by God after

mentioning he would have blood revenge if you could see. He kills Lyting and loses his sight against after the deed. He receives compensation as well.

-107-

Valgard the Grey returns and is shocked by the changes. He is still a heathen as well. Mord mentions that no one comes to his Thing anymore at Thingaskalar due to the new Fifth Court and people going to Hoskuld. Valgard makes a plan to cause strife between the Njalssons and Hoskuld. Mord urges Valgard to convert, but he refuses and later falls ill and dies after destroying Mord's Christian symbols.

-108-

Mord befriends the Njalssons, but Njal remains skeptical. They go to a feast with Mord and are given gifts, as was planned. Njal says they will pay the full price for them.

-109-

The Njalssons and Hoskuld hold feasts for one another and give each other gifts. They affirm their friendship this way. Mord goes to Hoskuld and says that the gifts from the Njalssons were of great mockery to him. Mord is unable to fool Hoskuld. Mord then goes to the Njalssons and tried the same thing. The rejected his claims at first but eventually believed him. Flosi noticed the coldness growing between them and urges Hoskuld to not return back there, but he refuses to run away from the matter.

Njal takes Kari's son Thord as his foster son. (Also remember Thorhall, to be the greatest lawyer of Iceland once put to the test).

-110-

Mord continues to spread slander of Hoskuld to the Njalssons. They all plan to kill hoskuld, after Mord urged that he would beat them to it if they do not act.

-111-

They slay Hoskuld, who does not fight back. His final words: "May god help me and forgive you." (Quite powerful). Mord plans to have the case eventually nullified once people find out he was involved. Njal is deeply

saddened by this, saying he would of rather lost two sons than Hoskuld. He notes that this event will bring them his and also their deaths, though Kari will not be effected the same way.

-112-

Hildigunn finds Hoskuld and Mord's plan begins to unfold. Thorgerd approaches Ketil over this, since he had promised to avenge Hoskuld if such a time were to come, but Ketil is in a difficult position being married to a daughter of Njal's. Still, he allowed Mord to take charge of the case. The slaying is spoken badly of across the land. Asgrim is even troubled by this when the Njalssons seek his aid and support.

-113-

Gudmund the Powerful, son of Eyjolf and Hallbera. His wife was named Thorlaug, daughter of Atli the Mighty and Herdis. (Genealogy include and Irish king). He was a great and wealthy chieftain. From him come the best people of Iceland (See quote 80). Gudmund was a friend of Asgrim's, who planned to ask him for support.

-114-

Snorri the Godi, son of Thorgrim and Thordis Sursdottir. (See genealogy, his father has kinship back to Ragnar). He was also a friend of Asgrim's, who also planned to ask for his support. Snorri was the wisest of the men in Iceland who could not foretell the future (Njal has that role).

-115-

Flosi learns of Hoskuld being slain, he is angry but remains even-tempered. Flosi sends word for Hall of Sida and his son Ljot (Note him being foretold of three summer Things). Flosi gathers more people. Flosi discusses the truth behind the slaying with Runolf, who lived close by to the event. Runolf, although a kinsmen of Mord's, also thinks he does more bad than good.

-116-

Hildigunn prepares for Flosi's arrival. Flosi was given a high seat, but was not flattered by this. Rather, he though he was being made fun of. He acts a bit of a jerk over a towel. Hildigunn makes it clear she wants blood vengeance. She

uses the cloak that Flosi had given Hoskuld to try and persuade him, but he gets angry over this. At this he left.

Ingjald, the brother of Hoskuld's mother. He was married to Thraslaug Egilsdottir. Flosi goes to him for support. Ingjald had promised to always help Flosi, but like Ketil, he was in a tough position due to his own relations with Njal and his sons along with other matters.

-117-

Flosi goes to speak with the Sigfussons (Ketil of Mork, Grani, Lambi, etc). They speak of vengeance, but Flosi explains that it is not practical, even if they do in fact desire this. Mord and Flosi also work more closely together. Flosi also has a marriage arranged to secure Mord's loyalty.

-118-

The Njalsson prepare to ride to the Thing. Njal decides to go with them. Thorhall Asgrimsson, Njal's foster-son, was there as well. The Njalssons laughed at him over a ragged cloak on. He replied by saying he would take it off after he takes action for the slaying of his foster-father (foresight). Hjalti agrees to help Njal and tells him of Flosi's movements. They head for Asgrim's. Asgrim vows his support for Njal and they head to the Thing.

-119-

Flosi and his supporters gather at the Thing. Asgrim decides they should seek more supporters for the Njalssons. Gizur the White agrees. Skafti refuses, Skarphedin insults him (turf on head incident). Snorri declines, but vows to not aid their enemies either. Haf the Wealthy won't help either. (Everyone keeps asking about Skarphedin). Gudmund says they will discuss support later, though it seems they do not get it. Thorkel Bully is next, known for interesting adventures abroad and impressive reputation.

-120-

(Impressive physical description of Thorkel Bully). Thorkel believes their case to be an unjust one, especially since Gudmund denied to support them. Skarphedin insults him and Thorkel gets quite upset. Skarphedin rushed at Thorkel and made him sheathe his sword and sit down (Impressive, since Thorkel was described so heroically). They left after that and return to their

booth. After Gudmund heard of what happened with Thorkel, he decided to help the Njalssons (him and Thorkel were somewhat rivals).

-121-

They prepare to let out Mord's secret (that he in fact was involved in the slaying), but Thorhall Asgrimsson tells them to wait, for they still would have time to re-validate the case if they acted now. The court convenes on Friday and the procedures begin. Thorhall reveals that Mord was involved and states that this case is invalid.

-122-

Njal has a few words though, before anyone leaves or gets upset. Njal urges for a peaceful settlement, stating how much he had loved Hoskuld. Flosi agrees to this thanks to Hall's encouragement. Twelve arbitrators are chosen and meet to decide.

-123-

(An interesting chapter with a lot going on)

Snorri thinks it is best to set a huge fine for Hoskuld's death, and to avoid exile or outlawry since that typically does not end well and creates enemies. He suggests triple compensation (six hundred ounces of silver). They also decide for it to be paid at the Thing, hoping to spark contributions from others as well to pay the fine (teamwork!). The fines were paid well. Njal added a gift of a silk robe and boots to the pile. (Skarphedin keeps grinning).

Flosi does not take the silk robe gift well and suspects Njal (not incorrectly) and uses the term 'Old beardless' to refer to him. An insult war sparks between Flosi and Skarphedin. There will be no peaceful settlement for this case. The others decide to hold onto the money for the next Althing, expecting it will be needed.

-124-

Flosi and the Sigfussons make an oath to see to it that the Njalssons perish. Whoever drops out forfeits both their life and property. Flosi tells of his plan. Flosi avoided his father-in-law Hall, knowing he would disapprove.

Ingjald was a part of this oath. His sister Hrodney comes to talk him out of it, but he feels stuck in a tough position. Njal had treated Ingjald well in the

past, saving him from outlawry three times. Ingjald refuses to tell Njal of the plans that were made, since that would be scornful, but tells Hrodney to tell them to be on their guard all summer.

Saeunn, old and wise and could foretell the future. She knew what was to come and nagged about the chickweed that would be used to start the fire.

-125-

Runolf Thorsteinsson. He had a son named Hildiglum. On the night of Lord's Day twelves weeks before winter, Hildiglum heard a great crash and saw a man pass quickly by on a horse (see the chapter for a more detail description — See poem 12 also). Hildiglum tells Hjalti of this and he says that it was a witch-ride and that they occur before great events. (foreshadowing Flosi's plans to come).

-126-

Flosi's plan begins to unfold. Details of Flosi's route. They all prayed along the way as well. Ingjald had not shown up and they said they would deal with this later.

-127-

Grim and Helgi were not at Bergthorshvol because they went to Holar, were their children were being fostered. An old woman tells them of an unusual occurrence: Flosi and Sigfussons riding with weapons and haste. Grim and Helgi head home at this news. Bergthora says this will be the last night that she will serve them food, the coming of Grim and Helgi confirms her thoughts. Once Helgi and Grim return, everyone was much alarmed. When they tell of why they came, Njal says that no one should go to bed that night.

-128-

Flosi was drawing nearer and nearer. Njal, his sons, and all their servants stood outside ready for them. They debate attacking with them outside, but Njal decides to go inside to take advantage of the house as a defensive tactic. Skarphedin is skeptical about doing this, knowing that Flosi and his men would result to a low tactic such as burning. But he agrees anyway. They take their positions inside. Flosi is pleased that they went inside. They surrounded Njal's home. Skarphedin kills Hroald Ozurarson. Many more men were wounded.

Flosi takes this as indication that they cannot defeat them with weapons. Flosi decides on the burning.

-129-

They begin to start fires and Skarphedin mocks them, especially Grani (see quote 91). The fires are put out, but then they find the chickweed and use that. This creates a worse fire and the whole house begins to burn. Njal still tries to make a settlement, but Flosi refuses. Flosi allows the women and children to come out though, pretty much anyone who isn't Njal's son. Astrid tries to sneak Helgi out, but this fails. He makes a good fight, but Flosi slays him. He offers Njal and Bergthora a free exit, but they deny this. Njal and Bergthora go to lie down in their bed and await their death. Thord, Kari's son, stays with Bergthora. The Njalssons continue to put up a fight.

Kari was able to escape. Flosi's men thought he was a piece of burning wood that Skarphedin was throwing at them (since his clothes were on fire). Kari went to a hollow and rested there, which is now called Kari's hollow.

-130-

Skarphedin could not escape. He and Grim try to put out some of the fire, but Grim falls down dead. The whole roof then fell and Skarphedin was stuck beneath it and could not move. Flosi and his men stayed until dawn. Flosi learns that Kari escaped. Flosi is disturbed by this and compares Kari to Gunnar. Some suggest they search the rubble for more survivors, notably for Skarphedin, but Flosi warns against this and they decide to flee.

They decide to go after Ingjald for breaking the oath. He states he is willing to spare him (due to his difficult position) if he gives him self-judgement. Ingjald refuses, saying he'd rather ride with Kari. They have a sort of spear contest and Ingjald is able to escape, but not before he kills Thorstein, Flosi's nephew. Fearing their bad luck, they ride off. They make a plan to wait things out for a bit.

-131-

Kari made his rounds, even to Mord, who actually grieved at these events. Kari encourage him to muster up men and go to Holtsvad. Next he goes to ride to Hjalti but runs into Ingjald. They both then ride to Hjalti now. He is angry upon hearing this and immediately thinks it best to go and kill them all. Thorgeir

tells them to not search to far and to push for outlawry and blood vengeance. Some wanted to go and seize their farms, Mord advises against this, for their farms untouched will lure them back. Mord makes it known he will stay loyal to Kari. Flosi suspected that they would not be safe going to their farms, and so they all go east and stay with Flosi.

-132-

Kari asks Hjalti to retrieve Njal's remains. They find Njal and Bergthora unburned (thanks to the ox hide from earlier). They comment that Njal's body was particularly radiant. Next they find Skarphedin's body (more violent description). His axe was noted, to be given to Thorgeir Skorar-Geir. There were burned crosses in his body. People did not fear Skarphedin's body. Ingjald's leg was infected. It healed but he always had a limp after that. Kari goes to stay with Asgrim, who extends hospitality to all who had lived at Bergthorshvol. Interesting moment with Thorhalla. Asgrim tells Kari of their plans on how to approach the case against Flosi. Kari was unable to sleep and spoke often of Njal and Skarphedin, not even ill of enemies.

-133-

Flosi has a dream. (Reflected from another tale, see footnote). The dream is of a man (named Iron-Grim) calling out names from a mountain, who die in the order they are called. These names are of Flosi's men, those who were part of the burning. It also foreshadows the battle coming at the Althing. He then speaks a verse of Kari (see poem 16). They do not tell anyone of this dream and search for supporters of the troubles that lie ahead.

-134-

Flosi travels by walking to Hall and asks for his support at the Thing. Hall agrees since he is bound to do so (kinship). Hall gives Flosi advice to find more support from chieftains in the north. Hallbjorn the Strong accepts to help Flosi. More aid is found, some aid is refused. Sorli states he will take whatever side Gudmund takes (his father-in-law). Some he even bribed to help him. Flosi returns to Hall and gets advice about the Thing.

-135-

Kari and Thorhall go to Gizur the White. Before Kari leaves, Gizur gives him advice on what to do next. Kari does as Gizur suggests and ride to Mord. As Gizur expected, Mord is hesitant to take up the case, and so they use his wife Thorkatla (for Gizur to bring her home and separate them) to make him agree. This works. (Passage of the procedure of turning over a suit). Helgi is the main death they use to prosecute the case. He repeats and names witnesses many times. They prepare for the Althing. Thorhall's leg is badly swollen, but he still prepares to leave and help, for he is a great lawyer.

-136-

Flosi and the other burners go to Asgrim to show him their ill will. Asgrim prepares his home for their arrival upon seeing them coming. Asgrim remains calm for the most part, but it is obvious he is slowly boiling inside. Eventually he leaps at Flosi with an axe, but this does not amount to anything, though displays Asgrim's boldness. Flosi and his men ride off. Hall made it clear he thought they had gone too far by doing that. They then ride to the Thing.

-137-

Thorgeir Skorargeir and his brothers Thorleif Crow and Thorgrim the Tall went east to Mord. Then Hjalti join them followed by Asgrim. They met with Gizur and then headed to the Thing. Tensions were high. There was a very large crowd at the Thing, like none other.

-138-

Eyjolf, son of Bolverk. He was held in great respect and was considered one of the three greatest lawyers in Iceland. Flosi speaks with Bjarni Brodd-Helgason. Bjarni asks who will be the lawyer for his case. Flosi says that they have none and so Bjarni suggests Eyjolf, and that he can be bought with enough coin. Flosi tries to get aid from the men of Ljosavatn, but they give him trouble. Flosi brings up what Skarphedin did to Thorkel Bully. Eventually he persuaded them with bribery and flattery.

Next they go to Eyjolf. Bjarni brings up Eyjolf's nobly birth (related to Ragnar). Flosi speaks bluntly and upsets Eyjolf. Flosi gives Eyjolf a golden arm bracelet in good favor (a kinder way of saying he bribed him). Eyjolf accepts.

They transfer the case lawfully to Eyjolf. Upon returning to the Thing, Snorri noticed Eyjolf's new bracelet; he is very critical about it.

-139-

The others talked of Flosi's movements. They also search for more support (this just keeps building up). They first go to Skafti, who refuses and insults them. They go to Snorri, who states he will not help in court but will help if a fight breaks loose at the Thing. He gives a detailed account of what could happen and how he would react.

-140-

They go to Gudmund next. He is quick to say he will assist them this time. After his support, they decided that should be enough, and so the Thing continues.

-141-

They all go to Law Rock. Mord speaks first. (Legal speech). Thorgeir Skorargeir speaks next. (Legal speech — similar to Mord's). Next Kari, then Thorleif Crow, then Thorgrim, then Asgrim, and then others. Eyjolf speaks of a plan to trick the prosecution into breaking procedure (see pg. 254 for details).

-142-

(Great chapter for legal procedures)

Each side prepares heavily, particularly for battle. The prosecution goes to the East Quarter Court to initiate their case against Flosi. Mord speaks. (Legal speech — name witnesses, name crime, name punishment, name notice, repeat.) Then the witnesses to Mord's notice repeat this twice. Then the witnesses of Mord's taking over of the prosecution recite their testimony twice. Mord named witnesses a second time. And again (for all steps being taken properly).

Eyjolf refutes Mord's most recent witnesses for their ties to him (kin and religious ties — baptism). This is agreed upon. The prosecution seeks Thorhall's advice. Mord can refute their dismissal since he is not the original plaintiff (that was Njal's nephew that had). This was agreed upon. Eyjolf aims to dismiss two witnesses due to not being property holders. Mord and Asgrim consult with Thorhall again. Thorhall knows what Eyjolf overlooked again. This is presented and agreed upon (see quote 104). Eyjolf tries to invalidate four more witnesses

for the presence of other witnesses who were closer and not summoned. To this they were boastful. They accept this, but Mord handled it well. The five valid witnesses give their testimony, repeated findings twice. Then the case is offered to the defense.

-143-

Eyjolf pulls his trickery to illegitimate the case with Flosi having changed him allegiance. (Not East Court but supposed to be North Court). They cannot seem to do much about it either, and so their other cases are presented.

-144-

They go to Thorhall and he figures out what Eyjolf is hoping to do: to take this case to the Fifth Court. Thorhall tells them to bring up the bribery that Flosi was guilty of. Mord summons Flosi and Eyjolf for this and another testimony that violated Althing procedure. Lesser outlawry was the sentence to be made against them for these things. The judges were divided (it had to be unanimous. This is the purpose for the Fifth Court, since that could be a majority rather than unanimous). It is a major gain for the prosecution to have made their summons first.

They all go to the Fifth Court. Mord names witnesses and starts the procedures. Flosi and Eyjolf were unable to challenge this. The nine witnesses find Flosi and Eyjolf guilty to these new charges. The evidence is summed up. Flosi and Eyjolf wait for them to make an error (amount of witnesses). They make this error and seek Thorhall's advice on how to mend this.

-145-

Snorri gathers his men upon hearing how things are going. Thorhall is extremely upset that they were going to be outlawed and that the prosecution had been quashed. He stabs his leg, which actually helps relieve it from its swelling, and goes to the Thing, spear in hand. He kills Grim the Red. Kari and Asgrim join in and a fight breaks out. Arni is killed. Thorvald Thrym-Ketilsson is killed. Flosi's side is forced to retreat a bit. Thorvald Tjorvason was wounded and would never get compensation for this. Snorri prevents Flosi's men from running and Asgrim's men swoop in. Ljot is killed. Kari kills Eyjolf. A truce was declared for the duration of the Thing.

Hall of Sida appeals to Asgrim, speaking of how bad these events have been. Kari still feels justice will not come, for their killings will be used towards the burning and they do not want this. Kari speaks verses of his actions (see poems 18-20). Laughed rose from Kari's verse against Skafti Thordsson. Hall pushes, Snorri even urges, and so Asgrim allows this to happen. (He did not want to make a settlement due to Flosi's rude actions beforehand). Major compensation to be paid for Njal and those victim to burning, for the most part (see end of page 276). Flosi and the burners were sentence to outlawry, most for life, but Flosi was only for three years (odd since he was the main leader of all this). Gifts are exchanged. The Thing is finally resolved, for now.

-146-

Kari hears that the Sigfussons are going to collect money from Hofdabrekka in the Eyjafjoll district. They decide to ride after them. They find them sleeping and wake them to fight. Kari has some very heroic moments. Sigurd Lambason is slain. Mord Sigfusson is slain. Leidolf is slain. The rest fled on their horses. (Remember Kari was one who did not agree to the settlement, and so they are not breaking this. for this reason they do not involve others who agreed to the settlement).

Flosi and Hall of Side meet and discuss trying to make a settlement with Thorgeir Skorargeir, this will leave just Kari to worry about. The other Sigfussons come along as well to seek a settlement with him.

-147-

They ride to Holt to speak with Thorgeir. Upon arrival, Kari was with Thorgeir outside. They greet Hall well. Kari urges Thorgeir to settle. Kari says he still will not settle because his son is still unavenged. Thorgeir resists, but eventually he agrees thanks to Kari. They exchange gifts. The settlement is made and Flosi must collect the compensation. Outlawry was not rebuked. Flosi's sentence apparently included a pilgrimage to Rome. Hall urges Flosi to follow the terms of this settlement.

-148-

Kari tells Thorgeir to take over his properties so that Thorgeir will not be dragged into trouble when Kari seeks vengeance, and so his property cannot be taken. Bjorn the White, son of Kadal. His wife was Valgerd, but only for his

money. She did not love him. Kari stays with him. Bjorn is keen-sighted and swift. Valgerd insults Bjorn, saying he is not brave. People thought Kari had gone to Gudmund the Powerful, and so he remained hidden for some time with Bjorn.

-149-

Flosi and the other burners plan their leaving of Iceland. They try to buy a ship off a Norwegian who needs a wife to stay in Iceland. Flosi gives him land for the ship. The other Sigfussons want to ride off to gather stuff, not fearful of Kari since he was up north (but not really). Flosi reminds Ketil of his dream. The Sigfussons ride past Bjorn and he goes to greet them. He tells them Kari went to Gudmund. Grani starts some big talk, saying they'd give Kari something to fear. Bjorn asks when they will be riding back and later tells this to Kari.

-150-

Kari and Bjorn ride east. They expect to run into the Sigfussons. Bjorn is amusing (wanting to run away yet stay and fight). The Sigfussons ride that way, where Kari and Bjorn expected them, and split up in the process. Kari slays Modolf. Grani is wounded. Kari slays Lambi Sigurdarson. Thorstein Geirleifsson is slain by Kari. Kari reports the slayings.

-151-

Kari and Bjorn make another plan to attack the Sigfussons. The fight begins. Glum is slain. Others are slain. Kari spares Ketil. Flosi says things are still not near an end, for Kari has no match.

-152-

Kari and Bjorn return to his house. Kari speaks well of Bjorn. Then they go to Thorgeir and Kari asks that he take Bjorn into his protection. Then Kari rides to Asgrim, he tells him that he will go abroad to hunt down the other burners. Next to Gizur the White, they exchanged gifts. Kari goes to Orkney.

-153-

Flosi and his companions sail abroad finally. They have a terrible trip. It turns out that they sail off course and get stranded in Orkney (how convenient). They appeal to the earl, who has heard of the burning. The earl seizes them all.

Eventually this was reversed thanks to a kinsmen of Flosi's (Thorstein). Peace was made. Flosi was allowed to enter his service. (Note that Helgi Njalsson had served for him before, which is why the earl was so upset with Flosi).

-154-

Kari hears of Flosi being in Orkney. Earl Sigurd meets with other figures, including Brian Boru. (A good deal of focus on Brian in this chapter). They talk of news, including the burning and Flosi and his men tell of their story to the hall.

-155-

Kari came and listened in as Gunnar Lambason was telling his story. Kari heard him lie about Skarphedin to King Sigtrygg of Ireland (Dublin). Kari could not stand the lies and rushed in and spoke verse with sword drawn (see poem 22). Kari kills Gunnar Lambason (resembles a scene from Snorri's *Saga of Saint Olaf* according to the footnote). The earl called for Kari's arrest, but no one would do this since Kari had a reputation here once before. Kari sails to Scotland. Flosi took over telling of the burning and did so fairly.

King Sigtrygg wanted earl Sigurd to fight with him against King Brian. they agree as long as Sigurd marries Sigtrygg's mother and give him the kingdom of Dublin. they search for two Vikings on the Isle of Man: Ospak and Brodir (attested in Irish sources). Ospak did not want to fight against a good king like Brian. (He was a heathen and the wisest of men). Brodir and Ospak are foster-brothers.

-156-

Strange events of rain that was boiling blood and other elements (read the beginning of the chapter for detail). Ospak says it foretells doom. Feud breaks between the foster-brothers and Ospak convert to Christianity and flees to go support King Brian. He tells of what is to come and King Brian prepares.

-157-

Earl Sigurd and his men head for Dublin. Flosi gives men of his for support. The armies prepare to clash. Brodir fights Ulf Hraeda, eventually having to flee. Earl Sigurd fights Kerthjalfad, who was destroying them. The banner-bearer got killed a lot, and so it was feared who would have to carry it.

Thorstein Hallsson was spared by Kerthjalfad (he seems out of place). Brodir returns and kills Brian. Brodir was killed violently by Ulf and Kerthjalfad. Many of the burners fell at this battle.

Dorrund sees women weaving with the remnants of men and instruments of war (see poem 23). This was on a Good Friday. Many terrible sights were seen abroad at the same time along with other odd events. Earl Gilli has a strange dream of an Irishmen named Herfinn (see poem 24). This dream occurred before they received official news of the battle. Earl Gilli and Flosi make their pilgrimage to Rome. They sailed to Wales and stayed there awhile.

-158-

Kari returns and learns of the events that happened in Ireland. He hears where Flosi went and follows him to Wales. Kari kills Kol as he was at the market in Wales. Kari gives notice of the slaying (interesting with them being in Wales and not in Iceland). Flosi never spoke harshly of Kari. Flosi made his pilgrimage. He received absolution from the Pope himself. He went home through Germany and Switzerland, going back to Iceland from Norway. He was showered with honor. He returned to Iceland having fulfilled all of his part in the settlement.

-159-

Kari made pilgrimage in Normandy and walked south and received absolution. He spent that winter in Caithness. His wife died that winter he stayed there. He returned to Iceland after a difficult passage. It was snowing and they go to Flosi for shelter. They made a full reconciliation. Flosi gives Kari his brother's daughter Hildigunn in marriage. Flosi lived to be old and was lost out at sea after going to Norway for wood.

Kari and Helga Njalsdottir's children: Ragnheid, Valgerd, and Thord (who was burned). Kari and Hildigunn's children: Starkad, Thord, and Flosi. Flosi was the most distinguished.

QUOTES

1. “The reader should not be seduced by the dry, factual prose style and the convincing social and geographical setting into thinking that this is anything other than a masterful work of prose fiction.” (xxxiii)
 - a) It is easy to fall victim to this desire, to accept something that sounds too good to be true. Even I like to play with this idea, that the story unfolding happened word for word, but it is only attractive in such a way because the author has orchestrated it to be so.
2. “She will get sixty hundred, to which you must add half, and if you have heirs you are to share property equally.” (5)
3. “Hrut placed in her hands full authority over matters inside the house, and everyone was pleased with that.” (14)
 - a) This does seem like an honor for the wife to receive in some ways. I find it even more interesting when this is actually denied by Hallgerd herself (page 29) when she is extended this authority by Glum.
4. “When you’re ready, go to your bed with the men who are to travel with you, and at your husband’s bedside name witnesses and declare yourself legally divorced from him, as is allowable according to the rules of the Althing and the law of the land. You must repeat the naming of witnesses at the men’s door. ...He then went to Law Rock and declared them legally divorced.” (16-17)
 - a) A three-fold divorce procedure from the woman’s side. Three declarations: at the bed, the main door, and the Law Rock.
5. “Hrut took a gold ring from his finger and gave it to [the boy] and said, ‘Go away, and don’t ever give offense again.’ The boy went away and said, ‘I shall always remember your decency.’” (18)
6. “...it’s my word that counts when we disagree, not yours.” (20)
 - a) Hoskuld’s word weighs more than Hallgerd’s word. I assume this is due to her honor being dependent upon him, since a woman’s honor was related to the honor of her nearest male relative.

7. "...Hoskuld paid over Hallgerd's dowry graciously." (21)
 - a) Another example of how a bride came with a 'security deposit'.
8. "“Her laughter doesn't seem as good to me as it does to you,' said Osvif, 'and the proof of this will come later.'” (21)
 - a) Another example of how people show wisdom as well as hint at a knowledge of the future of events.
9. "Hoskuld spoke: 'Whatever Hrut tells me can be trusted — he said that great misfortune would come from this marriage. But there's no use blaming oneself for what has already happened.'” (23)
 - a) I am interested with his calm reaction. I have already begun to notice the contrast between those who act with violence and those who act with wisdom. Granted, Hoskuld did not have a strong relationship with Thorvald and would not be too affected emotionally by his death.
10. "The nose is near to the eyes." (25)
 - a) A proverb meaning 'what involves those close to us involves us as well'.
11. "There's no stopping this. What is fated will have to be." (27)
 - a) A reference to fate, yet also the presence of free choice. Glum chooses to marry Hallgerd, despite the warnings of his brother.
12. "One oath does not invalidate all oaths." (27)
 - a) A proverb meaning 'what happens once, even if bad, need not repeat.'
13. "Everything must be free from deceit." (28)
 - a) A common issue so far has been in lies and certain people being in the dark about agreements and other actions.
14. "Glum spoke: 'My brother Thorarin and I have had some words with your father about an agreement by which I would marry you, provided it is your wish as well as theirs. Now tell us, as a woman with a mind of your own,

- whether this match is to your liking. If you have no heart for and agreement with us, we will say no more about it.” (28)
- a) It seems that the characters of the saga have learned something (at least these few), and as a result, the author has told the audience something important as well. The author has noted that a woman should not be kept out of affairs regarding their own marriage, for it can bring discontent and lead to misfortunes. I feel it is important that she was not blamed for the events, but rather it was the failings of multiple people that resulted in the earlier misfortunes. So now, this time around things have changed and more respect is given to her in these matters.
15. “The girl was sprinkled with water and given that name.” (29)
- a) Interesting to note, as was said in the back footnote, that this is not a Christian tradition, but indeed a pagan ceremony, although it sounds very much like a baptism. I do wonder how this is know to be a pagan ceremony — something to consider and look into further perhaps.
16. “The only bad company comes from home.” (32)
- a) An interesting proverb that comes up in other sagas as well.
17. “[Unn] was very lavish and improvident with her property, and her wealth wasted away until she had nothing but land and personal items.” (34)
- a) It is interesting to note that a woman could obtain property and rule over it herself, since she had not been married a second time. Perhaps this was a true possibility, though, even if this was so, the author seems to have this painted negatively, since she wasted away everything and managed it poorly.
18. (*after Hoskulð had a dream about a bear*) “This bear was the personal spirit of none other than Gunnar of Hlidarendi.” (40)
19. “Hrut named witnesses and declared that the suit was invalid because Gunnar had failed to present three witnessed statements that should have come before the court: the first at the bedpost, the second at the main door, and the third at the Law Rock.” (41-42)
- a) Process of witness statements in relation to divorce claims.

20. "...and she married Valgard without the advice of her kinsmen." (43)
a) That is obviously an important detail for the author.
21. "Gunnar saw the spear coming at him, and he turned around so quickly that no eye could follow and caught the spear in his left hand and threw it back at Karl's ship, and the man who was in its way was struck dead." (48)
a) Heroic action for one with heroic qualities.
22. "Kolskegg stopped to rest, and Gunnar noticed this and said, 'You have served others better than yourself today — by taking away their thirst!' Kolskegg took a goblet full of mead and drank it down, and then went back to fighting." (48)
a) Interesting role of mead in that scene.
23. "Hallgrim has a halberd on which he has put a spell so that no weapon but this can kill him. ...when it is about to strike a death blow, ...it makes a loud singing noise — that's how much power it has." (49)
a) An interesting magical weapon and a much feared weapon later on.
24. "Fate must decide that, my lord." (51)
a) Another notion of the role of fate, yet also in the presence of free choice.
25. "At Yule the earl gave him a gold bracelet." (51)
a) A mentioning of a pagan holiday
26. "His wife was Thorhild the Poetess; she was harsh with words and made up mocking verses." (54)
a) A female poet of sorts, but portrayed negatively.
27. "It was the custom between Gunnar and Njal, because of their close friendship, that every winter one of them would invite the other to his home for a winter feast." (57)
a) An interesting custom between them two, though it cannot be said that this is a widespread custom or practice just from this alone — but still interesting.

28. (*When compensation was paid for Svart's death*) "This was moderately done — the same amount must be paid for Kol when the time comes." (60)
- a) Clearly the feud is still the answer even though compensation had already been paid.
29. (*When Bergthora hires Atli*) "'I'm Njal's wife,' she said, 'and I have no less authority in hiring than he does.'" (60)
- a) An interesting note of how the wife had such authority over who works at the household and their properties, even without needing to consult the husband (at least in this case.)
30. (*When Atli is told to kill Kol*) "'That's quite fitting,' he said, 'since both Kol and I are bad sorts.'" (61)
- a) He just openly said how bad of a person he is. This is interesting but somewhat odd that a person would be almost proud of this. Characters like this are more for getting action done for the saga than anything else, or that a bad persona has been placed onto them by the author.
31. (*When Atli kills Kol*) "Atli then thrust his spear and hit him in the waist. Kol swung his axe at him and missed and fell off his horse and died at once." (62)
- a) Definitely a major contrast with the heroic actions of Gunnar earlier in the saga.
32. "Slaves are much more active than they used to be: then they just got into brawls, and that seemed harmless enough, but now they're out to kill each other." (63)
- a) Even the characters of the saga are noticing the progression of the bloodfeud. Yet, Skarphedin grins after he says this, as if pleased with the statement. It is as if there is no remorse felt by these actions, or even promoting them. People are working around the legal system, compensation means nothing anymore, for even when it is paid there is still a slaying. This is showing the early signs of law turning to lawlessness. The system of compensation should work, however, not when it is being manipulated in such a way. Eventually the ideals crumble and things get out of hand as people become somewhat self-centered in these affairs.

33. “More men than I expected have now become killers.” (67)
34. “Whoever warns is free of fault.” (68)
35. (*Upon Njal and Thord sitting — Thord sees a bloody goat, Njal does not and says...*)
 “‘You must be a doomed man,’ said Njal, ‘and you have seen your personal spirit, and now you must be on your guard.’” (69) “‘That won’t do me any good,’ said Thord, ‘if my fate is sealed.’” (69)
- a) Similar situation as seen in quote 18.
 - b) Also a mention of fate, yet no case of free choice in the matter this time.
36. “We’re not made like women, that we become furious over everything.” (75)
- a) This seems a bit ideal to say. Although sometimes it seems that they need convincing, they (as in men) are also known to be moved to kill over such insults at times. (I’d like to find some examples of this, if I am able). Though, the main characters, like Njal and Gunnar, are not easily swayed to such actions, though they also do not seem to do much to stop them other than talk.
37. (*Skarphedin says while plotting to kill Sigmund...*) “I’ve marked Sigmund for myself — for that is a man’s job.” (76)
38. “Gunnar announced the settlement at the Thingskalar Assembly, at a time when it was most crowded, and he talked about how well Njal and his sons had acted, and about the malicious words which led Sigmund to his death. No one was ever to bring these words again, and if anyone did he would be without right to compensation.” (78)
- a) In other words, an outlaw.
 - b) Also, I find this settlement to be an example of how the compensation was meant to work. Each side respectful and coming to peaceful terms and abiding by their agreement. This has been constantly broken before, and likely will continue to be broken, but here presents the ideal of how the compensation should not be broken. although, the 200 ounces paid was still cancelled out, since Njal received that 200 ounces of silver from another slaying from Gunnar only to give it back to him for this slaying.

- c) This demonstrates the power of words and of satirical poetry. Even though skarphedin said men do not become furious over such things, society as a whole seems to think differently. Gunnar stresses that these words should no be repeated, showing that words do have the ability to cause feud and strife.
39. “It’s not for men to busy themselves with preparing food!” (82)
- a) Like it has been said before, any matter of the household is authority of the wife.
40. “You’re the one who has to make amends for your wife...” (84)
- a) An example of how a wife’s honor is dependent on her husband’s, but also an example of the relationship between their roles.
41. “Do as you wish. But some men will say that you cannot see where your honor lies if you turn down the choices I have offered.” (85)
42. “It’s bad to have a scoundrel for a best friend, and we will always be sorry that you turned back — it’s not a clever move to send the worst of liars on an errand which, it may be said, men’s lives depend.” (85)
- a) Example of the importance of advice and who to trust, as well as wisdom, both in actions and in the prediction of events. But also an example of doing things yourself and not always trusting others to be your voice.
43. “Time passed until the final Summons Days for the Althing.”
- a) (*from the footnote*) Summons had to be made at least four weeks prior to the meeting, which was in late June.
44. “...ears belong best in the place where they grew.” (89)
45. “‘What I do not know,’ said Gunnar, ‘is whether I am less manly than other men because killing troubles me more than it does them.’ (93)
46. “Never kill more than once within the same bloodline, and never break any settlement which good men make between you and others, least of all if you have broken my first warning.” (94)

47. “They dug up the bodies and named witnesses to the fatal wounds. Then they gave notice of their findings and summoned a panel of nine neighbors.” (95)
- a) Perhaps an example of a legal process during the time of writing the saga.
48. “‘But it would be better if I did,’ said Skarphedin. ‘I’m the violent sort, like them.’” (101)
- a) Another instance where it seems the author uses a character to speak to the audience, since it seems odd anyone would openly regard themselves so negatively.
49. “Gunnar has always stood too firm to be felled by mere words, and so it is now.” (101)
- a) As the case has been many times prior, words have been a source of starting major feuds. I feel this scene is meant to be an example of how to handle such a situation without hastily jumping to anger. Though, Gunnar has not always been this way, as we have seen earlier, so I do feel this is an ideal that is placed into this scene to contrast the behavior of Egil’s sons.
50. (*When Thorgeir tells Hildigunn about his plan to attack Gunnar*) “‘My guess,’ she said, ‘is that you will be carrying both your head and hand low when you come from this encounter.’” (103)
- a) Although I do not think this is the first time, I like to see that a woman has some wisdom to share with the foolishness of these men. Often have the wives been at the center of trouble, but here we have a case of the opposite.
51. “My daughter Gudrun was wrong to put aside her pride and sleep with you, if you don’t dare to go along with your father-in-law. You’re just a coward.” (104)
- a) I include this especially since it is a complete contrast to what I just stated above, all within the same chapter as well. Here we have a wife who goads the men into trouble with words, yet again. Words and women.
52. “Gunnar rode home with Hjort laid out on his shield.” (107)

53. "...summon your neighbors to the scene of the fight and name witnesses and choose Kol as the slayer of your brother Hjort, for this is lawful." (108)
- a) Interesting, since it was not Kol but the Norwegian Thorir who had slain Hjort. Why is this lawful? Is it because Thorir was an outsider as a Norwegian? Or perhaps because they all worked together they all equally share blame in a way? — This is somewhat touched on again and Njal says that, if in the presence of witnesses, Gunnar is allowed to choose the slayer and it be lawful.
54. "...the payment for this plot against your life must be no less than a payment for the slaying of either of the Thorgeirs..." (116)
- a) It is interesting that prices of compensation are made to cancel out each other in this saga. I would be tempted to say this might be to make the story flow better, since it seems unlikely that compensation prices could be manipulated so.
55. "With law our land shall rise, but it will perish with lawlessness." (117)
- a) Very profound statement. Definitely hold a deeper indication than the case at hand, as if the author used this moment to make a larger statement about the world, and of Iceland, that is in a sense timeless.
56. "Now it happened...that a great deal of blood appeared on the halberd. Kolskegg asked what this meant, and Gunnar said that when such a thing happened in other lands it was called 'wound rain' — 'Oliver told me that it was a sign of great battles.'" (119)
- a) An interesting omen, and more interesting that the footnote mentions the likeliness of Irish influence on this. I have found it interesting and delightful that Ireland has been referred to so often, more so than I would have imagined.
57. "...the case was arbitrated and the amount of payment was set, all of it to be paid at once at the Thing, and Gunnar and Kolskegg were to go abroad and stay there for three years. If Gunnar had a chance to leave and did not take it, he could be killed with impunity by the kinsmen of the slain Thorgeir." (122)

- a) Unfair as this judgment was, it could have been worse. At least he was able to return and was not to be killed on the spot by just anyone. This settlement seems unique since only Thorgiers kinsmen could slay Gunnar if he did not leave.
58. “You’ve been cruelly used, my foster-child Sam, and it is to be expected that our deaths are meant to be close together.” (126)
- a) Interesting that Gunnar refers to his loyal dog as a foster-child here.
59. “Gizur looked at him and spoke: ‘Well, is Gunnar home?’ Thorgrim answered, ‘Find that out for yourselves, but I’ve found out one thing — that his halberd’s home.’” (126)
- a) A good bit of humor
60. (*upon a Shepard and servant woman passing Gunnar’s burial mound*) “Gunnar seemed to them to be in high spirits and reciting verses in the mound.” (129)
61. “Hogni took down the halberd, and it rang. Rannveig jumped up in a rage and asked, ‘Who’s taking the halberd, after I gave orders that no one should touch it?’ ‘I’m brining it to my father,’ said Hogni, ‘so that he may have it with him in Valhalla and use it in battle.’ ‘First you must carry it yourself and avenge your father,’ she said, ‘because the halberd is announcing death, for one man or more.’” (131)
- a) Gunnar definitely did earn a passage to Valhalla for his heroic actions in battle, but also interesting that the weapon itself seems to have its own will, calling out to seek vengeance almost.
62. “After this they went to Oddi. Two ravens flew with them all the way.” (131)
- a) It seems they have Odin’s approval, since Hugin and Munin follow Hogni and Skarphedin closely.
63. “I know that both of us are bad types, because you wouldn’t be here, far away from other men, unless you were outlawed by someone.” (144)
64. (*When Earl Hakon searches for Hrapp*) “He fell to his knees and held his hands over his eyes.” (145)

- a) This is interesting, because shortly after he does this — away from the other men — he leads them straight to Hrapp’s location.
65. “...Helgi killed Egil, the earl’s standard-bearer.” (150)
66. “The earl said. ‘They have killed two of our bravest men, and for that we must kill them.’ ‘That makes them all the braver,’ said Svein, ‘and yet it must be as you wish.’” (151)
67. “Kari spoke: ‘It’s wrong that you should be treated shamefully because of bad men. what do you want most now?’ ‘To attack the earl and kill him,’ they said. ‘Fate will not allow that,’ said Kari, ‘but you don’t lack courage. Anyway, let’s find out if he’s still there.’” (151)
68. “The hostility between you will grow, because they will pile up their abusive language as other join them — they are stupid men.” (154)
69. “..the effect of every action is two-sided.” (154)
- a) I suppose this is meant, in the case of blood vengeance, that vengeance leads to a settlement of peace, but the also leads to more discontent in some way.
70. “...pay him a red skin for his gray one.” (156)
- a) For him with blood for the shabby treatment he gave.
71. “Many are unable to choose the words directed at them.” (158)
72. “Hrapp spoke: ‘You’ve done what needed doing — that arm brought wounds and death to many a man.’” (160)
- a) Now he wants to be honorable somehow?
73. (*Ketil asking Thorgerð to foster Thrain’s son Hoskulð*) “‘I’ll grant you this,’ she said, ‘provided you do everything you can for him when he is grown, and avenge him if he is killed with weapons, and contribute to his morning gift when he marries — and you are to sweat to this.’”
74. (*Njal speaking with Hoskulð*) “Njal spoke: ‘Will you accept this ring as a gift?’ ‘I will,’ said the boy. ‘Do you know,’ said Njal, ‘what caused the death of

your father?’ The boy answered, ‘I know that Skarphedin killed him, but we don’t have to mention that, since the matter was settled and full compensation was paid.’ ‘Your answer is better than my question,’ said Njal, ‘and you will be a good man.’” (162)

- a) I found this to be a significant moment. Again, there is a glimpse at how the system was meant to function, no blood vengeance if full compensation was given. That is the point of compensation after all. I find it all the more appropriate that the younger generation says this — I do hope he remains true.

75. “...the Quarter Courts were set up on the basis of the traditional number of godis, thirty-six from each Quarter” (165)

76. “ Why didn’t you do the closing rite for him? His nostrils are still open.” (170)

- a) According to the footnote, “It was custom in the north to close the eyes, mouth, and nostrils immediately after death.”

77. “...the hand’s joy in the blow is brief” (171)

78. “ ...if this faith is destined to take hold it will take hold at the Althing. All the chieftains from the whole land will be there.” (179)

79. “...a tree does not fall at the first blow.” (179)

80. (*In regards to Gudmund the Powerful*) “From him are descended all the best people of Iceland: the people of Oddi, the Sturlung family, the people of Hvamm and of Fljot, Bishop Ketil, and many eminent men.” (191)

81. “...when evil seed has been sown, evil will grow.” (192)

82. “We shall eat our day-meal here and then ride on.” (194)

- a) According to the footnote, this is the chief meal of the day, but is usually eaten around nine in the morning.

83. (*Flosi to Hildigunn*) “You are the worst monster and want us to take the course which will be worst for us all. Cold are the counsels of women.” (195)

- a) I do find it a bit unfair to blame this type of counsel entirely on women. Although many cases for blood vengeance have been put forward by women, notably Hallgerd, there have been plenty of male characters who say the same for greedy reasons. In fact, Flosi turns around and praises vengeance as a manly thing! (See the next quote). But, I do suppose the author has somewhat made a point that women are partly to blame for such courses of action, since it has been a common theme nonetheless.
84. (*Flosi to Grani*) “You’ve been close enough to take vengeance, if you only had the courage and the manliness.” (196)
- a) On one hand he says that vengeance is a terrible course of action, while on the other he says that such vengeance is a matter of courage and manliness.
85. “Things draw on as destiny wills.” (205)
86. “Each of you is to have what he likes best, for this evening is the last time that I will serve food to my household.” (216)
87. “I look around the room and imagine that I see both gable-walls gone, and the table and food all covered with blood.” (217)
88. “The men who attacked Gunnar were chieftains of such integrity that they would rather have turned back than burn him in his house. But these men will attack us with fire if they can’t do it any other way, for they’ll do anything to finish us off. They must realize, and it’s not unlikely, that if we get away it will be their death. Besides, I’m not eager to let myself be suffocated like a fox in a hole.” (218)
- a) For once it seems that Skarphedin is right and that not following his father’s advice might actually save their lives. I do find it interesting that Njal has been so knowledgeable about the events of others and even himself, yet does not wish to change it or prevent this from happening. Njal should know more than anyone that death by fire awaits, so why does he put them into the situation that would allow that? Perhaps it is because the historical event was that Njal burned within his home, and that cannot be changed. It is not unlikely that the author made Njal’s character partially his

own voice as well, such as his foresight. Njal may have been wise, but obviously did not actually see the events of the future. In this aspect, using the house for defense is not a bad idea. But the author, and the audience for that matter, knows what has happened, and so this contradiction exists.

89. “Now it will be as often before, my sons, that you’ll over-rule me and show me no respect. When you were younger you did otherwise, and you were better off.” (218)

a) Ironically enough, this is the one case where not following Njal’s advice may have done them better, but it is as I stated before.

90. “There are two choices, and neither of them is good. One is to turn back, but that would lead to our death — the other is to bring fire and burn them inside, and that’s a great responsibility before God, for we’re Christian men.” (219)

a) This statement makes it seem as though burning is a terrible action only for Christians, though, I would feel this to not be the case. This was seen as a terrible option when Mord suggested it when killing Gunnar, and that was when they were all still pagan. Despite the author’s point of view, I do not think this to be a matter of religious view of good or bad. I believe it was used mainly to show to the contemporary audience that it is still a horrible thing to have done. Before it was a matter of honor, but not it is a matter of judgement.

91. (*Skarphedin to Grani*) “This is how you reward me for avenging your father — you’re the kind of man who places greater value on a lesser duty.” (219)

92. (*Njal*) “I will not leave, for I’m an old man and hardly fit to avenge my sons, and I do not want to live in shame.” (221)

93. (*Bergthora*) “I was young when I was given to Njal, and I promised him that one fate should await us both.” (221)

94. “‘He had the sword Life-taker,’ said Gerimund, ‘and one of its edges had turned blue, and we said that it must have lost its temper, but he said he

- would harden it with the blood of the Sigfussons and the other burners.”
(224)
95. “We must find other things to boast of,’ said Flosi, ‘than the burning of Njal, for there’s no distinction in that.” (225)
96. “We’ll keep at this until we have sentences of outlawry, if we’re successful, and blood revenge on top of that.” (228)
a) An still the cycle does not seem to find an end.
97. (*Hall to Flosi*) “It’s turned out just as the saying goes, that the hand’s joy in the blow is brief. The very men in your company who were once pushing for trouble are now hanging their heads.” (234)
98. (*Flosi to Sorli*) “I can see from your answer that your wife rules here.” (235)
99. (*Hall to Flosi and his men after ‘taunting’ Asgrim*) “They’ll remember their grief even without fresh reminders, and men who press others so hard are only creating trouble for themselves.” (243)
100. (*Bjarni to Eyjolf*) “Your forefathers have always played a role in major events, both at the Thing and at home in their district, and they have always come out on top. Therefore it seems to us that you are as likely to win legal cases as your kinsmen.” (246)
101. “Few bring up the better if they’re aware of the worse.” (250)
102. “...inflicted on him an internal wound or brain wound or marrow wound which proved to be a fatal wound.” (252)
a) A legal phrase often repeated.
103. “I give notice of this homicide suit to the Quarter Court in which this case should be heard according to law. I give this lawful notice; I give notice in hearing of all at the Law Rock. I give notice of the prosecution of Flosi Thordarson for full outlawry, to take place at this session. I give notice that the suit was turned over to me by Thorgeir Thorisson.” (252)
a) Another bit of legal process often repeated.

- b) Legal speech — name witnesses, name crime, name punishment, name notice, repeat.
104. “Any man who owns three hundreds or more in land has the right to sit on a panel of neighbors, even though he does not live off milch animals; and any man who lives off milch animals has the right to sit on a panel of neighbors, even though he owns no land.” (260)
105. “...four dozen men have not the right to make a judgement.” (269)
- a) In regards the the Fifth Court, a judgement would have to be made by three dozen. It seems that Mord has a dozen too many. He later removes six, but this is still not enough, since Flosi and Eyjolf were supposed to removed six themselves and do not.
106. (*Hall of Sida*) “But for the sake of a settlement I’m willing to let my son lie without compensation and, what’s more, offer both pledges and peace to my adversaries.” (275)
107. “...it often turns out that men slain only with words live a long life.” (278)
108. “Thorgeir said, ‘Do you want us to wake them up?’ Kari answered, ‘Why ask? You’ve already decided not to attack sleeping men and kill them shamefully.’ Then they shouted at them. The sleepers awoke and jumped up and grabbed their weapons. Kari and Thorgeir did not attack them until they were armed.” (279)
109. (*Kari*) “The one riding last, Ketil of Mork, is a man I don’t want to kill, since our wives are sisters, and he has always played very fair with us.” (280)
110. (*Flosi*) “Few men are like Kari, and what I would wish most is to have a character like his.” (283)
111. (*Valgerð to Bjorn*) “May trolls take your swaggering and strutting...” (285)
112. (*Ketil to Flosi regarding his dream*) “All things in the lives of men will come to their fated end — but your warning is will meant.” (287)

113. “If you let Kari down, you might as well know that you’ll never come into my bed again. My kinsmen will divide the property between us.” (288)
- a) She is very persistent at giving Bjorn a difficult time. Also, a little insight to how her kinsmen are involved with divorce.
114. “...[Kari] caught the spear in the air with his left hand and threw it back at Grani.” (289)
- a) Gunnar did this before, see quote 21.
115. (*Bjorn*) “Let’s fool them all as if they were dumb giants.” (291)
116. “...I’d rather stay with you and defend myself as long as fate allows.” (292)
117. “Ketil of Mork rushed at Kari and thrust at him with his spear. Kari threw his leg up and the spear went into the ground; Kari jumped on the shaft and broke it in two.” (292)
- a) This is not the first time he has done this. Kari did this before on page 280, and it was described with more detail in that passage.
118. “there is no one in our land now who can match Kari.” (293)
- a) This quote sums up well how Kari has become a figure much like Gunnar.
119. “King Brain pardoned outlaws three times for the same crime, but if they did it again he let them be dealt with according to law, and from this it can be seen what sort of king he was.” (297)
120. “Brodir had been a Christian and an ordained deacon, but he had cast aside the faith and become a renegade and sacrificed to heathen spirits and was very skilled in sorcery.” (299)

SEGMENTS OF POETRY

1. Svan's magic spell, page 24 —
*Let there be fog,
And let there be monsters,
And fantastic sights to all
Who follow you.*
2. Thorhild to Thrain, page 56 —
*This gaping is not good,
Your eyes are all agog.*
3. Thorkel Elfaraskald: on Gunnar's death, pg. 128 —
*We have heard how, in the south,
the skipper of the sea-steed
Gunnar, greedy for gore,
guarded himself with his halberd.
Wielding weapons against attack,
he gave wounds to sixteen
of the battle-bearers,
and brought death to two.*
4. Gunnar's verse as he sits in his burial mound looking upon the moon, page 130 —
*The bright bestower of rings,
the man bold in deeds, who
fought with full courage, the
father of Hogni, spoke:
the shield-holding ghost would sooner
wear his helmet high
than falter in the fray,
rather die for battle-Freyja
— and die for battle-Freyja.*
5. When Thrain flees from Earl Hakon with Hrapp, pg. 149 —
*Let Griffin fly forward,
Thrain does not flinch.*
6. The death of Veturlidi the Poet, pg. 175 —
*The tester of shields
took his victory-tools south*

*to smite the Balder of weapons
in his smithy of prayers.
The brave battler for faith
brought down with a clang
his axe of awful death
on the anvil of Veturlidi's head.*

7. Thorvald's words to Ulf on ambushing Thangbrand, pg. 176 —

*I, Ygg of armor
send this order to Ulf —
I'm fond of the son of Uggi,
the steerer of steel —
that he crush the cowardly
blaspheming cur
against the loud lodge of Geitir;
and I'll look after another.*

8. Ulf's response to Thorvald, pg. 176 —

*Though the dear friend
of the drink of Odin's hall
order me, I am not
accepting the offered bait;
I won't fall for the fly
from the seafaring fellow;
bad things are brewing —
I'd better watch out.*

9. Hjalti Skeggjason denouncing the old gods, pg. 177 —

*In barking at gods I am rich:
Freyja strikes me as a bitch;
one or the other must be:
Odin's a dog — or else a she.*

10. Steinunn speaking of the wrecking of Thangbrand's ship, pg. 177 —

*The shaping gods drove ashore
the ship of the keeper of bells;
the slayer of the son of the giantess
smashed Bison on the sea-gull's rest;
no help came from Christ
when the sea's horse was crushed;
I don't think God was guarding*

Gylfi's reindeer at all.

11. Another verse of Thangbrand's ship being wrecked, pg. 178 —

*Thor drove Thangbrand's beast
of Thvinnil far from its place;
he shook and shattered
the ship and slammed it ashore;
never will that oak of Atal's field
be up to seafaring again;
the storm, sent by him,
smashed it so hard into bits.*

12. The verse of the witch-ride, pg. 215 —

*I ride a horse
with hoarfrost mane
and dripping forelocks,
brining evil;
the torch ends burn,
the middle brings bane;
Flosi's plans
are like a flung torch;
Flosi's plans
are like a flung torch.*

13. Modolf Ketilsson's verse about Kari surviving the burning, pg. 225 —

*From Njal's house one lived
when fire burned the rest;
the sons of Sigfus,
stalwart men, set it.
Now the kin of Gollnir is paid
for the killing of brave Hoskuld;
the blaze burned through the house,
bright flames in the hall.*

14. The mysterious verse spoken from the embers, pg. 225 —

*Gunn of gold will not hold back
the gushing tears from her brow
over the sparring of spears
of the spirited shield-warrior,
when the allies of the edge
exulted in the slaughter —*

*I boldly sing this song —
and spears tried in wounds cried out.*

15. Kari's verse about his restlessness, pg. 232 —

*Sleep shuns my eyes, Ull
of the elm-string, all night;
I recall the man
who craved shields set with rings.
In autumn the blazing
sword-trees burned Njal at home;
since then the harm done me
has dwelt in my mind.*

16. Iron-Grim's verse of Kari in Flosi's dream, pg. 233 —

*A hardy warrior
will harry here soon;
men will see on the ground
many forts of brains;
singing of sword-play
will sound in the hills;
dew of blood will
dampen many legs.*

17. Kari's verse about his feelings of the burning, pg. 237-8 —

*A whetter of axes,
I went out in anger
from the alder's sweat
in Njal's abode,
when the wild
woods of the sword
burned there; listen!
I lament my loss.*

18. Kari's verse to Skafti Thordsson (1), pg. 274 —

*If I ran, warrior;
why rebuke me?
The weapon-storm pounded,
by my power, on shields.
Long, slender swords
sang loud, while you,
red-bearded softie,
ran to your booth.*

19. Kari's verse to Skafti Thordsson (2), pg. 275 —
*When warriors lacked
the will to stop fighting,
Skafti the poet was pinned
scared behind his shield,
and the cooks dragged
this dauntless hero
flat on his back
to the juggler's floor.*
20. Kari's verse to Skafti Thordsson (3), pg. 275 —
*Men who mount the sea's elk
have mocked the burning of Njal
and of Grim and of Helgi —
they did a great wrong;
and now in the heather-decked
hills of the bog
all goes otherwise
after the Althing.*
21. Snorri the Godi's response to Kari's verses, pg. 275 —
*Skafti would shorten the fight,
but then Asgrim shot his shaft;
Holmstein fled unwillingly,
Thorkel was forced to fight.*
22. Kari's verse to Gunnar Lambason, pg. 297 —
*Men bold of battle
boast the burning of Njal,
but have you heard
how we harried them?
Those givers of gold
had a good return:
ravens feasted
on their raw flesh.*
23. Darraðarljóð (The Song of Dorrud), pgs. 303-307 —
*A wide harp
warns of slaughter;
blood rains*

*from the beam's cloud.
A spear-grey fabric
is being spun,
which the friends (valkyries)
of Randver's slayer (killed by Odin himself)
will fill out
with a red weft.*

*The harp is woven
with warriors' guts,
and heavily weighted
with the heads of men.
Spears serve as heddle rods,
spattered with blood;
iron-bound is the shed rod,
and arrows are the pin beaters;
we will beat with swords
our battle web.*

*Hild sets to weaving
and Hjorthrimul
and Sanngrid and Svipul, (names of the valkyries)
with swords drawn.
Shafts will splinter;
shields shatter;
the dog of helmets
devours shields.*

*We wind and wind
the web of spears
which the young king
has carried on before.
Let us go forth
amongst the fighters
when our dear ones
deal out blows.*

*We wind and wind
the web of spears,
and then stand by
our stalwart king.
Gunn and Gondul,*

*who guarded the king,
saw the bloody shields
of the brave men.*

*We wind and wind
the web of spears,
there where the banners
of bold men go forth;
we must not let
his life be lost —
valkyries decide
who dies or lives.*

*The men who inhabited
the outer headlands
will now be leaders
in the lands.
I declare the mighty king
doomed to death.
The earl has fallen
in the face of the spears.*

*And the Irish will
endure an evil time
which will never lessen
as long as men live.
Now the web is woven
and the war-place reddened;
the lands will learn
of the loss of men.*

*Now it is gruesome
to gaze around,
as blood-red clouds
cover the sky;
the heavens will be garish
with the gore of men
while the slaughter-wardens
sing their song*

*Our pronouncement was good
for the young prince;
sound of mind*

*we sing victory songs.
May he who listens
learn from this
the tones of spear-women
and tell them to men.*

*Let us ride swiftly
on our saddle-less horses
hence from here,
with swords in hand.*

24. Herfinn's verse in Earl Gilli's dream, pg. 307-8 —

*When swords screamed in Ireland
and men struggled, I was there;
many a weapon was shattered
when shields met in battle.
The attack, I hear, was daring;
Sigurd died in the din of helmets
after making bloody wounds;
Brian fell too, but won.*

OTHER COMMENTARY

(After reading the end of the Introduction)

Perhaps history should not be viewed so much as linear fact, but more as something that is alive and ever-changing. The sagas seem to be an example of this living history, where it is used to remember yet to also reflect upon one's own time, which honestly seems to be what history has always been used for. Perhaps this 'living' history is a product of this oral tradition, where tales are passed down and change to fit comfortably with the time and situation also present. It seems perfectly fine to accept that not all aspects of history are meant to be confined to a box of factual events. In fact, I almost have begun to see these sagas as *more* precious than straightforward historical evidence. The fact that it is the preserved memory of the past is quite unique and powerful in its own right. I find more value in human experience than the tedious how's and what's of the past. What something *means* to a certain people or time far exceeds those facts.

Perhaps what I aim to say is best put into the words of Douglas Hyde when he describes the effects of Raftery's poems. "When a stone is thrown into water the water is moved. The stone falls to the bottom and lies there, but long after its fall the movement of the water remains, and the wave that the stone has raised is perceived from the top"¹. In many ways I felt this analogy could be applied to the events seen in these sagas. The burning of Njal was the stone, the event that caused these ripples in history. Those ripples reached the shore, the time of the author looking outward towards the source. It is perceived from the shore, quite a different perspective than out on the water itself. The historical 'fact' may lie in the event that sparked the wave but the perception itself has significance. That wave was felt by those further away in time and it was turned into a valuable experience, a lesson of a great shame and how it could be overcome. History was *felt*. In this way, the sagas are the 'feelings' of that wave, not completely objective information of the source but instead of the reaction to that source, which in itself is of noteworthy value. This relationship between the source and the 'wave' is a unique window into history.

(After reading the beginning of chapter 13, middle of page 26)

It seems to be a very common theme to introduce a male character by him deciding to seek out a wife, which eventually leads to all sorts of trouble.

¹ Hyde, Douglas. *Abhráin Atá Leagtha Ar an Reachtuire, Or, Songs Ascribed to Raftery: Being the Fifth Chapter of the Songs of Connacht*. Baile Atha Cliath: Gill, 1903.

(After reading chapter 22)

Njal's lengthy and complicated plan definitely indicates the careful orchestration of events in this saga. It was interesting that Njal had such detailed knowledge of future events, especially knowing exactly what would be said and how it would be responded to, and what should be said in return. These plans of advice, of which there have already been many, seem to be examples of literary intervention, or at least dazzled up versions of something that may have been. Though, I would find it more likely that these plans are what helped to explain the events that unfolded, as if filling the voids or bridging the gaps.

On that note, I am reminded of how Hrut and Unn's marriage did not fare well. That event was allegedly caused by a magic spell. If one were to assume Hrut and Unn were real people and that they did get a divorce, one could see that much of the details in the saga are inflated or created in order to fill the gaps of what was forgotten about it. This is still a dangerous approach to understanding these 'fillings' since they themselves are based off of assumption. Unless there is proof in other texts, such as the Book of the Settlements, that certain people did live at the time, it is difficult to say what is historical versus literary. This does seem to be enough in not assuming it is all correct, but only bits and pieces that are remnants, 'ripples', and not the complete facts. Though, is there really any need to separate the two completely? The ripple and the stone have a relationship that cannot be truly apart from one another. Especially when working off of the ripple.

(After reading the case between Gunnar and Hrut)

The booths is an interesting part of these procedures. It is very much a key part that has been mentioned often and that each person goes to their booth after discussion before the assembly.

(After reading the introduction of Skarphedin, Njal's eldest son)

I have noticed that all the heroic-types are described to have the same characteristics by this author. They all can "swim like a seal" and are big and strong. Also, it seems they are well balanced, since not only can they fight but some of them are also quick minded. The author seems to appreciate quite mindedness in characters, since that trait stands out among the more 'typical' traits of someone 'important'.

(After reading of Hallgerd and the slaying of Svart, pages 58-9)

I have begun to notice that Hallgerd's character is not stable. At times she is cruel and cunning, but there are also times that she is understanding and justified. It seems that her character sways in order to cause up trouble, even though she had been perfectly content for the most part. But overall, she really causes a lot of the conflict so far. In fact, the majority of trouble has been caused by women it seems, either through a man's love for her or her goading him into acting out of character. Hallgerd specifically becomes more hateful as her situation with Bergthora continues onward.

(After reading the end of chapter 37, specifically page 63)

Something is painfully obvious to the audience now, and that is the seeds of failure in the compensation system. Even the more 'noble' characters of Njal and Gunnar have betrayed the law of their land. In their 'servant's war' that was conducted by their 'troublesome wives', they completely worked around the compensation system that is supposed to prevent these bloodfeud for spiraling ever onward. The compensation of 12 ounces of silver was a complete wash, and they knew this all too well. They paid compensation to one another that would cancel out itself all the same. They simply abided by hollow formalities while they allowed their wives and servants to go off killing people.

(After reading of Atli's slaying and Bergthora's behavior, page 66)

I am noticing a pattern of frustration associated with certain characters, notably these wives, insisting on slaying. It has now started and I can see that it will not stop any time soon. Blood is only answered in more blood. But I must say, it is aggravating.

(After reading of Thord killing Brynjolf, page 67)

I have noticed this trend but only now mention it. I find it odd that all these characters announce to the world that they just had slain someone.

(After reading of Gunnar and Otkel at the Thing, page 88)

I have noticed the role of the duel has been pretty significant. All of the major cases put forth so far have, for the most part, involved a duel, especially when concerning heroic characters such as Gunnar.

(After reading of Gunnar slaying Otkel and his men, page 93)

The reason that is credited most of this were the words spoken by Skammkel. Again, it seems words have a strange power and affect on people and has been cause of much trouble.

(After reading of Gunnar's sons being born, page 100)

I have noticed rhyming names constantly throughout the saga. I wonder though, especially with this case of newborns, was it customary to name children with names that rhymed? Or is this rather a poetic remnant? I lean towards the latter.

(After reading of Hrapp's destruction of a temple, page 144)

It is odd that there is a temple of this sort, almost sounding as if a paganized Christian church. Also interesting that of the three idols, two were the semi-divine figures of Thorgerd and Irpa alongside Thor.

(After reading of Hrapp on page 145)

I find it interesting that he considers himself an in-law with this family so easily, since there was never any agreement nor ceremony of any kind.

(After reading of Kari's marriage, page 153)

I have noticed that many marriages fall into the time around midsummer, and (not surprising) fall in 'love' in the spring prior to that summer.

(After Reading chapter 97)

The establishment of the Fifth Court, at least for this story, seemed to be more about Njal's personal interests than it did for Iceland. I am sure this could be a way of describing, or rather fitting in, this event within the saga. Perhaps settlements were truly not being settled properly and a new court was needed. I am sure that one figure, such as Njal and his advice, was not the reason for the incapacibilities of the Quarter Thing alone.

(After reading chapter 102)

Although the translator urges that this saga is secular, I cannot help but notice what is at least some religious undertones at this part. Njal, whom we see as the 'good guy' of the saga, embraces Christianity immediately while the 'bad guys' of the saga are opposed to it, Mord and Valgard. It almost seems that there is more to this, at the very least showing the bias of the author. Still, I do not

think this detracts too far from the overall message, just an interesting thing I wanted to note and perhaps think more about.

Note from further reading: Mord does convert, though his father Valgard refuses and seems to die due to this. Also, things do not change much after conversion, the feuds and deception still carry onward all the same.

(After reading of Hoskuld's refusal to take Flosi's advice)

All of the heroic characters refuse safety in the face of their peril. I noticed this best at this moment, and can now see the trend. Hoskuld, as well as Gunnar I believe, refused to 'run away' to safety, rather they faced their deaths with courage and remained true to their values.

(After reading chapter 123)

A very busy and very interesting chapter. The procedure seemed a little different from before, but I cannot be exactly sure of the details as to how this is so. Also, the behavior of Njal is curious, since his gift brought trouble and he would not admit he placed it there. Skarphedin also kept grinning, as if he knew or wanted trouble to come about. Also, the settlement itself was interesting. Overall, a chapter I would not mind taking a closer look at in the future.

(After reading chapter 125)

This vision and the 'witch-ride' is something quite interesting. Is a witch-ride something that was a common belief at the time this was written? Or is it perhaps only a method for foreshadowing the events to come?

(After reading of Kari and Bjorn, chapter 151 & 152 in particular)

I like the combination of Kari and Bjorn, their teamwork is interesting. Bjorn's character is especially interesting. It is especially notable that Bjorn is constantly being tested as these events are told. Will he be brave and loyal? Or will he run off and not face the challenges at hand? It seems that the author wishes to make a point on this.

(After completing the Saga)

This saga has been an intensive story of feud and the good falling to its doomed course. I can tell that the most prevalent theme lies in this, since the best men of the saga are often caught up in feuds. Gunnar is a prime example of a very heroic figure who is brought down due to these feuds (and also a rude wife). It seemed very stressed that compensation was no longer enough to satisfy

the need for blood. It is referred to often that compensation was not enough for some, since it did not go in their favor. And so, being left unsatisfied, they seek blood for exchange. However, I did notice and feel that the author pointed out some issues with compensation, since it seemed often that compensation could cancel out a later compensation. Once this happened, it seemed pointless to bother with compensation. In some way or another, someone is left displeased by compensation and takes matters into their own hands.

It seemed to me that the segment of Kari contrasted with the attitude of the bloodfeud in the case for Njal and Gunnar. Kari was supported and no one disagreed with his vengeance. Even Flosi, whom the vengeance was most directed towards, was constantly saying this was to be expected. It seemed now that an exception was made since Njal had fallen so innocently to feuds (or did he?). Kari was never denounced for these actions and I did not get the impression that the author thought so either. It almost seemed as though it was encouraged, or created, as a means for resolving the terrible events that befell Njal. The audience would seek this 'justice' to fall upon the burners, and so it does not surprise me now to see Kari feuding with support rather than criticism.

The role of women was interesting as well during this saga. At times (most of the time), women were egging their men on to cause trouble. It seemed that the wife would want to see the husband come out on top, which is not surprising since her honor depended on it. However, characters like Hallgerd would do this to an almost obnoxious degree. I would venture to say it was a bit exaggerated, since these men (Gunnar, Njal, etc) are being depicted nobly. This might be because, in order to maintain a 'good' character, someone else must be responsible for their ill actions. How else would a 'good' character get involved with feud? Perhaps this is a product of fitting historical events into a more idealized story. Women also were sources of wisdom at times, which is a major contrast to provoking feud. Women were definitely not stagnate in this saga, but directly involved with the events that unfolded.

Words played a large role in feud as well. Insult was a major cause for discontent and rage. A prime example of this are the nicknames coined in verse for Njal and his sons, 'Old Beardless' and 'Dung Beardlings'. Those insults come back a few times throughout the saga. There were many cases, which I believe I have noted in a few quotes, that words drove men just as much, if not more, than any goading wife did. The power of words leading to feuds can best be shown by this quote: "...it often turns out that men slain only with words live a long life" (278). Even though Kari says this, he does not follow it. It would be responsible

to say that the author took this moment to make a point and contrast it with Kari's actions (though, Kari's vengeance seems to be excused).

Also, If one's manhood was challenged, things would definitely get out of hand. It seemed that words had a massive power to cause strife between the Icelanders. However, verbal insults were not the only major propellant of feud via insult, alongside this was material insult. The case with the silk robe and Flosi is a major insult that causes a lot of deaths later on. Once again, this applies to manhood being challenged.

In the end, this saga is full of complicity. I could spend much more time and accuracy in pulling out quotes and examples for many of these themes. When it comes to how this saga should be treated, I would say that the historical elements can be seen, but only as skeleton. There is much flavoring that is piled up on top of them. In some way I have even felt that historical events being included have caused contradictions to characters. The way that I have so far understood this saga would be a reaction to an event of the past. Like I said in my commentary after the introduction, Njal's saga presents a moment of the ripple that was caused by the actual event. The real value is not in cutting away all of the meat in this story to pull out the bones of fact, but to understand how someone closer to that time felt about it. It is the meaning placed onto the burning of Njal. It is what was learned from this by the people who lived after that time. It is quite complicated and not straightforward, but that is what makes it all the more special and valuable.

REVISITING THE SAGA: *SEPTEMBER — NOVEMBER 2016.*

Reading the following sections again for a paper on social commentary directed toward honor. Such commentary that takes place when feud and law interact. The sections to be reviewed are the following:

1. Gunnar and the Thorgeirs (chps: 66-74)
2. Mord's Discontent and the Njalssons (chps: 107-112, 121)
3. Njal's Death, Eyjolf's Trickery, and Hall of Sida's Sacrifice (chps: 123, 129, 141-145)

Keep these things in mind while reading these sections again:

1. **The manipulation of law:** Good or bad? Depends on the person? Always bad? What is the role of manipulation? Why is it manipulated and how is it depicted throughout the saga?
2. **The role of honor:** Does honor demand that feud must go on? Does honor constantly keep law from being able to remedy feud? Or does law itself need reform?

Gunnar and the Thorgeirs (Chapters 66-74)

Chapter 66:

1. Olaf said, "It's worth a lot to have Njal standing by you with good advice." (111)
2. "What you say is according to the law," said Mord, "but it's hard to accept." (111)
3. "...submit the whole matter to arbitration and let good men reach a settlement." (111)
4. "Gunnar rode home from the Thing and stayed there in peace, but his enemies were very envious of the honor he had earned." (112)

Chapter 67:

1. "I am ill-pleased," [Thorgeir Starkadarson] said, "with the outcome of the lawsuit we had with Gunnar." (112)

- a) Interesting, especially because the matter was settled so fairly and through arbitration. So, even the author has noted that not only law is being disregarded, but even arbitration. Again, honor is craved above all.
2. “It will be difficult to manage things so that you don’t become a truce-violator or peace-breaker, and yet get what you’re after.” (113)
 - a) He means to manipulated things to benefit Thorgeir. Also, perhaps note what comes right after this, where he mentions compensations and finds opportunities to re-spark tensions. Read those lines carefully if you plan to make use of them.

Chapter 68:

1. “They broke the settlement, not we,” said Thorgeir Starkadarson. “Gunnar took your grain-field from you, and he took Moeidarhvol from my father and me.” (114)
 - a) They speak as victims, yet they planned for this to happen. They *wanted* it to happen.

Chapter 69:

1. “This is moving nicely along — they’ll gain nothing in this venture and lose much.” (115)
2. “I will act as a go-between and try to make a settlement. They are properly frightened now. Since all of them are implicated, the payment for this plot against your life must be no less than a payment for the slaying of either of the Thorgeirs, should that occur. I’ll hold on to the money and see to it that it’s ready for you if you need it.” (116)
 - a) This part is interesting, but now that I think about it, very symbolic. Njal has often manipulated the law to protect his friends. Is it not true that the manipulation of law is what causes such strife? Has it not been the manipulation of legal matters by Mord that resulted in this affair? It is true indeed, however, there is a difference between Njal and Mord. Njal does this for others, he is like legal justice itself. Mord does this for himself, for he has much to gain from the Thorgeirs if they succeed. Mord is like the embodiment of honor, whereas Njal is the law. The law is flexible, but, anything that is flexible can be bent more than one way.

- b) Njal only manipulates to bring “justice” down upon those who have misused the law for personal gain. The Thorgeirs started this feud, along with Mord, having been envious of Gunnar’s gain of honor in their previous legal encounter. Their desire for honor has resulted in the continuing rampage of feud. Njal simply hopes to reveal that law must punish those who use honor to justify violence, those who manipulate law for personal gain. For law is not meant to be a weapon, but a system for balance and community judgement.

Chapter 70:

1. “They made offers and were very frightened and asked Njal to go back with offers of settlement. Njal said he would only go back with offers that had no deceit behind them. They asked Njal to take part in the arbitration and promised to stand by whatever settlement he made. Njal said he would only do so at the Thing, and only if the best men were there.” (116)
 - a) Njal aims to make this public. It almost seems as if this upcoming event is meant to demonstrate the petty nature of people craving to tear honor away from honorable people. Gunnar is well-respected in the community. If honor was to be decided by the community, than honor should be one without deceit. It should be won fairly, not through trickery and violence. Gunnar is a man of heroic nature, but most of his honor has come to him through legal victories. In fact, he is rather against killing others, for it pains him to do so. Gunnar is a prime example of this shift in honor. There is honor is battle, that is of the past, but now there is honor is law and peace, and that is what must be strived for.
2. “Njal called for silence and asked all the best men who had come what claim they thought Gunnar had against the two Thorgeirs for the plot on his life. They answered that such a man had great right on his side.” (117)
3. “It’s not breaking a settlement,” said Njal, “If a man deals lawfully with another — with law out land shall rise, but it will perish with lawlessness.” (117)
 - a) It must be recalled that the property that Gunnar acquired, the property that the Thorgeirs used to create a foundation for their cause, was said to have been lawfully purchased. Njal mentions this right after his statement, noting that Gunnar did not steal this land,

he bought it fairly. Yet, this statement, although touching that point briefly, extends far beyond this saga alone. The author uses Njal as a voice in this moment — the voice of the law and of himself.

Chapter 71:

1. “The Thorgeirs thought that they had lost a lot of money because of Mord and had nothing in return, and they asked him to come up with another plan for doing harm to Gunnar. ¶ Mord said that he would — “and now (118)
 - a) They still want their taste of honor. Even though they clearly had manipulated means to gain honor, they still wanted to foil the peace for their desires. Mord uses honor to his advantage by spreading rumors, which would force Gunnar’s hand, since the community would shame Gunnar if he does not act accordingly. Mord’s ways are clearly deplorable.

Chapter 72:

1. “Thorgeir Starkadarson spoke to the other Thorgeir: “There is not much sign that you have a father the avenger.” ¶ He answer: “It’s true that I haven’t made much progress, but you haven’t exactly been close on my heels — and now I won’t take any more of your taunts.” (119)
 - a) Check into this, because I am pretty sure his father was legally taken care of.

Chapter 73:

1. “The news travelled widely, and Thorgeir’s death was lamented by many. Gizur the White and Geir the Godi rode to the place and gave notice of the slayings and summoned neighbors to appear at the Thing.” (120)
2. Legal segment on page 121.

Chapter 74:

1. Legal response on page 122.
2. “Gunnar gave no indication that he thought this settlement was unfair.” (122)
 - a) Even so, it clearly was. Yet Gunnar believed in Njal, he believe in the law. That is, until he is struck by the beauty of his homeland and cannot stand to leave it behind. He did not intend to break the

settlement, but does. This is what costs Gunnar his life — when he finally ignore's law's judgement and acts on his own.

Mord's Discontent and The Njalssons (Chapters 107-112, 121)

Chapter 107:

1. Mord said, "New godords and a fifth court have been created, and people have stopped being my thingmen and gone over to Hoskuld." Valgard spoke: "You've repaid me poorly, with your unmanly handling of the godord I turned over to you. Now I want you to repay them in a way that will drag them all to their deaths. The way to do this is to turn them against each other with slander, so that the Njalssons kill Hoskuld. Many men will take action for this slaying, and the Njalssons will be killed because of it." (183)

Chapter 109:

1. "They gave you a dark-brown horse, which they called an untested colt, and they did that in mockery because they consider you untested, too. I can also tell you that they envy your godord. Skarphedin took it over at the Thing when you failed to come to a meeting of the Fifth Court. He doesn't ever intend to part with the godord." "That's not true," said Hoskuld. "I took it back at the autumn assembly." "That was Njal's doing then," said Mord. "But they also broke the agreement with Lyting." "I don't think they can be blamed for that," said Hoskuld. (185)
2. "I would much rather suffer death from them than do them any harm. You are the worse man for having spoken these things." (185-6)
3. Mord lies to the Njalssons about what Hoskuld says, and they believe him. (186)
4. "...I would rather die without the right to compensation than that many should come to harm because of me." (186)
5. "Njal had taken Kari's son, called Thord, as his foster-son. He had also fostered Thorhall, the son of Asgrim Ellida-Grimsson. Thorhall was a vigorous man and resolute in everything. He had learned the law from Njal so well that he was one of the three greatest lawyers in Iceland." (187)

Chapter 110:

1. Mord continued to slander Hoskuld (page 187)
2. "...I was seldom left out when their plans were good." (187)

Chapter 111:

1. Suddenly Hoskuld is addressed as Hoskuld the Godi of Hvitanes (188)
2. "May God help me and forgive you." (188)
3. Mord's plan for deception (188)
4. "...I would rather have lost two of my sons, as long as Hoskuld were still alive." (188)
5. "This was the only thing that ever touched Njal so deeply that he could never speak of it without being moved." (189)

Chapter 112:

1. Mord's manipulated legal actions unfold.

Chapter 121:

1. Mord reveals his secret to ruin the case

The Collapse of Law (Chapters 123, 129, 132, 141-5)

Chapter 123:

- 1.