

The Vikings are coming, the Vikings are coming.....

On Thursday the Vikings arrived in the form of the parents of the bride. Zamir's son is getting married on the 7th August to a lovely Swedish girl he met in Thailand. My daughter and I visited the family in Sweden in January while on our adventure, so we met these good and friendly people, so it was with some excitement that we cleaned up, made room and bought a ton of food, including lots of "fika" which is the stuff of morning and afternoon teas and supper – lots of cakes, biscuits, chocolates. I must have put on a kilo on our visit to them for 4 days, now it's my turn to return the favour.

People who know me know I'm nuts about the footy, but these good people have arrived at our house, Inga-Britt and Roland, and Rolands' sister, Maj-lis and husband Lennart, and have found hosts obsessed with improving Saints and a rampant football mindset. We ate a full on supper when they arrived Thursday night, a full on traditional Shabbos (Sabbath) meal on Friday night with candles, challah (traditional bread), gefilte fish, chicken soup, baked chicken, fruit compote and of course, cakes and sweets. And then in our particular traditional way, we introduced them to the North Melbourne versus Carlton game. Lennart's English is non-existent, but with Roland's help, we baptised these good folk into the footy world, with explanations of the rules, the structures, the teams and what struck Roland most was the speed of the game and the tackling.

(By Friday night, I'd booked tickets to next week's game against Fremantle, including the new Swedes who are arriving Sunday morning and Tuesday. Plus my usual bandit friend Rina who is going to sit with us up on the third tier close to the front for this particular game.)

I'm a creative human being and decided that a game on Foxtel meant, unlike Friday night, we couldn't all fit around the TV, so I have heard a lot about people going to their local pubs to watch, so I booked a table for 8-9 at the local "Angel Hotel" on the corner of Glenferrie Road and Dandenong Road, never having been there in my life. Thus planned, organised, I spent the rest of the day doing last minute shopping for the wedding with my daughter (Chadstone on a Saturday afternoon found her inside looking and me in the car listening to the Doggies almost steal the game from the West Coast Eagles). Chadstone on the weekend is another story better left to another time.

Coming Saturday night, we headed down in two cars to the pub, the bride and groom coming separately from their flat. We were "glad" or "lycklig" (happy) to be all together, in front of the biggest screen I have seen in a pub, with the images projected, and we watched the Aussies playing the All-Blacks in Rugby until the footy started. We ordered and Roland was shouting the evening. They drank VB and we the soft stuff, being designated drivers and a writer as well. I had to keep my wits about me.

The pub was so empty it makes me sad and wonder how they survive, but they served us well, making sure that the Saints had the big screen, the little screen had the Fremantle versus Hawks for the groom, and there was only in the end, a table of 6 men (one of who was Zamir's old neighbour) and the other, a couple happily ensconced in very comfortable couches at the back. From the noise and discussions over the night, all Saints supporters. The food was great, the atmosphere amongst us was happy. I was in my element with guest's kind enough to enjoy the evening with me.

My guests are from a small town outside Göteborg (Gothenburg) called VARGARDA.

(If you are a reader of Asterix, in Book 16, Asterix and Obelix go fishing and end up in a great storm, passing Vikings in the night, discovering America before the Vikings, being mistaken for Natives by the Vikings and being taken home as proof of the new world. I was remembering this cartoon until I finally found the copy at midnight last night after everyone else sensible had gone to bed. Everyone else sensible is still sleeping while I woke at 6am to write this. Anyway, with my Asterix beside me

(with their lovely take on the written Swedish language in pure comic genius) and my translation keys open next to me, you are about to read about the footy with a Swedish bent.)

We made a toast before the game, Skål (Cheers), I got the sister of the bride to be my interpreter for the night and she kindly wrote down all the words I wanted in Swedish as you will see. We were "Glad" (happy) to be together, the food was great and the game began.

After 15 minutes, three points (or "miss") for the Saints, we finally scored with Peake goaling after a good pass from Armitage. Mål! (Goal) Then we were not happy, "inte glad" at all the handballing and passes and mistakes, until Del Santo, mål! Then Lynch quietens me down with another off the ground, mål! , and the Saints are off and I can breathe again. There were 8 points kicked between the two teams for the quarter, the Gold Coast Suns got their first major just before the siren. Mål!

Saints by 14 points at the first break.

Then the Hawks game started and I envied their quick rush of about 8 goals in the first quarter that left them happy and relaxed and not spänd (tense) for the game. All the teams who we haven't beaten, Geelong, Collingwood, Hawthorn and Carlton, are giving their opposition spankings. We play Collingwood and Carlton in our run home. Sigh! Suck! (That really is the Swedish word for sigh, according to my Microsoft translator).

Gold Coast start the second quarter with a goal from Stanley and then Steven replies . Mål! Mål! And then Milne does his magic, mål! There's another to us and another to them. Mål! Mål! We hit the long break still ahead, but by too short a margin, 15 points. We are saved by Suns inaccuracy.

Third quarter, Rischitelli misses and Kosi mål! At last , "till sist" or "antligen". Bennell goals for the Suns. Mål! Kosi misses and Milne, mål! The end of the quarter, we're 21 points ahead. Inte tillräckligt! (Not enough!) Jag är orolig. (I am worried). And I am scared. (Jag är rädd). I am jealous, (Jag är svartsjuk) of the ease of the top 4 teams in disposing of their opposition.

I spend the break getting interpretations of : celebrate "fira" and relief "befrielse" and angry "ARG" and frustrated, "frustrerad" and then am happy "lycklig" when Polo goals truly, finally. Peake goals, mål! mål! We are ahead and more comfortably. Yeah! Ja! Ja! Ja! Swallow goals, mål! I ask for interpretations of lucky "Tur" and bad luck "otur" just before Ablett mål! Then Bock, mål! Inte glad, inte glad (not happy) mål! mål!, and Saints get possession and slow it down "sakta ner" There is only 1.03 minutes to go, there is 20 points the difference, I can relax "jag kan slappnaav".

And then, vi vann, vi vann, vi vann (we won) and we're coming, vi kommer, vi kommer. Saints and the Angel Hotel and my Viking guests, "tack", thanks, for the great evening. And we sing the song, in my head anyway:

Oh när heligonen (Oh When the Saints)

Marscherar in (Come marching in)

Oh när heligonen (Oh When the Saints)

Marscherar in (Go Marching in)

Oh hur jag vill vara i St.Kilda (Oh how I want to be in St.Kilda)

När heliga kommer marching in (When the Saints go marching in.)