

# Shrunk to Fit in Her Heart

HÉCTOR MEIRELES

Everyone wishes to find true love at least once in life. But what if that wish is not the kind of love people expect? What would happen if someone's deepest desire were to belong to another being in a very dangerous way?

And what if, suddenly, as if by magic, that person was given the chance?

Would he have the courage to take it? Or would it be wiser simply to run away without thinking twice?

Viktor placed two glasses of Viking beer on a table where three friends were talking. His attention, however, was not on them.

Serving drinks at Götubarinn in Akureyri, with its dim lights and the distant smell of the harbor drifting through the streets, certainly wasn't his dream. Although the job helped pay the bills, Viktor carried what felt like an almost impossible ambition: to live from his art and writing.

In 2026, that seemed nearly unattainable, especially for someone who valued peace and quiet. Viktor had no interest in social media or drawing attention to himself.

Most nights the job was tiring and dull. But over the past two weeks, something had changed.

He walked toward the table where his eyes were truly focused.

"Kvöldið. What can I get for you?"

"Two glasses of wine, please," the blonde young woman said, her voice the sweetest Viktor had ever heard. "And the food—the same as always."

He took longer than usual to write down the order, using every second he could to admire her golden hair and blue eyes. Outside the window he could see the faint glow of the northern sky over Eyjafjörður, but he barely noticed it.

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Brazilian writer and digital creator Héctor Meireles explores fiction through short stories, folklore, and literary adaptations. Based in São Paulo state, his recent work has turned toward Icelandic folklore, where he is researching and reimagining traditional tales for new audiences. Blending an interest in myth, storytelling, and contemporary fiction, Meireles brings an international perspective to the enduring power of folklore.

He inhaled slowly, catching the scent of a perfume he had never smelled on anyone else.

“Okay, I’ll be right back.”

“Thank you,” said the man sitting across from her.

Her name was Elín—a common yet beautiful Icelandic name. Viktor didn’t understand how he could feel so intoxicated by someone he had barely spoken to. And yet, it was as if she were the most extraordinary woman he had ever seen.

He returned to work and continued until the end of his shift.

After arriving at the small, simple apartment where he lived—part of one of the an iron cladd houses climbing the hillside above the town—Viktor changed clothes and picked up his phone.

“No answer, as expected,” he murmured, looking at the message, he had sent his mother earlier that morning.

Viktor’s family had never given him much credit. They made it quite clear that Brigid, his older sister, was their favourite—the shining star, the perfect daughter destined for success.

Viktor did not hate or envy her. In fact, she was the only family member who had always treated him kindly. He was genuinely happy for her professional achievements. It comforted him to know that her efforts had finally paid off.

He only wished his family would take him more seriously. Encourage his dreams.

Or at least... love him.

He didn’t feel loved by his mother. And his father? Well, he seemed incapable of showing affection—his four previous wives would likely agree. Perhaps life had shaped him that way. For most of Viktor’s childhood he had been a fisherman, spending long stretches at sea in the cold waters of the North Atlantic. Weeks away from home, nights working in darkness and storms, coming back only briefly before leaving again. Maybe that life had carved something distant inside him.

A fifth marriage. How could someone marry so many times?

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At least in romance, he wanted to find the love his parents had never given him.

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Looking at the unanswered message convinced him that moving away from his hometown had been the right decision. Being far from his mother’s constant poisonous words was proving extremely healthy.

He set his phone beside his notebook, ate dinner, and went to sleep.



It had been two weeks since Viktor last saw Elín at the bar.

Now he was meeting her somewhere else.

The day was sunny—one of those rare bright northern days when Akureyri felt almost warm. As he walked across Ráðhústorg, he felt the gentle heat of the sun on his skin and heard gulls crying somewhere above the harbor.

And there she was.

Sitting on a bench.

Her short white dress made his heart pound. It was very different from the dark clothes she usually wore during cold nights at the bar.

“You’re finally here.”

The sound of her voice—and the familiar scent of her perfume—made Viktor smile as he sat beside her.

“You look gorgeous today, Elín. As usual.”

She smiled back, and Viktor was certain he had found something more beautiful than the sun and all the stars combined.

“Have you thought about my proposal?”

He was certain he had.

Even though he couldn’t remember what the proposal was.

That was strange.

“If you accept,” she continued softly, “I can make your deepest wish come true.”

“This feels surreal.”

“There will be consequences, though.” She brushed the fringe from her forehead. “After all,... you would be in the palm of my hand.”

Even though it sounded impossible, Viktor felt that Elín truly could fulfill his deepest, most secret fantasy: to be shrunken by a magical, powerful woman. To belong to her.

A five-centimeter man held between her fingers.

Her property.

How could such a thing be possible?

It had everything to do with the proposal he couldn’t remember—yet couldn’t stop thinking about.

She touched his hand. Her skin was warm and soft. She made him feel alive in a way he couldn’t explain.

“So,” he asked, wrapping an arm gently around her, “are we going to stay here watching the sun?”

“Of course,” she replied. “If that’s what you want.”

“Being with you... that’s all I want.”

And there they remained, silent, immersed in the warmth of the day.

Viktor woke up laughing softly at himself.

Three days after Elín stopped coming to the bar, Viktor began dreaming about her. The dreams felt so real that sometimes he forgot they were only dreams.

He had developed two strategies to determine whether he was awake or dreaming.

This was not the first time he had experienced vivid dreams like these.

The first method was to retrace how he had arrived at a particular place. In waking life, he could always recall the sequence of events that led him there.

The second method was simpler.

He pinched himself.

Although he could smell, see, and hear as if awake, there were two sensations he could never experience in dreams—taste and pain.

It was a pity, really.

Not the pain, of course.

But he would have loved to taste the pizzas he so often dreamed about.

University was demanding that day. Viktor and his group had to present a project about the impact of different art forms and AI tools on the modern world.

His shift at the bar began at 18:15.

Wednesdays were usually calm, and he appreciated the quiet.

But around 20:30, his heart began to pound unexpectedly.

The smell of food no longer comforted him. The soft music from the old radio faded into meaningless background noise.

It was her.

Elín entered the bar alone and took her usual seat.

A simple red blouse, jeans, and white shoes seemed to Viktor like the most beautiful outfit ever created—simply because she was wearing it.

“Good evening,” she said.

“What would you like today, Elín?”

His voice trembled. He shouldn’t have used her name—he had overheard it in conversation. She had never told him directly.

He hoped he hadn’t been impolite.

“Just wine, please. A bottle.”

Her perfume was intoxicating as always.

“Should I bring two glasses?”

He noticed something peculiar.

Beneath her right hand rested a small figurine—a tiny man.

“No. Just one.” She smiled.

“Okay, I’ll be right back.”

“Thank you, Viktor.”

His heart skipped.

“You know my name?”

“You are wearing a name tag.” She laughed softly.

He laughed too, embarrassed.

“Of course. I’ll bring the wine.”

“What time does your shift end?” she asked.

“At ten.”

“Would you mind if I waited? So you can walk me home? I’d feel... better if you were with me.”

His thoughts screamed yes, but he answered calmly.

“Won’t the person you’re meeting be arriving later?”

“He already did,” she replied quietly.

“But if you can’t, I understand.”

“No, I can. I’ll walk you home.”

She smiled again.

When his shift ended, they stepped outside into the cool evening air. The wind from the fjord carried the sharp scent of the sea.

As they walked, she led him down a narrow alley he had never noticed before.

On the other side was a beautiful street lined with trees, their leaves whispering softly in the breeze.

“I didn’t know this street existed,” Viktor said.

“There are always new places waiting to be discovered,” Elín replied lightly.

Three large red houses stood fused together in an unusual structure, a hawthorn tree rising proudly in the center of their shared garden.

“We’re here,” she said.

Her house stood opposite them—simple, yet framed by a garden bursting with False christmas cactus, Meadowsweet, Siskiyow lewisia, Pink-sorrel and Candle larkspur.

A faint sound caught Viktor’s attention.

A muffled cry.

It seemed to come from the tiny man in her hand.

“Did that... come from your figurine?”

“Oh.” She glanced down. “It makes strange noises sometimes.”

She squeezed it gently.

Viktor heard a soft crunch.

A shiver passed through him.

A dark, secret thrill he barely understood stirred inside his chest.

“There’s an elf-stone in your garden,” he said quickly, forcing his attention elsewhere. “Do you believe in the Hidden People?”

Elín laughed softly.

“The Hidden People don’t want worship,” she said. “They simply want to be loved.”

She opened her gate and kissed his cheek.

“It was fun spending time with you in the real world,” she said. “I hope we do it again.”

The next morning he tried to find her house.

The alley ended in a solid wall.

He circled the block.

Nothing.  
 No red houses.  
 No hawthorn tree.  
 No street.  
 It was as if it had never existed.  
 Later that evening, his boss handed him a pink note.  
 “Your blonde lass left this for you.”  
 Viktor unfolded it carefully.

Dear Viktor,

I know you came to visit me.  
 I’m sorry you couldn’t find the path.  
 I hadn’t prepared a proper invitation.

Come again tomorrow at 12:30.

I’ll be waiting.

And perhaps we can finally discuss the proposal.

With love,  
 Elín

Suddenly, he understood.

The next day he skipped class and when he arrived at noon, the alley was open again. The hidden street waited for him.

He stepped through the gate.

Inside, Elín stood in her white dress, holding the tiny man.

Only now Viktor understood.

He was no toy.

Elín squeezed him.

The man screamed.

Viktor froze. Fear and fascination warred within him.

“There’s no forgiveness for betrayal,” Elín said calmly. “He was mine.”

With deliberate slowness, she dropped the man to the floor and ended him beneath her sandal.

Silence followed.

“You may enter, Viktor.”

The door opened on its own.

“I chose you,” she said. “Someone kind. Someone who already understands what it means to belong.”

“Our dreams...” he whispered.

“Our way of connecting.”

She stepped closer.

“You know the consequences. Once you accept, there is no turning back. You will be mine.”

He did not hesitate.

“Elín of the Summer Court,” he said softly, “I, Viktor, give you my name—in this life and in all the others to come.”

Light surrounded them.

When it faded, Viktor stood in the palm of her hand.

Her wings shimmered behind her like frost-lit glass in the northern sun.

“I will always take care of you,” she whispered.

And for the first time, Viktor felt that he truly belonged.