Prior to the delivery of my note, Robin had been respectfully declining Katerina's approaches. She appreciated the wolf's efforts, but she still didn't trust her; and Katerina's stating of the obvious did nothing to reduce that mistrust. Every action on the pregnant woman's part was met with a silent from the frozen girl, until, at last, my seal calmed her nerves.

Nervousness still pervaded Robin's demeanor beyond that point, but she now felt comfortable enough to talk to her rescuer instead of shunning her. The overcoat and blanket were thawing her frozen, defensive shell ever so slightly. Her bones followed suit, eventually returning to normal just as Katerina officially greeted her.

[b]"Good morning, Katerina,"[/b] the girl said while lightly bowing her head. [b]"I suppose I should have expected that Lady Natsumi was watching me this whole time, though her mastery of magic still seems a tad frightening to me. I've never seen a mage as talented as her."[/b] For a second there, Robin looked down at her feet. Her expression was melancholy, like an old woman recalling a painful memory. [i]"I don't deserve her kindness,"[/i] she murmured under her breath, subconsciously crumpling my note in her hand.

Katerina's blanket fortress appeared then, sending the young girl from sadness into panic. [b]"Ah,"[/b] she cried, taken aback by the flames overhead! She fumbled with my note immediately afterward, preparing to jump out of the sled as a reflex; but she soon realized that there was nothing to fear. The flames disappeared, leaving only an embarrassed warrior sitting underneath her new blanket tent in wide-eyed paranoia.

[b]"Sorry, still not used to magic on the fly. Please warn me next time,"[/b] Robin said before snuggling into Kat's gift to her. If she wasn't warm before, she certainly was now. There would definitely be no trouble waiting in her toasty environs for the sled to get underway what with this new development, and so she did while remaining quiet the entire time. Her eyes closed in those moments before departure, giving her the look of a napping woman when, in fact, she was just descending into a light meditation.

Meanwhile, another note popped up in front of Katerina's face just before her pack started up again. I warped it in after Robin wasn't looking at the wolf anymore, intending the contents to only be read by Silverstein.

[color=indigo][i]'P.S.,'[/i][/color] that piece of parchment began, continuing on from the last message I had sent. [color=indigo][i]'If so much as a single dismemberment or patch of frostbite happens to Robin in that place because of you, Katerina, I'll hunt you down and gut you like a fish. If not, and you succeed in ensuring her safety, I have a cup of Ambrosia Wine(non-alcoholic) with your name on it. Think about it.'[/i][/color] The letter tore itself apart after Katerina had read it, scattering its pieces to the four winds in an effort to erase all evidence. I admit the contents were a drastic, immature threat in hindsight, but, on some level, I was serious at the time. I did have some non-alcoholic wine to be used as a bribe.

At any rate, Robin and Katerina got underway shortly thereafter. The former was meditating during almost the entire trip, keeping just as silent as the latter until the blizzard intensified. Robin could sense the orcs before her driver spoke of them, and didn't need smell to identify them in the snow.

[b]"Five on the ridge overlooking the vault, and another seven or so are flanking our cart."[/b] The Ataiyan warrior spoke quickly and clearly while making note of the orc's life energy amidst the snow. She could sense magic and life in her immediate area by quieting her mind like in meditation – a skill she picked up in training – and so she didn't need to see her brutish enemies to find them in those low visibility conditions.

However, seeing them wasn't enough. When Katerina stopped the sled, she sprung an ambush from the flanking orcs. One of them came up from the rear, smashing into and overturning the sled. Robin jumped out of her basket before she was trapped underneath, taking her bastard sword and backpack with her. She didn't know what happened to Katerina, but she certainly didn't abandon her to run. Instead, she hid amongst the snow, cautiously measuring the actions of their enemies as she prepared a counterattack.