

## **The Battle Anthology**

*A collection of stories chronicling Kira's bombastic battles.*

*Stories in this anthology are unrelated to other major story events.*

### **Only Slightly Dangerous, Act One.**

Lula wobbled and held tightly onto Alaina's head and kept her thighs clenched to keep her in place. It was like riding a really tall motorbike... closer to a unicycle, really, but in the present circumstances it was far less fun. Why had she let them come all the way here? Wind scraped snow off the top of the mountain pass and whipped it into flurries rushing past her ears, but this was no winter wonderland. It was a graveyard. Menhirs and dolmens in disparate levels of disrepair dotted the landscape and she seemed to be the only one taking this seriously.

"Are you *sure* this is a good idea?" Lula questioned. "I mean, we've been here before."

"We have, and we're far stronger than we were then. This is just to give Lula a pick me up... a confidence boost. Smash a skeleton and go home. Or so, Joan thinks."

"It was your idea too..." Lula frowned, and realised her misgivings would yet again go unheard. She looked over at Kira, kicking chunks of ice down the path. Was this all just to mask her fear? Lula wondered what the point of trying to hide it was. She clutched a bag of silver tightly in her hands...

The iceball rotated, rolling down the hill, and crashed into a rock.

Rocks aren't supposed to move though, are they?

They're not supposed to rattle. They're not supposed to resemble skulls.

And they DEFINITELY aren't supposed to sprout arms and try to climb out of the ground!

"Ah, excellent!" Alaina said, and Lula yet again questioned how everyone else could be so calm about this... even upbeat? "Kira, there is your foe. Every so often, the Drust skeletons will become inhabited by wandering spirits and possess nearby bones. But it's nothing to fear! Just destroy the physical form, and the spirit should move on peacefully."

Kira stuck her hands behind her head and glanced over. "Sorry, what? I wasn't listening to half of that."

Alaina pursed her lips and kept a hand on Valour's grip as she saw the skeleton find its pelvis. "Nevermind. Remind me again what your abilities are?"

"Ugh. More exposition? Come on! It's like the most basic thing ever. I'm an Earth Wielder. And Air. And sometimes Water. And Tobbin says I have rock bones."

The skeleton didn't seem to care much for exposition either, not when it finally found its legs and feet and crawled out from the grave. The spirits in this area were clearly agitated by the poor storytelling on display and charged straight at Kira!

"No time for that then it seems, Kira. Smash it to bits!" Alaina called.

"Alaina please don't let her get hurt!" Lula fretted from above.

"Wait, you want me to fight this thing right now?" Kira cried, and froze in her tracks.

The scenes of her struggle against Fai Dan raced in her mind, and as bullish as she acted before now she was here in the moment she realised she did not have the courage to act.

The skeleton met her and pushed her into the ground, slack-jaw hanging open ready to feast, but this time Kira was not alone. "You can do it, Kira! One bad fight doesn't change

“who you are!” Alaina called from the sidelines while Lula was inches away from throwing her silver pouch; but with the support of her friends Kira found that lost courage and smashed the skeleton’s skull with a jagged rock. Its body slumped over, and she stood up.

“Wow, that was actually pretty easy. A short adventure, huh.”

But the spirits had other plans...

Eerie blue lights swirled around the skeletal remains and infused them with deathly energies... they drew more and more bones to their side... and before the three knew it, an even greater monster stood before them. A ten-foot tall Bone Behemoth.

“Ahh, Kira. You jinxed it!”

### **Only Slightly Dangerous, Act Two**

The Bone Behemoth swept its hand through icy stone and caused a shockwave that knocked everyone away. Kira landed face-down in the snow, while Alaina hung tight with ease... but noticed that a weight had been lifted from her shoulders. “Lula!”

The Tinker tumbled down the cliffside, her body surprisingly gelatinous and able to withstand physical impacts, but that did not mean this little trip down onto a ledge below was easy nor pain free.

Alaina rushed to the overhang from the top and reached her hand out to grab her, but she was too far.

“Don’t worry about me...” Lula grumbled, rubbing her eyes. “Go help Kira!”

Of course something had gone wrong. If only someone had mentioned this was a bad idea. If only someone had listened! If only someone decided to actually pay attention to the person they call the smartest in the room rather than consistently throwing themselves into trouble! But that would be too easy!

Meanwhile, topside, Kira quickly learned she was out of her element.

Not literally, ‘cause there was plenty of stone here to throw. It was a mountain after all.

But she was outmatched. Just like Fai Dan. Just like against everything!

The behemoth saw her backflipping over its attacks, caught her by the leg mid flip then slammed her back into the ground. Kira launched herself back up with a handstand, and kicked a crack into the bones on the way up,, but that wouldn’t stop it anytime soon.

One fist came and rocked her skull sideways.

Another swing came and caught her ribs, sending her to the ground.

A final punch was on its way, but Kira locked in and didn’t let it finish.

In one quick motion a massive rock hammer formed in her hands, and whipped it around to obliterate the skull for a second time!

“Are we done yet?”

The bones began to repair themselves again... drawing more from ice-buried bodies, until the whole thing grew even taller! It stretched over the mountainside, so tall even Lula could

see it from her vantage, and when Alaina finally joined Kira's side even she realised that she had perhaps taken this too lightly.

"For fuck's sake, come on!"

### **Only Slightly Dangerous, Final Act**

Lula realised that she, yet again, would have to be the one to fix the situation she had warned everyone about. She had the silver... but how hit the skeleton with it?

Lula gazed up to see her tool bag had snagged on a piece of rock on the cliff face she had tumbled down. "It's always gotta be hard..." she mumbled, rubbing her head, but knew there was no other choice. While the battle against the behemoth raged overhead, shaking the shelf with every crashing blow, she climbed up and dug her fingers into the icy rock.

The ground heaved, her grip faltered, she slipped, almost fell! But by digging a screwdriver into the wall like an ice pick, she found purchase, and clung on tightly. Her fingers were now inches from her toolbag...

"You fight shit like this every day??" Kira gasped, taking cover from the Bone Behemoth's blows.

"Aye! 'tis usually not this much trouble however!"

"It's a good thing you're only a little bit weaker than Rosie." Kira said, and looked around to see the monster drawing its leg back for a massive kick.

Kira rose up a wall but even that was smashed through, sending her reeling back into Alaina's arms. Kira stood back up swiftly, only feeling a soft pain in her chest, and grumbled. "That was a heavy blow. Are you sure you're okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just deal with this thing!"

Alaina marked Kira's impressive durability and considered that their original purpose here, to give Kira some confidence, could still be possible.

Lula yanked open her bag and saw her supplies were scarce. A couple of steel poles, a length of rope, a few uneaten Bindt chocolates, and her shorts. Things any good engineer keeps on them at all times, of course. But how to put them together...? She had already decided her plan three steps ago, and put it into motion.

As they continued their battle, Alaina made sure to cover Kira and create openings for her. She'd parry great swipes from bony digits or slam its legs aside to cause it to slip and leave its head free for an extra hit. But no matter how much earth Kira summoned and sent towards the monster, Alaina noted how its qualities had changed. It was weaker than real stone, lighter, softer. Kira's blows started to lose their effect. The behemoth's armour was too great. Alaina even found Valour's strikes proving to be less effective. How could they win if they could not even damage their opponent? How could she give Kira the win she so desperately needed?

Ah, of course. But it was so simple!

Alaina rushed in, putting herself between the behemoth and Kira and snared her silver meteor to keep it in place. "Now, Kira. Finish it with your bare hands!"

“Bare hands? You’re fuckin’ insane.”

“You’re stronger than you think. Just trust me!”

Lula was ready. With the elastic band inside her shorts tied by rope to the two steel poles drove into the ground, Lula had the perfect means for delivering her payload... a slingshot!

“I really hope this works..!” She fretted, adjusting her goggles’ zoom to gauge the distance, and saw that Alaina had given her the perfect opening by snaring the monster.

She pulled the band back with all her strength and let the silver bag fly!

With her excellent skills of triangulation, Lula hit the target head on and watched as silver dust scattered across the monster’s head which melted away at its cursed form.

“Kira, now!” Alaina cried!

Earth erupted underneath to launch her high into the air, and harnessed no element but her own raw strength just as Alaina had commanded, steeling herself in preparation for her bones to break with no protection... but just as Alaina said, she was stronger than she thought! Kira’s own bones proved stronger than the skeleton’s, providing enough resistance for her to smash a massive hole through the skull for the final time and watch the skeleton crumble into the dirt.

The three of them waited with bated breath for the monster to reform, but no bones took to life this time. Wisps of faint blue energy rose from the corpse and swept themselves away with the breeze, leaving the mountain at rest once more.

## Deeprun Slam, Act One

Kira woke to the sound of screeching brakes, and to her face accelerating into the chair in front.

*CRRRRRKKKKK...!*

She looked around, same as all the other passengers. The hell was going on? Alaina's eyes were peeled, spine straight, vision steady, watching.

It had been thirty minutes since they left Stormwind Station.

Kira had gotten all dribbly on Alaina's shoulder, crunked out, and was expecting to skip the whole way into Ironforge for their day trip by sleeping. Seemed like something, or some people, had other plans.

"Kira, look." Alaina pointed her head to the doors. Was there supposed to be a stop halfway through the tunnel? Even if there was, a bunch of dudes wearing swanky looking black suits and sunglasses getting on probably wasn't a good sign... especially not when one of them carried a big bag.

Kira shot up, but Alaina pulled her down by the shoulder and forced her to watch them walk down the carriage.

The tram jolted, and they were moving again and the disquiet of the other passengers eventually settled down.

"Stay here. I'm going to go investigate." Alaina said.

"Oi, no chance, I'm coming with you."

"You're staying here to keep an eye on things from this side." Alaina's serious, battle-ready look told Kira all she needed to know... she wasn't being told to sit out, no. Quite the opposite. She was a member of the team.

"You got it, boss."

Alaina travelled down the carriage, leaving Kira to handle herself.

Kira checked her watch, unable to sit still, her trainers bouncing on and off the floor.

"Where the fuck is she?" She hissed under her breath. Fuck it. She waited long enough. It was time to go.

She hurried past the other passengers, speedwalking down to the other side, and went to get into the next carriage but the door was locked. She tried the handle again and again, then peered through the window.

It was one of them! Mr. Black Suit.

He pried one of the panels off the wall and used a set of pliers to snip one of the lines, sparks flew, she heard the wheels under the carriage creak and rattle, and just as he was done Kira managed to kick the door down and burst in!

"You think you're slick, huh? I don't know what you fuckers are doing but I'm not gonna let it slide!"

He sneered. "There's always someone willing to play the hero... always someone willing to die."

Kira put her fists up, and so did he.

Mr. Suit threw the first hit, a jab aimed at her throat.

Kira parried then uppercut, straight to the jaw.

He stepped back, blocked Kira's next few hits, found a gap, feinted, punched her in the gut and then followed up with a kick that knocked her back out the door and into the passenger cart!

Everyone stood up, looked around, hid themselves as they saw the fight start.

Kira hit the floor hard and groaned. "Nice to be a spectator sport, huh?" but Mr. Suit had no time for quips. He came at her again and Kira recovered by twisting into a handstand.

By the time his flying knee was close she ducked out of the way and countered with a body blow that knocked the wind out of him.

She danced on her toes. "That's what getting punched by rock bones feels like, mate."

Mr. Suit pulled a knife from his jacket and threw his glasses down.

"Getting serious? Time for round two then!"

Kira knew he was trained just by how he held that thing. He constantly switched grips, using a forward grip for the range and distancing while twirling the blade around to icepick for powerful stabs. Kira blocked one with a cross-arm guard, but the fucker spun the knife around and slashed Kira's forearm before nearly gutting her neck if she wasn't quick enough to dodge.

By now passengers had begun rushing away to the back of the carriage. Something was wrong, the tug of the tram's movement kept growing, kept accelerating, but Kira had no time to think!

She backflipped to get some distance, constantly keeping just out of range and stuck her middle finger up after every time she landed. "Try hit me, shitnugget!"

By the time he threw his knife at her in anger, desperate to prove her wrong, and she kicked it out of the way?

"Wrong choice, buddy."

He had already lost.

Kira charged him, but rather than going head on, she used the luggage railing to climb above him and delivered a kick so powerful it made him spring off an empty seat like he was in a bouncy castle.

Mr. Suit landed on the floor, and he continued to be a little bitch and fight back until Kira smacked him again and again and again.

"Spill the beans, spill the beans, spill the beans!"

He grabbed her neck and dragged her close.

"You're too late... the brakes are gone..."

"How's that gonna help you mate? Just means I get to my stop quicker!"

"The only stop for this tram is straight to hell... and when it gets there? *Boom.*"

Kira's mind rushed back to the start. The bag!

Mr. Suit grinned as the tram continued to accelerate, the screeching of steel almost deafening him.

"And I bet we're nearly there."

This massive bang met the force of a freight train slamming into them.  
Kira slammed against the ceiling, then to the ground.  
She struggled against unconsciousness when the screams got louder and louder.

### **Deeprun Slam, Act Two**

Good news. Kira wasn't dead.  
Bad news. Things were about to get a lot worse.  
She pulled herself up, head ringing, throat dry. Mr. Suit had passed out, he clearly wasn't planning to see the fireworks. Kira hauled ass up further through to the next carriage to make sure they couldn't go off.

They were still moving, though, still accelerating. Kira realised that the thing they hit had been another tram along the same line. She had seen it out the window; flipped over and crashed up against the other side of the tunnel as they went past.  
Voices were up ahead, sounds of fighting. She sped up.

The first thing Kira saw was one of the suited men flying past her down the hallway, then another grabbed by the shoulder and punched clean out. Alaina woman-handled three, four, no- five bad guys at once. Good thing she had backup.

"I thought I told you to keep an eye out back there!" Alaina said, bashing two skulls together.  
"And miss this party?" Kira ran at the wall, sprang off and dropkicked the next suit before he could get to Alaina. "Besides, they have a bomb."

"Why didn't you start with that!" Alaina and Kira stood back to back, side to side, and watched as even more suits surrounded them...

"How many of these fuckers are there?"

"At least twenty from what I counted earlier." Alaina said. "I hope you're warmed up. We're on a time limit."

Kira cracked her knuckles. "We better get started then!"

Kira had never seen Alaina like this. The woman was a beast.  
She wasn't one of those weird Knights who carried her sword everywhere, she really had expected this to be a chill day out, but as she went off on them she went hard.  
One hit from her was enough to knock you out cold. She swung her arms like huge logs, swiping cleanly through stacks of enemies like a scythe in a field of wheat. She grabbed one dude by the neck and held him as the other came in, kicked him down the hall, another dude stabbed her with a knife and she broke his arm like a twig before he could pull it out.

As for Kira? Well, she had just gotten in the groove.  
It's hard being an earthwielder in a metal tram, but Alaina had conveniently helped her out here. Kira would never walk through dirt in her designer shoes, but Alaina's riding boots were up to the heel in mud. All it took was for her to clench her fist tightly to drag all that substrate into a sphere... and now she had her weapon.  
Kira wasn't about to let Alaina handle this by herself!

Three dudes came at her.  
Kira went first, smashed him with the stone ball,  
Next one came, dodged past, hidden knife up his sleeve,

She leaned back, parried with a rock glove, metal scraped,  
Struck back, one two three, leg then chest then head,  
Kira weaved under the next hit, but he weaved hers,  
She pinned his foot to the floor, now nowhere to hide,  
Kira crashed her fist into his jaw and finished him off!

More kept coming. She looked over. Alaina had her back.

Kira was fast, Alaina was strong.

There was a glint of metal, air sliced, a thin streak hurtling towards Alaina but it never landed. Kira came in, blocked it, the look on his face when he saw the rage of the dragon come down with both fists was priceless. And Kira wasn't just the backup, either. Alaina had three guys on her and punted one of them towards Kira to handle, she grabbed a cup from an empty chair and cast the coffee from it out into his eyes before throwing him to the ground!

Those fuckers just wouldn't let up though.

Time was ticking, the tram continuing to accelerate towards its final destination, the wheels rattled on the tracks that hadn't been built for this momentum. The carriage lurched, rattling them like crisps in a can, all the while more Suits came out of nowhere!

Someone came out of nowhere and grabbed Kira, smashed her head through the window, she felt her brain rattle in her skull, she struggled against him to break free while her head was outside of the carriage inches away from being ground into paste against the tunnel wall in a high-speed blender! Alaina was tied up; though she had the strength of five, maybe eight men, twelve seemed to be her limit. They held her down by every inch of her body, hands, arms, shoulders, two guys around each leg, one suit with a tight headlock.

Kira put everything on the line. She wasn't as out of her element as they might think, not when they were basically shoving her headfirst into it!

Kira wrestled her arm free and slammed the tunnel wall, trading the skin on her knuckles for a chunk of stone to shoot out and knock out the guy pinning her down!

Kira twisted her hand and reshaped that stone into a sword before kicking it over to Alaina... and oh boy, were those assholes in for it now.

As soon as Alaina had hold of it, it was like her strength tripled. Who knew what a power up she could get just from the mental boost of holding a sword-shaped bit of rock. It was like a blur, Kira could barely see her as she flung all of them off at once, disabled them, twirling the blade, drove them into the dust.

Another shockwave came through the tram, more screeching. This one was different though... it felt like they were starting to slow down.

"They finally gave up?" Kira commented, but Alaina knew better.

"No... quick, with me!"

Kira and Alaina rushed to the carriage furthest to the front they could find, and saw something that made their hearts drop.

The coupling had been broken between this carriage and the next...

They were being cut off,  
And the bomb was getting further by the minute.

### Deeprun Slam, Final Act

“Talk about a leap of faith. You ready?”

Kira held herself out the window, every moment that passed bringing them further away from the carriage. Alaina grabbed her arm and counted.

Three,

Two,

Go!

Neither of them would have made it on their own, by the combined powers of Alaina’s incredibly heroic leaps and Kira’s aerial affinity they were able to soar across from one carriage to the other... and catch a handhold at the last possible moment!

*You are now entering First Class.*

The overhead speaker said.

“Time to give them first class service, aye Kira?”

“Yeah. With a first class ticket to getting punched in the face!”

They swept through each room, past passengers relaxing on large tables, smoke drifting from ashtrays, luggage lockers, smashed Suit heads as they broke into the bar, all while the tram continued on a one way trip to explosion city. Neither of them could see the bomb from the rooms they passed through, but with all the bad guys finally cleared Alaina stopped Kira in her tracks to make a plan.

“We need to find and disable the bomb before it-”

An old lady passenger shrieked loudly. “A BOMB?! IS THAT WHAT THOSE RUFFIANS WERE UP TO! OH GOOD HEAVENS! WE'RE GOING TO DIE!!”

Screams and shouts erupted, until Kira raised her voice over them. “SHUT UP, BITCH! WE'RE DEALING WITH IT!”

Alaina grabbed Kira’s face to get her attention. “I will find and disarm the bomb. It must be somewhere close to the front of the train by my reckoning. You must find a way to stop this thing. If we crash again, it may all be over no matter if-”

Kira punched Alaina’s shoulder and ran off. Time is of the essence, right? Point made, get moving!

Alaina smashed her way into the front cart, where the drivers area would usually be, but on an automated service like these trams all Alaina found was pipes and engines. But there in the corner, a black bag! She dipped into it and gulped seeing the number on the display.

[01:00]

[0:59]

[00:58]...

Kira hoped by the time she reached the back end of first class that she would have figured out a plan, but she had absolutely none. How the hell do trams work anyway? All she knew is, when that guy snipped the lines, the tram stopped slowing down. The brakes had been cut... the brakes...

Kira slammed her hands together. It was now or never!

Beads of sweat dripped from Alaina's forehead. An innumerable mass of wires, a tangled mess almost as bad as Lula's junk piles, was laid before her. They were coloured almost every hue of the rainbow, red, yellow, pink, blue, green, mahogany... Alaina checked the timer.

[00:29]

[00:28]

[00:27]

Damnit! Think! What would Lula do?

Alaina cast her mind back... Lula had taught her this, Lula had explicitly said how to cut the wires in a bomb once! An ethereal image of Lula appeared in her mind.

*"So what you do is you take the electromagnethesis and trace the logosological conduit back to the metastasis battery where the charge for the thermobaricnuclear explosion will be..."*

Alaina rubbed her head. She wasn't smart enough to have understood any of it!

At Kira's command, a massive stone hand erupted from the tunnel floor between the tracks and wrapped itself around the undercarriage. Metal sparks plumed from the wheels and an ear-splitting screech was left behind, but even the strength of granite only did a little to slow the great speed of the speeding tram.

"Hrrrnghh...! Fucker...! Come on...!"

Kira released her other hand and used it to call a second hand, this time from the tunnel roof! The stone constructions sped along behind the carriage, keeping up and applying counter-force, but time was running out... the elevation in the tunnel changed, they were nearing the station!

[00:10]

Alaina's lips quivered. She had to do something, cut a wire, any wire!

[00:09]

Kira's veins popped out of her arms and used every ounce of strength she had to slow the tram!

[00:08]

Red, blue, pink, which to choose?!

[00:07]

*You are approaching Ironforge Station.*

[00:06]

Alaina remembered her oath. She couldn't die here!

[00:05]

*Please collect your luggage, and mind your step on the way out.*

[00:04]

Alaina couldn't adjust her goggles or pull at her messy hair. Come on! Think!

[00:03]

Stone fingers dredged through metal, holding on for dear life.

[00:02]

Alaina looked down at Kira's makeshift sword...

[00:01]

The station lights came into view...

*If you see anything suspicious, please contact the Gnomish Transport Police on 61.0-61.6  
Or speak to a member of staff. See it, say it, sorted!*

*Bing!*

The carriage slowly crept into the station, and the doors opened wide. Passengers piled out of the train and out to safety, while guards rushed in to investigate why half the train was missing.

They found Kira collapsed by the back end of the train, passed out.

And they found Alaina by the front looking awfully smug with herself.

She needed to cut a wire, any wire, before it had a chance to blow?

Then why not cut all the wires before any of them could trigger the device!

Kira woke in a cot in an infirmary, and saw Alaina's ugly mug looming over her.

"Urgh... waking up to you is becoming a bit of a habit."

Alaina scoffed. "You say that as if it's a bad thing."

"It's not. If I died and went to rejoin the Light I'd hardly be in paradise if I saw you there huh?"

Alaina punched her in the arm as payback. "Oh shut up! You'd be dead if not for me."

"And you'd be a pancake if not for me, so let's call it even stevens eh?"

"You did well, Kira. I couldn't have done it without you."

Kira grinned. "We still hitting the town once I'm out of here?"

"Naturally. Who'd want to miss that?"