

*The characters Torvald Arend 'Tor' & Victoria Angela (nee Connell) Svensen, James Conrad & Cathryn 'Cathy' (nee Hunter) Svensen, Brett, Dana Lynn (nee Svensen) and Sabrina Angela Kasnikon, Roger, Gytha Louise (nee Svensen) Roger Jr. & Heather Louise Delancey, Axel Torvald & Madelyn (nee Barrett) Svensen, Bradley Torvald 'Brad' & Janet Lee (nee Mondragon) Svensen, Trenton, Nancy Jeanne (nee Svensen), Trenton Junior 'TJ' and Chelsea Corbin, Ronald Arend 'Ron' & Brenda Mae (nee Cartwright) Svensen, Lawrence James 'LJ' & Alicia Leanna (nee Svensen) Hood, Valerie Connell, Walter Lee Sr. & Harriet (nee Bishop) Connell, Walter Lee Jr., Michelle Annette 'Misha' (nee Kazinski), Walter Lee III, Joseph Franklin 'Joe' and Sarah Noel Connell, Robert James & Elizabeth Ann (nee Caine) Sands, Barbara Caine, Edward and Mary (nee Leese) Caine, Richard Tisdale & Wilhelmine Marie 'Willi Marie' (nee Kurzweil) Delancey, James William & Nancy (nee Roland) Kurzweil, Erich Martin & Inanova Marie 'Ina Marie' (nee Schmidt) Kurzweil, Jason & Natasba 'Tasha' (nee Porter) Cummeron, Peter the dispatcher, El Casa Del Burrito[®], Leonard's Restaurant[®], Hunter Auto Parts[®], Right Way Groceries[™] and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission. Any resemblance to any fur or person, either living or dead is purely coincidental. Fender, Guild, Gretsch, Jackson, Charvel and Squire are the property of Fender Musical Instruments, Inc. Gibson, Les Paul and SG are the property of Gibson Musical instruments. (Gah, this is tedious!) *Note* More rambling credits/warnings below! Please read and heed! Aslaug "The Angelbreaker" Larsdatter and Varghöss are the copyrighted properties of Joan Jacobsen, 2005-2010 Her writings may be found at a wonderful place called "Aslaug's Axe Shed" and the URL is as follows; <http://www.aslaug.eu> Please have a look and enjoy her writings. The characters of Joe and Annie Latrans are copyright The Silver Coyote 2003 - 2010, and are used here with permission. Stories containing Joe and Annie Latrans along with The Silver Coyote's writings may be found at <http://thesilvercoyote.net/> Tell them Kellan sent ya. ;-) Note* This is a shameless plug for Aslaug and The Silver Coyote! What are friends for, anyway? Camille 'Cami' Carter is from the 'Trisha' series by Kellan Meig'h but is not canon to that series. All other characters property of Kellan Meig'h unless otherwise noted.*

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“End Game”

By Kellan Meig'h

Chapter 16 – “Prosecution Part Quatre?”

The room slowly coalesced around the tigress, appearing to be their suite on the Celestial Court's planet. There was blood all over the sheets, Torvald's pillow and the floor where she had landed when she had fell out of bed. Her hubby was rubbing his eyes, still trying to clear his vision and Cami seemed confused, standing there in the buff, rifle in one paw and a cordless pawset in the other. Miss Carter was the first to break the silence.

“Wha . . . what just happened to us?” she asked, setting the pawset back on its cradle carefully afterward.

“We were on a world that is marked 'Neutral Ground', I think,” Victoria replied, walking over to examine her hubby closely. His coat was now a very light platinum blond and his mane and tail were white as snow. “Um, Tor, Hon, you had better take a look in the mirror.” she suggested.

“Oh No . . .” Tor said reverently as he turned to see himself in the mirror over the vanity. “Well, I guess it's time to start dying my coat,” he mused, holding his tail hairs to the light just to confirm their color.

“Tor, how did this happen?” Victoria asked, running her paw through he mane.

“I don't know, exactly,” he offered up. “I have the feeling I was almost an Einharjar until Eyr intervened.” he mused.

The trio were rudely disturbed at that moment by the medical crew bursting into the room, eleven furs in all. They barged into the bedroom, pushing Cami aside roughly while the crew literally forced the Immortal Couple to occupy the two gurneys brought into the room. Victoria came under the scrutiny of a male lapin EMT.

“How do you feel? How many fingers am I holding up? Can you hear me??” the muscular gray rabbit asked, shining his pen light into the tigress' eyes.

“I'm fine!” she replied, trying to sit up. That's when another fur, a femme armadillo started an IV in her

left arm. "Hey! I just said we're fine! Cami, tell them we're fine!" she shouted, getting the femme chimera's attention. In the meantime, Torvald was dealing with his own problems.

"Will you stop that?" he asked as a fur, a male gazelle, shined a light into his eyes a second time.

"What day is today?" the cervine asked while he checked the stallion's pulse.

"I have no idea!" Tor blurted out. "We don't live on this planet so how would we know!"

"What's your name, then?"

"It's Torvald Arend Svensen." he replied. "We were healed by Eyr, for your information." he added.

Back at Victoria's gurney, things weren't going her way. The furs treating her were very sure she had something serious wrong with her.

"Her heart rate and blood pressure are both elevated," one technician pointed out.

"Prep her for a heart monitor!" the lapin shouted. Multiple electric fur trimmers came out, shaving the fur on her chest and arms down to the skin in numerous places.

"Hey! That's my fur!! Stop it!!!" Victoria shouted as she tried to leave the gurney, only to realize at some point she had been restrained on her gurney by some very thick leather straps around her wrists.

"This is for your own safety, Ma'am," the rabbit stated while he gave her a sedative. That injection seemed to knock the wind from her sails.

"Oh . . . please don't . . . mess up my . . . fur?" she begged quietly, laying her head down when the room began to spin rapidly, right before she blacked out.

Cami finally acted, doing the only thing she could think of to do in this situation; take command.

"Everyone! Stop!! Stop or I'll shoot!!!" she shouted. Everyone in the room ceased what they were doing and turned to look at the naked femme wolverine holding her rifle in a combat stance. "There is nothing wrong with them! They were taken to 'Neutral Ground' and a femme healer took care of their injuries!!!"

The lapin with the hypo in his paw raised an eyebrow, then asked what seemed like a logical question.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Cami Carter, their bodyguard! Now, everyone step away from the gurneys! Do it!!!"

"Thank you for stopping this insanity," Torvald said to Cami as he sat up. The sight on the other gurney, however, seemed to upset him. "What did you do to my wife?" he inquired, staring a hole through the lapin.

"We, um, I mean, uh, that is, I gave her a . . . a mild sedative." the rabbit finally admitted.

"And her fur? Who shaved her fur?" Tor questioned further, noting there were huge patches of bare skin on his mate. "Whoever did that had better get out of here before she comes to or their behind will belong

to her.”

“We, um, that is, I ordered her prepped.” the gray one admitted.

“Well, you'll stay here and apologize to her.” the stallion stated.

“Um, she won't be coming around for . . . an hour or two?” the EMT informed Tor.

“That's just fine, then. There will be plenty of time to shave your butt squeaky clean,” the stallion stated, getting between the rabbit and the door.

“Oh, you wouldn't dare!” the lapin stated.

“Fine. I'll just file a complaint with Judge Talmadge and your superiors.” Torvald suggested.

“No, that's alright. I jumped the gun, I suppose. I have it coming,” the tech replied, holding out a trimmer toward the angry equine.

“No, you will ask forgiveness from my mate. If she says you don't have to shave yourself, you get off easy. It's up to her, now.”

Another EMT got Torvald's attention. “I could give her a stimulant to revive her but it would leave her with a very bad headache,” the femme armadillo pointed out.

“Do it. We need to be in court this morning.” Torvald replied to that suggestion. “I'll take the heat for that.”

Victoria was given that injection through the IV in her arm, the med-tech cringing as she administered it. Momentarily, the tigress began to come around.

“Wha . . . what the hell . . . what in the world did you insane furs do to me?” she said quietly, putting a paw up to her forehead as she grimaced. “My head is effing exploding!” she exclaimed through gritted teeth as the pain finally set in.

“They gave you a sedative, then I told them to give you a stimulant to bring you around,” Torvald told her as he helped her to sit up on the edge of her gurney. “The EMT, here ordered you prepped for a heart monitor, I guess. Your fur is a mess.”

“Uh, I 'm sorry, Ma'am. I didn't know you had been healed by Eyr,” the EMT stated, stepping back out of claw range. “Um, sorry about the fur, Ma'am.”

“My fur?!?” the tigress blurted out, looking down at the situation once she realized what they were talking about. She had a dozen or more places on her body where the fur was missing all the way down to the skin. “Oh good grief! You've effing butchered my pelt, you maniac! Now I'll have to wear high-necked blouses until it grows back in! Gah!!” she exclaimed while she examined the extents of the damage.

“I'm very sorry, Ma'am.” the lapin stated, taking another step back from Victoria.

“You're not convincing me that you're sorry,” the femme feline stated in a low tone, getting that angry look on her muzzle that meant she really wanted to go feral on the fur in question.

“So, what would it take to convince you that I'm sincere?” the EMT asked.

Victoria just smiled a very malicious smile.

The eleven Med-Tech furs made their way back to their station on the first floor and started the task of putting away their gear. The gray lapin, Jon Lawton, was the last to arrive. He walked slowly to his locker and properly stowed his emergency gear. He then sat down on the bench beside the lockers and put his head down into his paws.

“Jon, You okay?” the femme armadillo asked.

He looked up to answer, looking very dejected. “Yeah, Mattie, I'm fine. I'll just have to deal with this when I get home. Maybe my wife can figure out how to wash the iodine out of my fur.”

The lapin had a very prominent 'L' shaved into his forehead that had been colored in with the aforementioned iodine to make it stand out.

Victoria was trying all of the blouses brought in for her in hopes that one would cover the bare patches on her chest. There were two bare places above her left breast that would be very noticeable with every blouse save one. That one was a dress blouse meant to be worn under a suit coat. That blouse was also sleeveless so she would have to keep her coat on through the remainder of the day.

“Can you believe what just happened?” she mused to no fur in particular while she dressed. The tigress touched a bare spot in her chest, shaking her head in disbelief.

“I have witnessed some stupid things but that took the prize!” the stallion retorted. “Including that sedative! What in Hades were they thinking?”

“That's just it, Tor. They weren't thinking!” she half-jokingly stated. She then grimaced and squinted her eyes. “My head still hurts, Sweetheart. I just hope I can make it through the day.” she added.

“There's some Goody's Headache Powder in the medicine cabinet,” the stallion put forth.

“Well, maybe I'll try that first,” the tigress stated, giving some thought to the situation. “I'll need some sunglasses, too. My eyes are very light-sensitive right now.”

While Torvald retrieved her medication, Victoria pondered their situation. Once again, what seemed to be the work of the Malefic Council had left them in a bad way and it was only by sheer luck the situation forced a meeting with their 'employers' on 'Neutral Ground'. Had that not happened, she was sure her hubby would have died and she would have been left permanently scarred, both physically and mentally by that episode.

Why the Council thought they would come over to the dark side, she didn't know. Especially since they had done this last physical 'torture' to them. The tigress knew in her heart she would rather go to oblivion rather than join them. She was also very sure her hubby would join her.

Victoria sat down gingerly, ever mindful not to jostle her body too much. She straightened her skirt and jacket, then adjusted her sunglasses again.

“Tor, next time that happens, just let me wake up on my own, please?” she commented to her hubby. She still had that nasty headache from earlier and the femme Med-Tech had told her it would probably take all day to wear off.

“I’m sorry, Sweetheart. You can blame me for your headache.” he countered. The stallion straightened his clothes again as they waited for the hearing to begin. They were currently waiting in a small room off of the main courtroom area where it was quiet.

“I feel bad now,” the tigress admitted, adjusting her eyewear again. “I shouldn’t have used that iodine.”

“He’ll get over it, I would think,” Torvald suggested, picking up a local newspaper to read. Their trial seemed to be the local section page one news for some reason.

“So, what color are you thinking about?” she asked.

“Color?” Tor asked, not sure of what his wife was getting at.

“Yeah, color. You’ll need to dye your fur now. That color is just too light to be perceived as a natural coloration.” Victoria stated, running her fingers through his white mane. “It’s pretty, but furs would think you’re dyeing your fur.”

“I’m not sure, Sweetheart. Maybe a solid copper-red chestnut?” Tor offered up.

“That would be good.” she replied. “Just a single color that would be easy to take care of.”

“Hmm . . .” Tor thought for a moment, then nodded. “yeah, that would be good.”

“Okay, as soon as we’re home, I’ll take you down to the fur stylist to be dyed.” the tigress said with a smile. She then looked at her hubby and grinned. “There’s no way I can talk you into going for zebra stripes, is there?”

Torvald smiled just slightly at her. “I can’t imagine how long that would take to do,” he offered up, wondering what he would look like as a zebra. A huge, buffed zebra.

“It would be worth it,” she commented. “You would make a very handsome zebroid.”

Tor turned and looked at his mate. “You’ve thought about this, haven’t you?”

“I can’t lie to you.” she stated. “I’ve had Dana Photoshop you into a zebra just to see what you would look like.”

Torvald just shook his head while smiled a crooked smile. “Okay, let me see the picture when we get home. I might indulge you, just this once, though.”

While they discussed Torvald's coloration issues, Tom Iskenderian poked his head into the room.

“Glad to see you both made it.” he offered up. “You can come in now,” he told them, motioning for them to follow.

The Immortal Couple made their way into the courtroom and took up their seats, taking a moment to see who had returned for this second day in court. Victoria's mom and dad were right behind them and Wilhelmine had brought Mala and Xi with her. Bethany joined them at the Defendant's table, setting up her notes for later.

“I heard you both had a run-in with some kind of a Dark Agent,” she commented, looking to see how her clients had fared.

The tigress nodded. “It was pretty serious. That Agent made us believe Torvald was punishing me for a perceived indiscretion. I was made to think I actually tried to kill my hubby.”

“Good Grief!” Bethany blurted out. “That is scary,” she added, giving more thought to it.

The bailiff finally made his appearance and started the proceedings.

“All rise! Court is now in session, the Honorable Judge Harold Talmadge presiding!”

The judge made his way to the bench and scanned the room before he seated himself. The canid nodded to the bailiff, who spoke up again.

“Torvald Svensen, please take the stand so we may continue where we left off.” the bailiff directed.

The stallion took up the witness stand and Thomas approached him with a notepad in paw. The jackal looked at his notes to create a bit of drama, then addressed the defendant.

“Torvald, would you please confirm that at no time during your altercation with Mr. Harper, you did not deviate from proper police procedure?” he asked.

“I followed proper procedures at all times.” Tor replied.

The lawyer smiled. “Now, will you confirm that at no time did your employers advise you that you and your mate needed sanction for your missions?”

“No, we were not advised of that fact.”

“No further questions.” Thomas sat back down behind the defendant's table and scribbled a few notes.

“Cross examine?” the judge asked the prosecuting attorney.

“Decline,” he answered without even looking up, making a few notes of his own.

“Torvald Svensen, you may step down.” the judge offered up. The stallion walked by the ferret on the way back to his chair, noting the attorney sporting a very smug smile.

“Your Honor, I would like to call Victoria Svensen to the stand.” the prosecutor stated firmly after standing again.

The tigress was sworn in and asked by the judge to remove her sunglasses before the prosecuting attorney began to question her.

“For the record, please state your full name and occupation.” he asked.

“My name is Victoria Angela Svensen.” she stated. “I’m an assistant manager for Century Real Estate on my home world and I’m a troubleshooter for *The Gods*.”

The ferret smiled at the tigress. “And could you clue us in on what happened between you and Mr. Vincent Lyle James?”

“There’s not much to tell,” Victoria stated. “my husband and I had returned to finish this particular mission and we had actually captured Mr. James alive. He was being escorted to the podium to make a public statement when he broke loose from the officers leading him. My husband, myself, a small army detachment and several local police-furs followed him to a sporting goods store. He was taking refuge in the back room when for whatever reason he decided to shoot his way out. At one point, once the shooting had ended, only Lieutenant Cahill, Torvald, Mr. James and myself were the only ones still alive in the store.

“My husband was out cold from being hit in the head by a piece of sporting equipment that had been knocked off of a display and Lieutenant Cahill was shot, incapacitated and laying on the floor. I had the lapin under gun-point and I told him that he should just give up because he couldn’t harm me. I explained to him that I was immortal so he leveled his shotgun at me. I told him to either shoot or give up. He didn’t give up, however, deciding to try to shoot me instead. I fired a split-second before he did, ending the engagement right there.”

“You were not shot?” the attorney asked.

“No, I was not.” Victoria replied.

“I take it from reading the records, you were totally uninjured during this mission?” the ferret asked.

“Far from it,” she began. “I was shot multiple times by Mr. harper, I was roughed up by several police-furs when I was taken from my hubby, I was drugged with a dart and I had my leg cut through by a bandsaw! Now it that is uninjured, I would hate to see injured!” she put forth.

“I see . . .” the ferret looked at his notes, then back at the defendant. “Tell me, did you have sanction from the Celestial Courts to conduct this mission?”

“No I did not.”

“No further questions, Your Honor.” The prosecuting attorney seemed very smug at this point as he returned to his seat. The courtroom erupted in a loud murmur, irritating the canid behind the bench.

“Order!” Judge Talmadge shouted, slamming his gavel on the bench. “Counselor Iskenderian, your witness.”

The jackal got up and approached the stand. “Victoria, were you ever told that you and your husband needed sanction from the Celestial Court to conduct your missions?”

“No, we were not informed of that fact. If we had been informed, we would have obtained permission first.” she replied.

“No further questions,” the jackal stated, returning to his seat to make more notes.

“Cross examine?” the judge asked the prosecuting attorney once more.

“Decline,” he answered, giving the tigress a wink.

“Victoria, you may step down,” the judge stated, giving the prosecuting attorney a hard stare. “Closing statements?”

The ferret rose and cleared his throat. “As you have heard, these two 'Warriors for The Gods' have run amok across numerous parallel worlds, disregarding all rules and regulations set forth by the Celestial Court. They have broken the law and deserve to have the book thrown at them. Unless they are stopped, they will continue to run roughshod across the known parallel worlds, flaunting their disregard for proper sanctions while they continue to commit murder after murder in the name of all that is good.”

The prosecuting attorney took his seat, smiling at the jackal as Thomas rose and addressed the jury.

“I contend that Torvald and Victoria are not guilty by the fact that they were not informed that they needed specific sanction from the Celestial Court to perform their duties. They would have sought out sanction had they known that they needed it. Torvald is a police fur with an exemplary work record and Victoria is well aware of proper procedures from her day job as a real estate broker. I ask that you to take this into consideration when you go decide their fates.”

The judge banged his gavel, getting everyone's attention.

“Court is now adjourned until deliberations are concluded.”

Nancy was reclining on her family room couch, her injured leg elevated on some pillows for her comfort. The wound had healed for the most part but is still hurt deep in her thigh. The bullet wound in her abdomen was doing better, only hurting her when she stood up.

She gave thought to what had happened, just to make sure she was making the right decision. If this was the norm for a femme on a mission, she didn't want anything more to do with it. Nancy didn't want to endure being raped again, even if it didn't leave permanent scars on her body. What it *had* left was permanent mental scars to her psyche that would never heal.

Her father had come to stay with her for a few days, just to help out until she could get around better. He was currently in the kitchen, cooking dinner for her brood. Her hubby Trenton was sitting on the arm of the couch, holding her paw while he fought for his composure. TJ and Chelsea were sitting on the floor in front of her, both wiping at their tears.

“We all knew this day would come,” Nancy said for their edification. “We've all known that I wouldn't be

here forever. These demons in my head that I've lived with all my adult life and now these missions. I'm sorry, I just can't allow my body to be violated at every turn just to do some God's dirty work."

"Won't you reconsider?" Trenton asked.

"No, I can't take it any more." Nancy replied. "Just look at me! Raped twice, a bullet wound and an arrow wound, just to retrieve some items that wouldn't work for long before the batteries gave out? No, I . . . I can't go on doing this."

"Why don't you talk with your Grandpa Torvald first?" her hubby suggested.

"I will wait that long for you, if the Gods will allow it," she offered up, squeezing his paw.

Chelsea sensed her parents wanted to be alone for a bit so she urged her brother to help her set the table. That left Trenton alone with his wife. He knelt in front of her, wrapping his powerful arms around her.

"Nancy, how will we deal with your passing?" her hubby asked, trying not to choke up.

"Don't grieve for me, please? Make it an Irish wake. Plenty of beer, whiskey and old funny stories about us, dredged up from the closet." The femme equine looked at the floor, then at her hubby with tears in her eyes. "I don't want to do this, Trenton, but I have no other choice. They won't allow me to live on this planet as an immortal unless I do the dirty work of the Gods."

"Hon, couldn't you . . ." Nancy interrupted her hubby.

"There are no other choices, according to my mission assistant, Megan." she offered up. "I asked for leniency and got none when we debriefed yesterday. I was told either I had to do the work or give up my immortality."

Nancy stopped for a moment, pulling her thoughts together before she spoke again. "It's not just that, Dear. Every time I see something high, like a tall freeway fly-over or a steep cliff, the first thing that comes to mind is the question of whether or not it's tall enough to commit suicide off of. That is what's killing me, Trenton. I just can't seem to stop thinking about it. I even rushed a phalanx of armed soldiers, armed with nothing more than two pistols, hoping to somehow be mortally injured and die."

"I have already grieved for you," her hubby admitted to her. "I've felt your pain, especially when you've had one of your episodes. Now that you put the situation in this light, I can't say that I blame you for wanting to end it."

Just promise me this, Trenton Corbin." she said in a small, wavering voice, "Do not let our children forget who their mother was. Tell them stories, show them the old photo albums and home videos. Take them to see my family. Just do not let them forget who Nancy Corbin was."

Pulling the last bits of his composure together, Trenton hugged his wife lovingly, then stronger as his composure faded. Swallowing that huge lump in his throat, he answered his wife's request between sobs.

"I will never let them forget who their mother was and I will never forget you, ever."

Court had resumed and everyone waited patiently while the jury filed back into the jury box. Torvald looked at the faces of his peers, trying to figure out what the verdict might be. A few furs, a male feline and a femme hedgehog had looked their way but there was really nothing the berserker could see to indicate their fate.

“All rise, court is now in session. The Honorable Judge Harold Talmadge presiding,” the bailiff announced, taking his place by the side of the bench afterward.

Mr. and Mrs. Svensen, please rise,” the judge asked, looking at them over his reading glasses. “Do you have anything you would like to say before the verdict is announced?”

“I do,” Torvald announced, waiting until the judge nodded to continue. “I would have been perfectly content to have went to my reward in Asgaard if the Gods had not intervened. I was told to study under a mage but when he was killed, I was more or less on my own for almost one hundred years. Once the Gods acknowledged what they specifically wanted me to do for them, I was never once told that I needed to obtain sanctioning from the courts.

“Victoria, for her part, was as uninformed as I was. She only agreed to become a troubleshooter just to be near me, since the number of husband and wife teams were so few. If anything, she is totally innocent in this. Throw the book at me if you wish, just leave her out of this.”

“Please remain standing,” the judge ordered. “Jury, what is the verdict?”

A male black ursine stood up. “We, the jury, find in the matter of The Courts versus Torvald Arend Svensen and Victoria Angela Svensen, both are guilty of a level two misdemeanor, acting without sanction from the Celestial Court on missions for The Gods that impacted destiny.”

The courtroom erupted in near-pandemonium, causing the judge to have to get the court back under control.

“Order! Order in the court!” he shouted, banging his gavel loudly. He rolled his eyes in disgust while the room quieted down. Once it had quieted, he addressed the Immortal Couple.

“You have been found guilty of a level two misdemeanor. While this might sound dire, it is not.” Harold looked at the paperwork in front of him and nodded. “The sentence for a first time offense is five years probation. During such time, you may not leave your home planet without my permission or do any work that you might be directed to do by the Gods. If you break probation, I will have you jailed on a null-power planet for the remainder of your term.”

Judge Talmadge stopped for a moment, then continued. “Forseti, Michael, please rise.” he ordered. Once the ursine and the angel had stood up, Harold continued. “As representatives of their respective Gods, you must agree to these terms of sentencing.”

“Agreed,” Michael replied, looking to Victoria and nodding. “We will abide by your judgment.”

“We will agree to honor your judgment,” Forseti replied, smiling at the judge ever so slightly.

“Torvald, Victoria, please follow the bailiff,” Judge Talmadge directed, indicating for them to do so.

The bailiff led the Immortal Couple to an area of the building that seemed to utilitarian in nature. They had passed several offices that seemed to be document storage, then the area where they had been previously when their bail was paid. They were led over to a counter where a aging Pronghorn stag stood waiting for them.

“Torvald, Victoria, I'm Jacques Forrester. I have been instructed to fit you with tracking bands.” he explained with a slight French-Canadian accent. “Ma'am, please give me your right wrist,” he asked, using a gauge to measure her right above the paw. He then brought out a box from under the counter.

“This is a standard tracking band, nothing special,” he stated as he removed a silver-colored band that had some engraving on it. Using one end of a key of sorts to open it, the device sprung open. The key was unusual due to the fact that it had a short cable attached that was connected to another key. The stag used the second key to open another band, gold in color. “You must have one band on at all times. To switch bands, you know, for fashion reasons, you must put one on before the other will unlock. The bands have sensors that will tell the band when it is on your wrist. By the way, they are totally waterproof.” He then demonstrated the procedure before he equipped Torvald with a similar set of bands.

“This will be in your home,” the stag said as he brought out a small black cube, not more than three inches square. “I have researched your planet's power distribution scheme so this receiver will plug right into your household current. When it is powered up, this light in the top will flash amber. Once it has established communications, the light will go green. If this does not happen, call the number on the bottom of the unit.”

Torvald turned the unit over to see it had some brief instructions printed in very tiny print and a toll-free number on the label.

The cervine continued with his instructions. “This has a range of about one thousand miles, more or less depending on terrain. I will need your home phone number and your cell numbers in case we lose communication. By the way, the receiver has batteries in it as a backup. The batteries will be good for twelve hours, approximately.”

While Victoria filled out a form with their phone numbers and their family's numbers, the cervine went through replacing the batteries in the bands with Torvald. He then walked the stallion through using a car power adapter to take the receiver with them on a long trip.

“You two are very lucky,” the stag commented. “I have researched your situation a bit. It would seem that the sentence given you keeps you from being used to do the dirty work of the Gods. I am guessing this does not upset you?”

Victoria nodded. “No, it doesn't. I guess we really got of lucky in this situation. By the way, we were told by Christopher that we were now inactive Agents.”

“Ah, I see.” Mr. Forrester mused. “But you are still Agents, nonetheless.”

The tigress responded to that comment. “As soon as Eyr figures out how to remove our immortality, we will no longer be Agents, we will be just plain old Victoria and Torvald, mortals.”

“All the better for you,” the stag commented while he set up some paperwork for them to sign. “I need you to sign for all of this equipment, please?” he requested, giving the stallion a pen.

There was a mountain of paperwork to sign, both for their tracking equipment and the various forms regarding their sentence. Once that was completed, they met up with Victoria's parents, Thomas, Bethany, Cami and Willi Marie.

“My paw is still sore from all that signing!” the tigress mused while they made their way to the arrival and departure room. She was rubbing it while they walked along.

Thomas spoke up, seeming somewhat sad. “I feel like I failed you two,” he stated, giving them a pensive smile. “You shouldn’t have been charged in the first place and certainly you should have never been found guilty of something you were unaware of.”

“Actually, I think this might work out just fine,” the berserker brought up. “We're guaranteed five years that we won't be bothered at all. That's plenty of time to set up our 'At-Risk' teen diversion program.”

When they arrived at the white room, Cami erected a portal for them to return to the home of the Immortal Couple. They all stepped through to find themselves in the front yard of Rancho Svensen, looking at a big 'Welcome Home!' banner over the front door. All of the local Svensen children were there, waiting for them to return.

“I knew you might like this,” the jackal commented, watching all of the tearful hugging going on. The group seemed content to hug and cry for a bit, letting all of the stress melt away. They all eventually gravitated into the home where Dana pulled her father aside.

“Dad, um, I took a call for you about an hour ago,” she offered up, passing her father the cordless pawset. “It was Nancy on the phone and she seemed upset. She wanted you to call her.”

“Okay, I will give her a call in a little bit, as soon as things quiet down.” Tor replied.

“Hey Dad,” Axel greeted his father, giving the elder Svensen a glass of mead to celebrate with.

“Hi Axel,” Tor replied, sipping a bit of his drink. “Thanks for the welcome home, Son. I think your Mom and I both needed this.”

“I had Madelyn make some carrot cake,” the younger equine offered up, nudging his father towards the counter. “You have to try it. Maddie worked so hard on it.”

“Mmm,” was the only thing the berserker commented as he savored the taste.

“So, Dad, you and Mom are not allowed off the planet for five years?” Axel queried.

“Yeah, thank the stars. This is what your Mother has wanted for years. We're retired Agents now with time to start that program we have been talking about.”

“Retired?” Axel raised an eyebrow at that notion. “Do you think the Gods will allow you to retire?”

“Axel, I read in an obscure ancient text about a couple, Heathen and Christian, who were Agents by the cryptic description given. They were allowed to retire and live out the rest of their lives in peace.

Christopher told us to our muzzles that we were retired.”

“I just hope this works out,” Axel put forth, getting himself a piece of cake. “Conrad wanted to be here but he was too busy preparing for The Superbowl.”

Tor nodded. “Yeah, he must be pumped to be going to 'The Bowl' again.”

“He said you and Mom had better be there this time. They're playing in Sacramento this time.”

“Yeah, we will not miss this one.” Torvald agreed. “You know, this will be the first bowl game we've ever been to.” he mused.

The two equine males were talking about last year's bowl game when Victoria interrupted them.

“Tor, did you call Nancy?” she inquired.

“No, I forgot.” the stallion admitted. “Um, I guess I had better call, then.”

He called Nancy's number, waiting patiently for her to answer. When she did, he could hear the stress in her voice.

“Grandpa Torvald?” she asked, the sounds of her sniffing plainly audible.

“Nancy, what's wrong? Is there something I can do to help?” The stallion asked.

“There is something you can do for me, Grandpa. I need you to get in touch with Aslaug. I need her to do a favor for me.” the blond femme replied. “I need her to come take me to my reward.”

“Nancy?” Tor blurted out, not sure of what he heard.

“I can't do these missions, Grandpa. I'm not cut out for them.” she offered up.

“You were on a mission?”

“Yeah, with my father.” Nancy admitted.

“Aw Geez,” the elder Svensen said as he shook his head. “Not both of you . . .”

“I don't want to do these missions, Grandpa. I had to kill numerous furs just to get out of there in one piece!”

“You don't have to end it, you know. I can try to get your . . .” Nancy interrupted him.

“It's not just that,” she explained. “I've been troubled with suicidal thoughts all of my adult life. There are other things, too. I just need to move on. Even if I weren't immortal, I would still be haunted by thoughts of suicide. Then I really would be able to carry it out.”

“I . . . I've never had to deal with this,” the stallion admitted, trying not to cry. “I've just gotten to know you, Hon. I don't want to lose you.”

“I'm so sorry, Grandpa. That damned angel said I either had to do the missions or I would lose my immortality. I would die once that happened. I . . . I just can't do missions, killing furs in the process and have to live with that . . . that . . . guilt . . . on my mind.” Nancy stated.

“I can't say that I truly understand,” Torvald put forth, now crying openly. “If that's what you want, I'll . . . I'll have Hrist find Aslaug. I'm sure she would help out.”

“Th . . . thank you, Grandpa,” the femme equine sobbed out, trying to keep from bawling her eyes out. She then closed the connection.

Torvald just stood there in the family room, looking at the pawset. He looked like he was mulling things over in his mind, his lower lip quivering in sorrow. After a few moments, an angry look crossed his muzzle, one that showed all of his inner-most emotions. He raised his fists to the ceiling and screamed out a cry of primordial frustration, anger and pain. He then began a rant that came from his heart, telling the Gods just what he thought of them.

“***You Bastards!!*** You have stabbed me in the heart, you ***soul-less Sonsofbitches!!!*** You're taking my family away from me, ***you dirty liars!!*** I will ***never*** do another iota of your damned dirty work again, do you hear me?!? ***Allfather!! WhiteChrist!!*** Do you hear me?!? “***DO YOU HEAR ME!?!?***”

He then dropped to his knees and cried his heart out.