

*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 Kasbnikov, 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Hunter Auto Parts[®], Right Way Groceries[™] and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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 18 – “Tolerance Stack-up”

Torvald looked up to see Nancy coming back out of the treatment area of the Emergency Room. She seemed to have cheered up so maybe that meant Trenton was doing okay.

“How is your hubby?” Victoria asked, also concerned with his well-being.

“Aw, it wasn't as bad as it looked.” she replied. “He needed fourteen stitches to close up that gash. Who knew he would faint and hit the back of his head on the hardwood flooring? At least he didn't suffer a concussion.”

Chelsea was very concerned, too. “So, Daddy will be okay?” she asked.

“He's fine, Chelsea,” mom replied, sitting down by her daughter. “I guess my appearance shocked your father just a bit too much.”

“I almost peed my panties when I saw you in the house! You said when you left the other morning, that was going to be it for you!” the young maned wolf femme blurted out.

“Well, I'm not leaving any time soon, Honey. Your mom is just a plain, old mortal equine femme now. I no longer work for a higher power.” Nancy put forth.

Looking down at her daughter who had put her head against her to muffle her crying, Nancy knew this was what she had really wanted all along; to be mortal and have a loving family. She also knew that she somehow looked at life differently now. Life was to enjoy and to cherish the time spent with her family. That included time with her great-grandfather and great-grandmother, too. There had been an offer from them to go to the Superbowl to watch the 49'ers go up against the San Jose Raiders. Nancy knew Trenton would love to go; he was a rabid 49'ers fan.

An orderly got the femme equine's attention, letting her know her hubby wanted her again so she got up and headed back to where Trenton was located. On the way, she passed a femme lynx and a male

pronghorn, both dressed in black uniforms, rolling a gurney of sorts. For some reason, she thought she recognized them from somewhere. Dismissing that crazy thought, she continued on to see her mate.

Once the femme equine had walked past them, the male cervine poked the femme feline to get her attention.

“Allison, did you see that femme that just walked past us?” he questioned.

“I did, Art.” she replied.

“I’ll swear, I know her from somewhere.” the male explained.

“Art, we pick up DB’s all the time that remind you of someone,” the femme feline retorted. “I suppose you think she’s the DB from earlier that went missing, huh?”

“Naw, it’s not possible,” he suggested. “That body was all busted up. Not a hope that femme . . . at least I think the DB was a femme . . . anyway, not a hope that body could come back to life. That would take Celestial intervention.”

“Don’t believe in miracles?” Allison put forth while they waited for the service elevator to come up to the main floor.

“It’s not that either,” Art admitted. “It’s just . . . well, it’s been a long time since a true miracle had been documented. Not since the time of Jesus.”

“So, you’re saying a miracle can’t happen?”

“No, I just wish there were more miracles,” the cervine put forth.

“That’s touching,” she commented, giving him a smile just as the elevator door opened. “Come on, let’s go down to the holding area and get the DB that’s waiting for us.”

Nancy sat down by her hubby again, taking his paw in hers. He looked a little worse for wear and she felt entirely responsible for the situation.

“What did you want, Hon?” she asked.

Trenton smiled at his mate. “I just wanted to make sure you were still here.” he admitted. “I really thought I was hallucinating earlier when you showed up at our home.”

“No, I’m not a hallucination.” she countered. “I am back and I have no plans to leave anytime soon.”

“I’m glad you’re back,” the male equine put forth. “I was worried sick about how I was going to make ends meet, Nan. You and I really need to set up a trust fund for the little ones and we need to increase our life insurance benefits while we’re at it.”

Nancy knew he was right; they needed to improve the situation, as far as insurance was concerned. That was one thing she had not taken into account when she had decided to 'call it quits' a few days earlier. The most important thing would be to increase their life insurance benefits, just in case something did happen, their home would remain in one of their custody, to provide a place for TJ and Chelsea to grow up..

Nancy had got up to get Trenton something to drink from the nurse's station so the male took a moment to get comfortable. Just as he closed his eyes to relax, his moment of rest was interrupted by a San Diego County Deputy Sheriff.

“Excuse me, are you Trenton Corbin?” the black wolf asked. “I'm Sergeant Al Haskell,” he added, stepping into the room when the buffed equine male nodded in the affirmative. “I . . . I hate to barge in on you but I need you to identify a body we found earlier. I'm sorry but we think she might be your wife.”

Trenton remembered that he had called the police this morning, just as Nancy had asked him to. He had reported her missing and filled out the proper paperwork that was required. He had failed, however to notify the authorities that she had turned up, alive and well.

“Yeah, about that . . .” Trenton began but his wife interrupted him by returning with some ice chips for him to suck on.

“Hon, what's going on?” she asked, wondering about the presence of the law-fur.

“I'm Sergeant Al Haskell, Ma'am.” the canid put forth. “I came by to ask . . .” He stopped talking when he realized the femme equine fit the victim's description perfectly. “Um, Ma'am, do you have some identification on you?” he asked.

“I have my driver's license with me,” she replied, reaching in her pants pocket to retrieve it for the sergeant. That's when she remembered that the clothing she had on were the same clothes that she was wearing when Aslaug had met with her on that hillside. Nancy gave the law-fur her ID, hoping he wouldn't put two and two together.

“Um, Ma'am, we seem to have a problem here,” the police fur stated after examining her identification. “You were reported missing by your husband early this morning. We have also recovered a body that had been found by hikers along with the victim's Plymouth Prowler just south of Harbison Canyon this morning. It seems the victim was you, Ma'am.”

“That's strange,” Nancy commented, giving the officer a pensive smile. “As you can see, I'm just fine. I was hiking near Harbison Canyon, I'll admit and I did get lost yesterday. My GPS failed on me, leaving me with no way to get back to my car, then my cell phone quit last night while I was talking to Trenton. I guess he panicked and called you furs.”

“That still doesn't explain the body that looks just like you, carrying a driver's license just like this one,” Officer Haskell stated, holding her ID up to reinforce his stance. “I have some photos here, taken this morning and I have the victim's ID, too.”

The deputy pulled out some photos and laid them on the small rolling table by Trenton, looking them over cautiously. He then looked into the manila envelope in his possession, seeming very upset.

“Is there a problem?” the male equine asked.

“I don't understand this,” the officer retorted. “Every photo seems to be missing one thing; the victim, and the ID I knew was in the envelope with them is gone.”

Every photo had the numbered markers plainly visible and there was some blood on the ground but just as the officer had indicated, her body was not in the photographs.

“Are you sure those are the right photos?” Nancy asked.

“Ma'am, I'm positive these images were the right ones. I even wrote the victim's report number on the back of each one.” Turning them over, the numbers were missing.

“I don't know, officer. Looks to me like those are the wrong ones.” Trenton mused.

“You might be right,” Deputy Haskell agreed as he put the images away. “It seems like Mrs. Corbin is no longer a missing person, too. I'll let the station know that you've been found,” he said to Nancy, right before he left the room, shaking his head.

Nancy watched the officer leave the room, glad they were alone again. She sighed, then sat down with her hubby again.

“I'm glad that's over,” she offered up, giving her hubby the cup full of ice chips. “Um, what did the doctor say about going home?” she mused.

“He's going to watch me for a bit, just to make sure I didn't receive a concussion. After that, I can go home.”

“Okay, that's good.” Nancy put forth. “Um, you know, I still have vacation scheduled through next Monday, Hon. Want to go somewhere?”

“How about we just stay at home with the kits?” Trenton replied. “I still have a bad headache that might last a few days, according to the doctor.”

“That's fine with me, I guess,” the femme equine stated, straightening her blouse a bit. “I . . . feel responsible for your injury, Hon. I'm sorry I shocked you like that.”

“No, I shouldn't have stood up like that with my head swimming,” he retorted. “If it makes you feel any better, I forgive you.”

“Yeah, it does,” Nancy put forth, giving his paw a loving squeeze. “I'm never doing that again, you know, being an Agent. You can bet on it.”

The blond femme leaned down to give her hubby a kiss and Trenton responded by hugging her tightly.

“Don't you ever pull that stunt again, do you hear?” he said to his wife, right before he broke down crying.

Deputy Haskell sat down in his cruiser and pondered what had transpired. He knew what he had

observed in the photographs and that femme in the emergency room had matched the victim to a T. Knowing he hadn't been wrong about this, he returned to his office, puzzled about the situation.

He made his way through the station, greeting a few furs that he had worked with personally. Once in his office, he brought up the images on his laptop. Just as he had suspected, the femme's dead body was just as plain as day on the screen. Sending that image to the color printer, he chose several others to print, including an image of the victim's California Driver's License.

Satisfied that this would help him get a search warrant for Trenton and Nancy's house, he went to the color laser printer down the hall to retrieve the pictures. What he found, once again, was a series of images with no victim in sight. Furthermore, the identification card on the last sheet was a total blank, no information on it.

“Something wrong?” a voice asked, making Al turn to see a white felid officer he didn't recognize.

“Um, no, nothing is wrong,” the black wolf replied, still looking at the images that matched the photographs that he had done previously. “Say, are you new here?” he added.

“Yeah, I guess you might say that.” the feline replied. “Name's Uri Mortos.”

“Al Haskell,” the canid brought forth, shaking the feline's paw that was offered. “I dunno . . . I printed out some pictures that aren't coming out right.”

“Oh? Mind if I take a look at them? I might be able to help.” the pale colored officer responded.

“Yeah, follow me,” Al asked, leading the other officer to his desk. “See? This should be . . .”

Deputy Haskell's voice trailed off as the image of Nancy's identification was still on the screen, matching the printed image in his paws. The identification was a blank, just like the image that was printed. He quickly scrolled through the other photos to see that the body was not present in any of them.

“This was a series of crime scene photos,” Al put forth, scanning through them again, just to be sure.

“Maybe you've misplaced the important photos. Happens to me occasionally.” the white feline submitted.

“I don't think so,” the wolf commented. “Oh well, maybe the coroner has a set of these that might be the ones I need.” the deputy mused.

“Well, hope you find them,” the feline bid, giving the puzzled officer a smile.

“I hope so too,” the canid said as he looked down at the photos once more. Lifting his gaze, he noted the feline was no longer in his cubicle. “Wow, that's odd,” he mused, still puzzled as to what had happened.

This whole thing was a complete mystery to Deputy Haskell. He knew what he had observed and that was a dead body, a possible hiking accident, and now that body was not to be observed in any photo that he had in his possession. Even that femme at the hospital that was a dead ringer for the decedent, name and all, had acted as if there wasn't a problem.

Maybe he was remembering it all wrong. That had to be the only reason, since dead bodies didn't re-animate themselves. Not even with Heavenly intervention.

Victoria looked up from her work to see Torvald finishing up vacuuming the living room. They had taken a few days to straighten up the house after helping Nancy 'return from the dead'. They intended to throw a party for her, to celebrate her 'retirement'.

The femme feline knew her stallion was more relaxed now than ever before, now that they were no longer Agents. He didn't have to worry about having to leave on a mission with no advance warning and he knew the worst thing that might happen at home was hitting his fingers with a hammer. He even seemed to smile more often.

“Tor, why don't we finish up this work tomorrow?” the tigress suggested, walking up to her hubby slowly and rubbing up against him. “Let's go enjoy a soak in the big tub. I think we've earned it, don't you?”

“That would be nice,” her hubby replied, giving her a kiss.

Torvald guided his mate through the house to their master bathroom, then knelt down to start filling the huge tub, large enough for both of them to stretch out in at the same time.

“I'll go get some snacks,” Victoria suggested, giving her mate a suggestive smile. “I think we still have some sparkling cider and fresh strawberries.”

“And some chocolate to drizzle over them?”

“Yes, I think we have some,” the tigress stated with a smile, heading off to round up their treats. Right before she left the room, she put on The Doobie Brothers “Fault Line” album as an afterthought. They were one of her favorite groups, as far as rock and roll was concerned.

While his mate took care of the refreshments, Torvald took the time to put out the bathmats, some thick towels, Victoria's favorite shampoo and his body wash. He then set the mood by closing the blinds a bit to darken the room followed by lighting the numerous candles in the room.

The stallion knew this was right, retiring from active duty for the Gods. He knew that his mate was just as fed up with the insane missions as he was. It was only a matter of time before they were destroyed by some Dark Agent that packed more power than they possessed. Now that they were out, they had both relaxed and decompressed from the stress placed upon them.

Torvald started to undress by taking off his polo shirt, then he continued by reaching for his wrist watch. Noting the time, he observed the fact that Victoria had been gone a long time. Too long, in fact. He thought that maybe she needed help with the items so he went to see about her. What he found in the kitchen shocked him.

There was food scattered about where a shelf had been pulled from the refrigerator and several chairs at the table had been knocked over. There were signs that a scuffle had taken place, the sliding door to the patio was off its track and the patio furnishings were askew.

A trail of blood went out the door but it stopped before the edge of the patio. This meant that his mate was probably injured, then healed up, stopping the flow of blood.

The marks in the grass and on the gravel pathway pointed in the general direction of the horse barn so he headed that way in a hurry, looking for signs as he went. He entered the open side entrance to the structure and rounded the corner into the main corridor between the stalls, only to have his mate shout at him.

“TOR!! STOP RIGHT THERE!! DON’T COME ANY CLOSER!!!” she screamed, hoping she had his attention.

Torvald stopped, stunned at what he was observing. Victoria was standing in the hallway, her shoulders up against a two by ten board that was lag bolted to structural supports on either side of her. There was a rope tied around her arms, near her body that was fastened around the board. That wasn't the frightening part.

Torvald recognized the objects piercing her body, since he had purchased them to do some structural repairs to the barn. Her wrists were fixtured to the board by some twelve inch long by one quarter inch diameter lag bolts, apparently driven straight through her flesh. There were three inch diameter structural washers on the bolts, preventing her from just pulling her arms free of the pinions. There were similar lag bolts through her feet, holding her fast to the wooden floor beneath her.

“Torvald, those are pressure mats all around me,” she pointed out, making him stop and assess the situation.

The wires on the mats went back to a box that looked an awful lot like an intrusion alarm control. Other wires went to four plastic fifty-five gallon barrels, two on either side of her, one fore, one aft of her body. Four more wire bundles went to some bands that were fastened around her ankles and wrists. There was a door on the front of the control box that had a key in the lock, possibly holding it closed and a smaller box nearby that had a key in it along with a prominent red button on it. The situation was topped off by an old-fashioned red LED display on the front of it that was counting down by the second, now showing fifty nine minutes and ten seconds.

“Hon, the bastard that did this, that Dark Agent Kenji, left a note tacked up on that column,” the tigress proffered up, grimacing in pain from her pinions. The stallion wasted no time in removing the note from the post and reading it aloud to his mate.

“Torvald, please read this carefully.

“The four barrels are each filled with 40 kilograms of plastique, 100 kilograms of framing nails, fifty kilograms of ball bearings and they are topped off with assorted pieces of sharp steel rebar cuttings. Trying to bypass the pressure mats to reach her will set off the explosives. Cutting a wire to disarm the explosives or the timer will set them off. Face it, stallion, you cannot stop this. Victoria will not survive the resulting explosion if you do nothing but she cannot walk away unharmed, either.

“You may mitigate the damage to your mate in a simple manner. You may save your beloved tigress by turning the key on the smaller box clockwise and pressing the red button. After a one-minute delay, shaped charges placed around her limbs will sever the tigress' paws and feet cleanly, but in the outside chance that they do not, I have left some first aid items for you in the barn's office. The button will also shut down the main explosives. This option will be removed once the timer reaches fifteen minutes.

"By the way, when the timer hits 'Zero', all of the explosives will fire regardless.

"Kenji

"p.s. - Please understand that this is nothing personal against the two of you. I was paid well by The Malefic Council to do this. If you are very lucky, you might just figure out a way to circumvent the inevitable."

"Torvald, I am so screwed royally this time!" the feline femme lamented, trying to keep from sobbing. The tigress had been in some bad situations before but this one was the clincher. There was no way she could walk away from this one with just a few scratches. At the very least, she would lose her paws and feet. At the worst, she was a dead fur. Victoria knew she had to put on a brave face and order Torvald out of the barn, knowing that the box with the button smelled like a trap to get both of them. She was startled, however when her hubby calmly took his cellphone from its holster and made a call.

"LA County Sheriff's Office. Please state the nature of your emergency." the femme dispatcher stated once the call was answered.

"This is Detective Torvald Svensen, LAPD, Badge number three-seven-eight-one, retired." he replied. "I have a situation here at my property on Glenn Ranch Road and I need a bomb squad here Code Three. My wife is wired up to one hundred and sixty kilograms of plastique so she needs help right now. The timer says," he added, looking at the display, "About fifty-seven minutes."

"Tor! They will never get here in time!" Victoria offered up. It would take at least an hour for the bomb squad to reach them from down town Los Angeles once they were activated.

"Time to have some faith," he offered up in reply, walking over to the phone in the office. While still listening for the dispatcher to come back on the line, he placed another call from the land-line.

"Delancey residence," the femme on the other end stated once the call was answered.

"Willi, this is Torvald."

"Hi Uncle Torvald. How are things, now that you and Aunt Victoria are retired?"

"Not so good right now," he replied, glancing over at his wife. "Your Aunt is wired up to one hundred and sixty kilos of plastic explosives. We might need your help."

"Ohmygodno!!" Willi Marie spat out as she materialized in front of the huge stallion. "We have to get her out of that situation!" She then rolled her eyes when she observed she was still holding the telephone receiver in her paw, the severed cord dangling.

"She's been literally nailed to a plank and the floor, Willi," Torvald pointed out, turning her around to see the situation. "Watch out, those mats are pressure-sensitive mats."

"Willi Marie, you and Torvald get out of here right now! You both could be killed if this rig goes off prematurely!" the tigress shouted.

“I will not leave without you!” the femme equine shouted back. Using her powers, she examined the mat in front of Victoria carefully. It was a pressure mat but it was not attached to the cabling running under the edge of it. Slipping it out of the way, she looked over the tigress' pinions. “These huge screws have been bent over past the wood, stopping us from just unscrewing them. Maybe I could . . .” Willi was sent flying backwards towards Torvald after touching one of the lag bolts.

“Willi! Are you okay?” he asked after he scooped her up off of the floor, noting she was shaking her head and the paw that had touched the lag bolt.

“I . . . I was shocked, like I was being repelled from the bolt.” she offered up once the stallion had put her back on her hooves.

“Damned Dark Agents!” the tigress spat out. “Listen, both of you get out of here. One hundred and sixty kilos of plastique has to make a very huge bang so I don't want either one of you hurt. I won't survive but you two can.”

“We are not leaving,” Torvald offered up, giving his mate a crooked smile. “We will find a way to get you out of this.”

“Detective Svensen? Are you still there?” the voice asked on his cellphone that was on 'Speaker'.

“We're all still here,” he answered, picking up the phone from where he had sat it on a hay bale.

“The units will need some direction.” the femme stated. “I have your location on GPS via your phone but there's no road nearby.”

“Oh, um, yeah.” he responded. “Once they turn up into the drive, there's a gravel road to the right of our driveway. That will take them up to the upper part of the property and the barn. We're inside but don't come barging in. There are some pressure mats by another set of doors. Only use the open doors.”

“How many are in the barn?” the femme asked.

“Myself, my wife and our adopted niece.”

“No fur's armed are they?”

“No, we're unarmed.” Tor looked at the distressed tigress and shook his head. “Any word on when the bomb squad will get here? There's only fifty minutes left.”

“I keep hearing forty or so,” the femme replied. “I know it's not what you wanted to hear.”

“Tell them to do their best.”

Willi Marie had been examining the wrist and ankle bands to see if something could be done about them, once she had discovered she couldn't just transport the tigress from her situation. Nodding, she gave them her thoughts.

“I think I can remove the bands, since we can't cut the wires.” she offered up. “There are four wires to each cuff so two of the wires are tamper wires. Cut them and the whole thing goes.”

“How can you get these things off, then?” the tigress asked. “He used something to weld the bands together.”

“I can see that,” the femme equine agreed. “I can remove them but it might be painful. Unlike me, you have no ability to control the elements. I will literally make the bands and your body occupy the same space. I will not lie to you, Aunt Victoria. It will hurt. A lot.” Victoria could see she wasn't lying at all. “First, we need to protect you.”

The sorceress made two sets of impact-absorbing suits appear, ones used by military ordinance disposal squads. Both sets were rather large but there was a method to her madness. Torvald assisted Willi in securing the two suits to the femme feline, one over the top of the other. A helmet/faceshield combo was slipped on her head and thick gloves placed on her paws.

“That is as best that I can do,” Willi commented, adjusting the helmet just a bit. “Now for the painful part.”

Wilhelmine gripped the first band around her aunt's right wrist and concentrated, pulling ever so gently on it. One side of the band, the side that was next to the wood, went tight against the tigress' arm, then the pain started as the band started its journey through her body.

“Willi! It hurts like hell but don't you dare stop!” the bound femme hissed out through clenched teeth. The band was half-way through when Victoria finally fainted.

“Better that she's out anyway,” Willi submitted. “Here, one down.” she commented. She sat the first freed band by Victoria's right foot and then she started on the next one.

“What the hell just happened?” an unknown male voice asked. Torvald turned to see a Sheriff's Deputy standing in the doorway with a shocked look on his muzzle. The canid looked at Tor, the band, Will and then Victoria, still stunned.

“I'm Detective Svensen,” the stallion put forth. “I'm sorry but you need to wait outside,” he added, trying to escort the rottweiler out of the barn and out of view of Willi's work.

“No, I don't know what's happening here but I'm not leaving, Detective.” the officer shot back. “You tell me how she's doing that,” indicating the femme equine that was almost done with the removal of the second band.

“You want the real answer?” Tor asked, giving his counterpart a crooked smile.

“Yeah, I would.”

“She's a sorceress.”

“A sorceress? Like Merlin?”

“Yup.”

“You're shitting me!” the canid proffered up. “There is no such thing as magic!”

“Okay, then you tell me what's going on.” Torvald challenged.

“I don't know but it's creepy, if you ask me. Who are they, for my report.”

“The tigress is my wife, Victoria Angela Svensen and the palomino femme is our niece, Wilhelmine Marie Delancey. She was a demolition expert in the German army so she has IED disposal experience.”

Willi Marie caught the attention of the two males, giving them a crooked smile. “While you two were flapping your jaws, I removed the bands. I need to cover them with sand, at least four hundred pounds, to cushion the explosion.” she pointed out. “According to this note,” which she gave to the officer, “We can detonate them and that will disable the main charges.”

“Willi, I don't have four hundred pounds of sand.” the stallion stated.

“Yes, you do,” she replied, winking at him. “Isn't there a pallet of sand behind the barn?” she asked.

“I really don't know,” he replied, following Wilhelmine out of the barn and around the back only to see a pallet covered in fifty pound bags of washed beach sand.

“Come on, you two strong males give me a paw with this,” she asked, grabbing a sack and heading back into the barn. Torvald and the officer each took up a bag and followed.

Willi placed the first sack of sand on top of the bands, which she had moved to the limits of the wires away from Victoria. She then arranged each additional bag, making sure the weight would assist in holding back the explosion that would result.

“Willi? What are you doing?” the tigress asked.

“I'm covering the bands, Aunt Victoria,” she replied, going over to see about her aunt. She materialized a bottle of water between them, out of sight, then lifted the thick laminated face shield and gave her adoptive aunt some refreshment.

“Willi, you have to get out of here,” Victoria offered up. “You're pregnant, Hon! Think about your unborn kits!”

“We will be fine,” she retorted. “When we push the red button, that sixty second delay will allow us to get out of here. Once we hear the bands detonate, we will come back and get you out of this mess.”

“Will, this is insane. Rig that button up so I can push it. That way you all can be safely away when I detonate it.” Victoria begged.

“Not a hope I will let that happen,” her hubby stated, walking towards her with the small box in paw. “I will stay here and make sure you're safe.”

“You've lost your mind, Torvald Arend Svensen!” the tigress blurted out. “I just know it's a trap!”

“Listen, Sweetheart. If it is a trap, we will know that we died together.” Torvald retorted. “I love you too much to go and hide while this transpires. If we make it, we make it. If not, it was a hell of a ride.”

“Uncle Torvald, the timer!” Willi shouted, getting his attention. The display was now showing seventeen minutes to go.

“Willi, get him out of here and shield yourselves,” the berserker stated firmly. “I will wait one minute.”

The femme equine literally dragged the officer out of the barn so Torvald watched through a window as they went down towards the house and got themselves situated behind a retaining wall. He then turned back to his wife, the love of his life.

“Victoria, I will always love you and I will never forget you,” he stated with tears in his eyes, slowly turning the key until it clicked, making a small green LED light on the box light up.

“Torvald, you will always be my one and only true love,” she replied, blinking her eyes to clear the tears. “Go ahead, do it.”

Torvald pressed the red button, then they both looked at the display. It went blank, then '60' appeared on it and it began to count down. Once it hit '57', the display blanked out again, a clicking was heard and the counter then displayed a new countdown; '3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . 0 . . .'

. . . The resulting explosion vaporized the barn and its contents, flattened the Svensen home, damaged several other homes nearby, broke windows for a one mile radius and was actually recorded on a nearby seismographic station.