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“Redemption”

By Kellan Meigh

Chapter 06 – “Four Hundred and Fifty-Seven Square Feet”

Wilhelmine had visited for a bit with her adoptive relatives, just to assure herself that they had indeed survived this brutal attack upon them. The three of them had discussed what the femme equine could do to make things easier for them, once they returned to their property. Tor and Victoria had then took the time to fill her in regarding their future plans to 'assist' Agents with retirement. Willi agreed to talk with The Consortium and find out if they could assist, then the femme sorceress had excused herself, citing the need to go take care of her hubby.

The femme equine sorceress met up with Agent Trask, who was busy supporting the wall by the elevator. The rhino, knowing that Willi might just want to 'pop' home, had already selected a large linen closet that seemed to be unoccupied at the moment, devoid of any staff inside. Randall smiled, directed his charge towards the door and closed it after they stepped inside. What, or rather who was inside, startled the Agent and the Sorceress.

“What the hell!?” the rhino blurted out, pulling his departmental-issue Glock 40 and bringing it to bear upon the otteress and the moose.

“Freeze!” Jenna shouted, waving her paw at the two newcomers. Agent Trask suddenly found himself unable to move a muscle.

“Shit NOOO!” Willi countered, bringing up a shield in front of herself, preventing that bit of magic from affecting her. A quick wave of her paw placed the two that were unknown to her into pawcuffs, neutralizing that threat for the moment. Once that was in effect, Randall found that he was able to move again.

“What in the Devil . . . ?” Jenna spat out once she discovered that the cuffs could not be removed by her magical abilities. “Who the Hell are you?” she demanded, taking up a stance that was as defiant as possible.

“You're in no position to make demands,” the Special Agent put forth. “Now, I'm pretty sure you're Jennifer Longbow and your associate, here is Doctor Bruce Peyton.”

“Yeah, well? So what?!?” the otteress spat out.

“What are the two of you doing here?” the huge gray one demanded.

“We're providing medical care for Torvald and Victoria Svensen, you lump-head. They're our ticket out of the business,” the dark brown femme replied in an annoyed tone, still struggling a bit with the cuffs.

“What, you get to retire from being a Dark Agent if you kill them?” the rhino asked.

“Gah! Are you ever dense!” Jenna put forth, rolling her eyes. “Listen, they're planning on helping Agents on both sides to get out of the business. I heard about it and I was actually trying to confront them with a request for aid from my associates when I heard about Kenji Nishiguchi trying to off them. I scooped them out of the explosion but not before the three of us were injured to various degrees.”

“This isn't adding up,” Randall offered up, scratching his cheek while he pondered this.

“Take us to them,” Bruce suggested. “If we're on the up and up, they will confirm it.”

“Agent Trask, I'll bind her powers if you can keep him under control,” Willi put forth, turning Jenna around to have access to her wrists. Willi materialized a pair of dampening bands and slipped them around the otteress' wrists before removing the paw-cuffs.

“What about me?” Doctor Peyton asked.

“You'll walk ahead of me, very casually,” the rhino stated, taking one cuff off of the moose so he could re-cuff Bruce's paws in front of him. Randall then pulled the sleeves of the doctor's smock down to cover them.

“You're sure professional, I'll give you that.” Jenna stated to the femme equine.

“Former military,” was the reply. “Now, just be calm and nobody gets hurt,” Willi added, opening the door to the hallway.

The foursome made their way down the corridor to the room assigned to the injured Immortals. Wilhelmine guided Jenna through the door in front of her while Randall did the same for his charge. Once inside, the huge gray one pushed the door closed with his foot.

“Willi, what's going on?” Torvald asked, his conversation with his mate interrupted by this strange intrusion.

“Uncle Torvald, do you know these two?” the femme sorceress asked.

“Um, yeah . . .” The huge equine was confused by all of this.

“Are you helping them to get out of the business?” Agent Trask asked.

“Well, we thought we were,” the tigress replied, seeming to be puzzled. “Willi, why is our doctor paw-cuffed?”

“Why do I think I'm going to be eating a huge helping of humble pie?” Randall mused.

“Um, we um . . .” Wilhelmine was totally embarrassed. “I didn't know. I'm sorry.” she added. A wave of her paw made the cuffs and the bands disappear. “I didn't know who they were, Aunt Victoria.”

“I guess I kind of over-reacted, too,” Jenna put forth, looking very embarrassed herself. She looked at the floor while the stallion spoke up.

“Wilhelmine, this is Jennifer Longbow, our benefactor in leaving that explosion still somewhat alive. Jenna, this is Wilhelmine Delancey, our adopted niece and Grand Mistress,” the stallion introduced the two sorceresses to one another.

The otteress turned to the femme equine with a pleading look on her muzzle. “Wilhelmine, please hear me out. I'm a Dark Agent that wants out of the business in the worst ways. I really want to be a proper member of The Consortium once that happens for me. I know there are other associates that would love to skin me alive for turning to the darkness but I assure you, I have regretted that decision for all of my adult life.”

“Jennifer, I can say with all honesty that I harbor no ill will towards you.” Willi replied. “I've heard your name mentioned from time to time but I haven't heard any fur say exactly what it is was that they dislike about you.”

Jenna shook her head. “I have never betrayed The Consortium. I have been forced by my 'employer' to perform magic that was malicious, yes but I have never exposed or turned against another member.”

Willi frowned at that information. “Well, I sit on the review board so I have access to your files. I'll take a look and see what's in them that seems so onerous.”

“I'm sure you'll find enough to make you turn against me.” the femme otter put on the table.

“And that's why I'm on the review board. I will not judge you until all of the facts are weighed and all of the arguments are heard.” Wilhelmine stated.

“I appreciate your fairness and honesty.” Jenna said in a quiet voice. “I've tried to do good, when I could. Like scooping Torvald and Victoria out of that barn. I understand my 'boss' is mad at me for doing that.”

“Who is your boss, if we may ask?” Torvald asked.

“Zagam.” Jenna looked confused when Victoria started snickering. “What's so funny about that?”

“We sent him back to Damnation, once upon a time.” the tigress replied.

“I heard he had a run-in with some Agents Of Light over a hundred years ago. He got his arse kicked so badly that it took some time to reconstitute his body for him.” Bruce offered up.

“That was us.” Victoria retorted between snickers and giggles. “This is funny but it's not, in a way. We might have to face off against him a second time at some point.”

“Oh, no, Victoria,” Jenna interjected. “When the time comes, his arse and few others are mine to deal with properly. I will do whatever it takes to destroy them.”

###

Several days later, the Immortal Couple were finally discharged from the hospital and into the care of their family. Axel had used his mother's mini-van to transport them home, considering their condition and the need to provide for the tigress' injured limbs. Once he turned the van up the drive to the house, he cringed. Axel just knew his mother would explode at the sight of her home.

Victoria was in the front passenger seat of the vehicle so she had a front-row view of her house under reconstruction. The front doors were leaning against the front of the house, a pair of glaziers were working on the front windows and several more workers were carrying lumber into the house. There was a path through the parked construction vehicles to allow them to reach the travel trailer so she sat quietly while her son navigated the way up to their temporary lodging.

Axel parked the van in front of the coach, then went around to the passenger side to assist his brother-in-law Roger with his parents. The huge gray stallion lifted the tigress effortlessly into her wheelchair, then pushed her up the newly-constructed ramp to the front door. Torvald was right behind them, supported by his son.

“Roger, turn me towards the house, please?” the tigress requested, surveying what damage that she could see. Most of the garage was now re-framed, having been heavily damaged by that squad car that had landed on top of it. The side windows to the family room were covered with plywood and the remnants of the deck that could be seen were piled up near the side of the house. “Axel, can I get into the house to see the interior damage?” she asked.

“I'll have the fore-furson make you a path through the house,” he replied. “It's just too messy at the moment.”

“Is it possible to get me up to where the barn used to be?” she asked, wanting to see that destruction for herself.

“I could carry you,” Roger offered up.

“Um, maybe we could do a fire-fur's carry,” Axel retorted.

Victoria frowned. “Um, maybe I could wait until I could walk up there by myself.” she suggested.

“You're not that heavy, Mom.” Axel put forth. “We'll carry you up there.”

the two young stallions carefully lifted the tigress and carried her up the hill, being careful of the construction vehicles running up and down the gravel road to the upper part of the property. They did have to step off of the roadway once to allow a dump-truck to pass, his load meant to fill the hole left by the explosion.

Once at the site, Victoria took in the work in progress of forming up a new foundation for the barn, one that they had to pay for out of their own pockets. The insurance company determined that there was no proper foundation to begin with so that was not covered.

“That is a deep hole,” she mused, looking at the small dozer that was moving dirt around at the bottom of the crater. The thought of how much energy it took to create that pit made her slightly queasy. It was a

miracle that they had survived that at all.

“I was told it would take about four thousand cubic yards of earth to fill that hole back in.” Axel informed his mother. “That's why the barn will have a basement now.”

“Geez . . . that was a hell of an explosion. I don't see how we actually survived the first few moments of the blast, even with Jenna's help.” the tigress said in a somber tone.

“Good thing we were still immortal at the time.” Torvald added.

Axel looked at his father. “Dad, I've been thinking about something. If you're going to be helping out Dark Agents, maybe the two of you should remain immortal, just until that work is over with or until you're very sure that the Malefic Council will be leaving you alone.”

“I had given thought to that,” the elder stallion admitted. “We really don't know what will happen once we start cheating the underworld out of Agents.”

“One other thing,” the younger Svensen started, “Maybe you should have Aslaug live here on the property for a bit. For all of your safety.”

“She wouldn't do that.” Victoria offered up. “The filly is just too anti-modern world. As much as I would like another femme around that's immortal, one that could relate to my situation, Aslaug would never agree to stay here. She has her place up in Canada where she's kind of entrenched. She would never leave that cabin.”

“It wouldn't hurt to ask,” Roger suggested, understanding Axel's reasoning.

“Okay, I will ask her when we see her again.” the tigress stated, taking one last look around. “Let's go back down the hill. I'm starting to get tired.”

###

Once back down the hill to the travel trailer, they moved Victoria's wheelchair inside and made her comfortable in it. This gave her the opportunity to finally look around at their temporary digs.

“Well, it's only four hundred and fifty seven square feet but it is laid out for handicapped access.” Axel pointed out. “Mrs. Hebert needed the access for her wheelchair so it's built with that in mind.”

“It is nicely appointed,” the femme feline commented, noting that there was plenty of room for her to navigate the coach, if she could use her paws to push her wheelchair about. Roger moved her over to see the island kitchen that was one of the many slide-outs. This is what made it so big and spacious for a fifth-wheel trailer. The oven was set under the counter for better access and the base cabinets were lower than normal. The dining table nearby had an open spot for a wheelchair to be used to sit at and dine.

The adjoining living room had an area for a wheelchair to be placed that would allow the occupant to visit with company or watch television properly. It also had a couch and two swivel recliners for company to use. There was a gas fireplace in one corner, an efficient sealed combustion unit. Rather than a pile carpet, the floor covering was a nice Berber carpet that would allow a wheelchair to roll easily. The living room had a slide-out on both sides to add room to it, too.

The rear of the coach made up the master bedroom complete with a large bathroom. There had been provisions to allow a wheelchair access to either side of the bed, aided by the fact that the bedroom was a double slide-out, one on each side like the living room. Although she couldn't see up there, the upper section over the hitch was another bedroom with a single slide-out, although not as nicely appointed according to her son. There was a smaller bath and a laundry room between the kitchen and the upper bedroom.

"I think we will be just fine here," Torvald stated, taking up a seat on the couch. He looked rather rough from moving about this afternoon, Axel noted.

"Gytha said that she would be by this afternoon to take care of the two of you, just as soon as she can drop off the kits with my mother." Roger put forth. "Until then, you're stuck with me to help out."

"You can't take time off of work just for us!" the tigress blurted out. "Besides, what if I need to . . . you know?"

"I'll just close my eyes, Mom Svensen."

"A lot of good that would do," Victoria retorted, trying not to smile at the mental image of her son-in-law, attempting to help her take care of her personal needs without seeing what he was doing.

"Well, do you have any other ideas?" the huge gray male asked.

"Um, maybe Axel could . . ." The younger Svensen interrupted his mother's thoughts and made his thoughts apparent.

"Mom! That mental image just made my brain fry!" he blurted out.

"Haven't you seen Madelyn naked?" the tigress asked.

"Yes, I have, Mom but she's an equine, she's black and white striped and she's my wife, for crying out loud! She is not my mother! Sons are not meant to see their mothers naked!!"

"Axel? Please?"

"Mom! No! Not on a bet!" The young stallion rolled his eyes and made a dismissing gesture with his paws while he made his protests.

"Tor, how did we raise such a stubborn colt?" the tigress mused.

"It wasn't easy," the stallion replied, smiling at the look on Axel's face. "He must get that stubbornness from his mother."

"I am not stubborn!" Victoria stated for the record.

"You're as stubborn as they come." Torvald shot back. "Your sister, your brother and your parents will all back me up on that."

"What will I back you up on?" Valerie asked, standing in the doorway with a double arm-load of groceries in her possession.

“You have to agree with me, Valerie. Your sister is stubborn.” Tor replied.

“No more stubborn than you are, my dear, sweet brother-in-law,” the younger tigress retorted, putting her load down on the cooking island. “Um, I hope you both like what I bought for your meals.” she added. “We tried to salvage what we could but most of the canned goods ended up on the floor, dented and bent up. I don't know about you, but I just don't trust them when they're like that.”

“I agree. You can't know if the can is still intact or not.” Victoria put forth.

After Valerie put the milk, eggs, butter and sodas in the refrigerator, she got her nephews' attention. “Roger, Axel, I think I have it under control right now. If either of you need to leave, I'll stay until Gytha gets here.”

“I do have to go meet with the fore-furson to discuss some things and then I need to get back to the shop,” Axel replied, giving his mother a kiss before he excused himself.

“And I have to get back to the office. It seems several servers have been infected from within by some nit-wit turning loose a trojan of some kind,” Roger stated, looking at several text messages on his cellphone. He gave Victoria a hug, then headed out behind Axel.

“Val, I need you to open these bi-valved casts on my arms so I can move them around a bit. Doctor's orders.” the elder tigress requested. The new casts were made from black fiberglass casting material, carefully split and set up so that they were removable. This was so she could exercise her arms per the doctor's orders. They still went from her knuckles up to her armpits, however, making them annoying when she had to wear them.

“Sure, Sis. I can free your arms for you,” Valerie replied, setting to work unstrapping the two halves of each cast that were held closed by hook and loop fasteners. “Vicki, your wounds are still bleeding a little.” she pointed out once the casts were removed.

“I know, Val. That damned Dark Agent Kenji put a spell over all of the materials he used to build his bombs. It's just as if I were still mortal,” the elder femme feline stated, flexing her paws and slowly bending her wrists. This was still very painful for her and she would most likely need a two milligram Dilaudid tablet once her exercise period was over with.

“Well, I think I should treat these wrist wounds before I do anything else.” the younger femme suggested.

Valerie went out to her vehicle to retrieve her industrial-style first aid kit. The kit in question was enough for thirty furs and it contained an extensive collection of items, including a suture set and an emergency surgery kit. Torvald and Victoria heard her returning but there were two more voices with her, a male and a familiar femme.

“Victoria, there's a fur here from the cable company. He needs to know where to hook up your temporary cable service,” Valerie pointed out as she came through the door with a short, stout bobcat wearing the uniform of a local cable installer. Behind them was Cami Carter, carrying a pair of bags with her.

“There must be a hookup point on the coach somewhere, Ma'am,” the young male fur offered up. “Oh, I

think I see it,” he added, going over by the fireplace to check an access point. “Um, this is it, Ma'am. If you don't mind, I'll put the modem right here. This looks like the access to your phone circuits inside the coach.” he suggested.

“Do what you need to do,” Victoria offered in return, smiling at the young male as he left the coach.

Cami sat her bags down, then took up a seat at the table nearest the tigress. “Victoria, I brought you some skirts that have hook and loop fasteners at the waist and some tops that are split up the back with a pair of snaps at the collar and the waist. They should be more comfortable than trying to wear regular clothing.”

“I appreciate that.” Victoria stated. “I'm still not able to close my paws all the way, yet. It's just too painful. Even Willi Marie couldn't help me by much.” She was bending the elbow of one arm while her sister worked on the other wrist. “I still have to exercise them several times a day to keep them from getting stiff on me.”

“Doctor Peyton is coming by this evening.” the femme wolverine informed them. “He told me at the hospital that he needed to take care of some pressing matters but he would be dropping by each day to see about the two of you.”

“I hope that he's not dealing with a Dark Agent.” Torvald offered up from his spot on the couch. He had discovered the unit was a double recliner and he was currently reclining back, hooves up, just about half asleep.

“I think it has to do with his employer on his home planet.” Cami replied.

“Hopefully it's his day job, if you know what I mean.” the elder tigress interjected.

“By the way, I'll be staying around, just until things get back to normal for you two.” the former femme soldier offered up. “Judge Talmadge will be paying my wages while I'm here so don't worry about that. If it's all right with you, I'll take a spare bedroom, if you have one. If not, I'll have the judge deliver a small travel trailer to the site.”

“There is a spare bedroom up top,” the tigress replied, indicating the side hall past the kitchen. “I was told it's standing room up there so maybe it would be okay for you.”

“I'll check it out, then,” Cami said as she got up and went up to see the room that was offered. In a few moments, she was back, smiling. “It's just fine. I hope that's not supposed to be your bedroom, though.”

“No, the master bedroom is in the back,” the tigress pointed out. “Actually, I would feel safer if some able-bodied fur were staying here with us.”

“I'll be here full-time and I can act as your chauffeur if need be.” Cami put forth. “Morgan Sleight still has some unfinished business on this planet so he'll be dropping by from time to time.”

Victoria was mulling all of this over while her sister tended to her injuries. They did survive the attack upon them by that blasted Kenji, the police department was not hot on their heels concerning their reappearance and they now had a place to stay while their home was being rebuilt. If they could just manage to heal up without any further complications, things might finally be changing for the better. What bothered her was the fact that The Malefic Council might still make another attempt on their lives.

The tigress could see her home through the windows over the dining table and it saddened her to know it was so badly damaged. Torvald seemed to think that the contractor would be able to return the home to its original condition but she had her reservations. Since she worked in real estate, she knew just how unreliable contractors could be. She really hoped that this particular fur heading up the job was a decent and honest contractor.

###

Rumjal was sitting around a conference table with a few of the other beings that collectively ruled the underworld, discussing the situation concerning Torvald and Victoria Svensen. The gathered Dark Deities were debating the most effective method to bring them over to the side of evil.

“We cannot turn them to our side unless we can turn them against one another.” the pachyderm brought up.

“I say you are just wasting your time.” Zagam interjected. “We cannot turn them against one another. They love one another with total and complete devotion.” the winged bull added.

“You might be right about that,” Lucifer stated. “But like anything else, this undying love can be broken. You just have to have the right wedge to drive in between them.”

“I think I might have an idea as to what would be the proper 'wedge' to drive between them.” Rumjal offered up. “Give me a little bit to investigate this further.”

After a further debate on the subject, the meeting was adjourned but Zagam stayed behind. Rumjal knew he would hear some static about not just ordering the deaths of the Immortal Warriors but as it turned out, he was pleasantly surprised.

“Listen, Rumjal. I have a thought for you.” the bovine put forth. “Here's a good way to drive a deep wedge between them.” The pachyderm smiled and nodded while Zagam laid out his plan in some detail.

“I dare say, you have a great plan,” Rumjal stated. “I will get right on top of finding those furs that we need.”

“Rumjal, I need a favor, too.” Zagam requested. “If you run across that sorry bitch Jenna Longbow, destroy her for me. She's been openly disobeying my direct orders as to what I want done.”

“Any special requests?”

“Yeah, make it as painful as possible. And don't think you have to stop with her, either. Go ahead and take out her husband and daughter, too.”

“That will cost you,” the gray one brought up, mulling over in his mind just how he could benefit from all of this.

“How about I give you a legion of undead soldiers?” Zagam suggested with a smile.

“That might do just fine.” Rumjal agreed. “Let me keep Jenna's daughter as my personal maid and we might have ourselves a deal.”

“We have a deal, then.” the ebony bovine agreed. “Just remember; make it just as painful as possible. I want to hear her screaming from half-way across the universe.”

###

Jenna stepped back into the shadows outside that conference room, trying her best to suppress her anger. Zagam wanted her dead, now did he? Well, she could play that particular game, too. Taking a quick mental count, her associates collectively possessed a combined power capability that far outstripped Zagam's abilities. She knew that she would relish watching him suffer heavily under their relentless onslaught. Both Zagam and that sorry ass-hat Rumjal.

The femme otter smiled as she thought about the retribution that she and her group could rain down on these two. On the other paw, betrayal would be acceptable to her, if it was done at the right time. She knew that a certain unique avian could provide the muscle, if she could manage to arrange the opportunity.

###

The bay-colored femme with the white blaze up her muzzle looked around herself at the wooded hillside, wondering just how she got here in the first place. There seemed to be a substantial amount of noise down the hill so maybe she should go down . . .

Wait just a dad-blame minute . . .

Where was she and how did she get here? The last thing that she remembered clearly was standing across the room from her dying corporeal self in an out-of-body experience, probably the final one, wondering if the rest of her family had survived this Influenza epidemic that was claiming her life.

Looking down at herself, she noted that the clothes she wore were indeed hers, a pair of tan dungarees held up by a narrow brown belt and a blue checked shirt, her favorite because she had sewn it from one of her husband's work shirts.

Her husband . . . that huge brute of a male had seemed very distressed when he observed her cutting that garment down to fit her body. She smiled at the fond memory of him, standing with his arms crossed, trying not to grimace as she cut apart the seams. She needed a work shirt if she was going to help out at the lumber mill. It was a foregone fact that she would have to help with running the place.

She felt hungry, disoriented and a bit nervous, too. It did make sense to her, to just follow the path of least resistance and head downhill, towards the commotion that she heard. Shading her eyes with her paw, she began to carefully pick her way down the hill towards civilization.

###

The elder tigress was trying desperately to quiet her mind, wondering why her senses seemed to be running in overdrive this afternoon. She knew it must have been important, whatever this was that was jogging her acute sixth sense, but no amount of concentration would reveal the nature of the issue. She nudged her mate with her casted right arm, getting his attention.

“What is it, Sweetheart?” he asked, blinking his eyes to clear them. He had been almost asleep when she disturbed him.

“I . . . Something's bugging me. Real bad, too.” she put forth sheepishly.

“So? What's the matter? Can't concentrate?” he asked.

“Yeah, maybe that's it.” she said, nodding in defeat. “I'm hurting so bad that I can't seem to settle my mind.” Victoria admitted. That made her sister look up from the book that she was reading, curled up in a recliner across from her sister and brother-in-law.

“Sis, do you want a pain pill?” Valerie asked.

“Well . . . Yeah, I guess so.” the elder tigress replied, giving her sibling a crooked smile. “You know me; I don't like to take medication unless it's really necessary.”

“I would say you need one,” Val agreed, getting a 2 milligram Dilaudid tablet out of the bottle and fixing a glass of water with a straw. “Sis, your nose is pale and you look like you're really hurting.”

“Do I look that bad?” Victoria asked.

“You look like you're in real pain.” Torvald offered up. He couldn't remember the last time he had seen his wife looking so bad.

“Here you go,” Valerie said, giving her sister that pill and holding the glass up so she could sip through the straw. Once the elder tigress was done, Valerie noticed the time just in case her sister needed another pill later on. “You know, it is two in the afternoon. Would you like some lunch?”

“I would like a sandwich or some soup,” the stallion put forth, using the lever to return his end of the recliner couch upright again.

“Soup for me.” Victoria added.

“Okay, how about soup all around?” Valerie suggested. Once the Immortal Couple agreed with that idea, the younger tigress sat about her chores.

Victoria settled back in her wheelchair to watch her sister cook for them. It was just soup but it made her feel bad that she was that incapacitated. Between that and that nagging feeling that something wasn't right, she still found it impossible to rest her mind.

###

The blond femme hid behind a large fallen tree while she watched the male feline pick his way up the ravine in an obvious manner that said he was not a hunter or warrior. He was tripping over branches, getting hung up in the brush and generally being entirely too noisy. His kind was unknown to her, having observed a felid with such coloration only once before. His ruddy orange coat, some white accents on his chest and arms and those black stripes really unnerved her.

She gripped her weapon, her late husband's war-axe and tried to keep as low as possible. The blond femme had thought at first that she was dreaming this. The last thing she remembered was being brutally raped by a Saxon, a smelly dark canid whose small raiding band had taken her village. He didn't even have the courtesy of removing the arrow from her thigh before using her for his pleasure.

That smelly, dirty canid had rolled off of her and stood up, wiping his sweaty body on one of her good bed hides with his back to her. That was his mistake. That canid picked up his longsword and turned to dispatch her only to receive a rude surprise in turn. She had gritted her teeth, pulled the arrow from her leg and jammed it deeply into his neck, making him drown slowly in his own blood. She wasn't sure if he was dead or not when she used her dead husband's axe to take off his head.

Watching this striped male, she actually felt sorry for him. Where her kind were silent in the woods, this male wasn't at all quiet. There were a number of furs up above at the top of the ravine, doing things that looked very strange to her when she had went up there to investigate. She was sure that he would draw their attention with his noisy manners and she would be put in a position to defend herself.

He was dressed strange, that was for sure. His blue-hued leggings weren't belted on and the tunic seemed to hug his body and appeared to be made out of some *sejd-material*, it was so thin. His foot-wear was odd, too. She had never observed some animal that had snow-white hide like the leather his shoes were made from.

Just as if things couldn't get worse for her, that male felid spotted her! Damn her bad luck! He was waving his arms and shouting at her, trying to get her attention! She knew he was all alone so the only logical thing to do was to get him to be quiet, no matter how she did it.

Keeping her axe out of sight, she waved at him to come closer. She knew as long as she kept him at more-than-arm's length, she would be safe. She did wish she could speak his language, though so she could tell him to be quiet. It sounded a bit like Saxon-speak but she did know that language. His was not one that she recognized. Worse yet, he seemed to want her to follow him up the hill!

She tried to let him know to stay put but he didn't understand or he might have wanted to die. She cringed when he made a dismissing gesture with his paw and headed up the ravine. She knew this might bring the others down here to look for her so she just as well get it over with. Fighting in the open was a preferable way to die, anyway. With some luck, she might even survive this mess.