

*The characters Torvald 'Tor' Svensen, Victoria Connell-Svensen, Conrad Svensen, Dana Lynn Svensen, Gytha Louise Svensen, Axel Torvald Svensen, Valerie Connell, Barbara Caine, Wilhelmine Marie Kurzweil, James William Kurzweil, Laura Dunsmuir DDS, Clyde Moraine, Marie Moraine, Rev. Johnny Ray Roundtree, Dr. Robert Mollenkopf, Officer William 'Bill' Nellis, Officer Johnathan 'John' Hightower, Officer Kimberley Taylor, Richard 'Rick' Carvin, Alan 'Al' Samick, Catherine 'Cathy' Gebhardt, Matthew 'Matt' Black, Joyce 'Jo' Black, Daniel 'Dan' Tasker, Joan Elfsborg, John Robert 'Jack' & Rose Lynn Reynolds, Carl Parker, Art & Melissa Glaser, Mike Helguson, Vincent Lyle 'Vinnie' James, El Casa Del Burrito<sup>©</sup> and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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.*

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## **“A Loss Of Rights”**

By Kellan Meig'h

### Chapter 5

The immortal couple and Laura were finishing their lunch, the tigress feeling much better now that she had something more substantial inside of her and her medications were beginning to kick in. She was still carefully trying to chew the remnants of the tortilla that her burrito was made from when the bay colored pony remembered to pass along some information to the tigress.

“The fur that runs the shop where they make the caps in this area was at church services this morning” she related, taking a sip of lemonade before she continued. “I asked him if he could work on your caps in the morning and he told me he would.”

“That was very thoughtful of you” Victoria commented as she poured herself another glass of her homemade lemonade.

“I ... uh ... felt I needed to do that for the two of you” Laura stated somewhat nervously. “I talked with Robert and the Reverend this morning and we have all have prayed on it. We're all feeling compelled to assist you in your mission here on earth.” She looked at her plate for a moment before she looked up at them and spoke again. “I would feel honored to help out in any way that I can.”

“Don't treat us like Gods or angels because we're neither one” Victoria quickly pointed out. “We are just problem solvers for the gods. We were both mortal at one time and we hope some day to be mortal again and finish living out our lives in peace.” The tigress reached out and held Laura's wrist gently as she said “Torvald and I can both tell you that immortality sucks big time. We have a very dear immortal friend that would tell you exactly the same thing if she were here right now.”

“I don't understand ... how is being immortal such a bad thing?” the mare asked them with a confused look on her muzzle.

“We're immortal and this means we will never age again until we somehow earn our conversion back to mortality. Torvald had to practically beg the gods to give him some gray hairs on his muzzle to make him look as old as I do” the tigress stated. It was clear the pony mare was still confused about this concept of being immortal.

“How old do you think I am? Take a guess” Torvald asked her.

“Uh ... I'll guess 40?” she replied.

“Well, as near as Victoria and I have calculated, I’m about 149 years old, give or take a few years” the stallion retorted.

“You don’t look a day over 45 to me” Laura pointed out, still unsure of where this conversation was going. She was thinking to herself “How in the world could he be *that* old?”

Torvald reached out and took her paw in his as he said “Please stand up, Laura. Let me show you something.” As she stood up with them, the room began to get cooler, the air getting clear and crisp in Laura’s nostrils. The room around them slowly changed from a nondescript kitchen into the outdoors with a small village nearby.

“Come with us” the tigress beckoned to Laura, pulling gently on her paw. The pony mare went hesitantly with them, headed towards the village in question.

“I’m not sure of the date but this is very early 10<sup>th</sup> century” the huge fur stated as they walked into the middle of the compound. “This is where I was living, the area known to me as Saxony when I was chosen by the Gods to do their bidding” he pointed out as they walked over to the longhouse. Once there, it was only a few moments until the past tense Torvald came out of the door, wearing his armor and carrying his Dane axe. He was followed by a rather muscular solid black equine and a gray wolf, both wearing armor and carrying their weapons. It was clear by the look on their muzzles that they weren’t going out to greet visitors warmly this afternoon.

“I’ve seen this part before” Victoria stated with a sad sound to her voice. “He’s going to tell his first mate Wilhelmine that he’s heading south with his warriors to run off some Germans and he will be home soon. It never happened for him.”

“Why is that so? What happened?” the pony mare asked, still terribly confused by now. She was positive that she must be hallucinating or something like it because there was *just no way in hell* that they were standing in the middle of a primitive village, in northern Germany in the past.

“I’ll try to show you what happened to me” Torvald said, closing his eyes and concentrating hard. The scenery slowly shifted, the sun moving higher in the sky rapidly to become the heath to the south of his village. “Watch closely” the huge fur said, pointing out his past tense form charging the German forces. The immortals both felt Laura flinch when the past stallion was run through with an opposing warrior’s broadsword and began to die.

“I’ve seen enough!” Laura shouted, pulling at them to get them to let go of her paws but they wouldn’t let go just yet. “Please take me back! Please!!” she begged, not wanting to see any more death and bloodshed.

“No, you need to see this” Victoria stated to her as two white-colored warriors appeared from out of nowhere and picked up the past Torvald’s dead body to carry him off the field of battle. The warriors in question were both femme equines, wearing a very early style of leather armor.

“Where are they taking him?” the pony mare asked.

“Torvald, can you show her that?” Victoria asked her mate. The stallion nodded and concentrated again to take them to the dead stallion’s destination. Once there, Laura looked around in astonishment.

“Is this Heaven?” she asked, looking at her surroundings. She could feel the extreme serenity of this place, so peaceful where they were at the moment that she felt like she would like to stay here.

“No, this is not Heaven, Laura. This place is Valhalla which is in Asgaard” Torvald replied. “Look over there” he said to the small femme equine, pointing out a building nearby with his free paw. Momentarily the past tense Torvald came out of the door, looking none the worse for wear. He was being escorted by Freya and Frigg to meet up with Odin. Laura could hear the vixen, the femme wolf and the past Torvald conversing with one another in his native tongue as they walked by them. “I was healed here and sent back to earth to learn my craft and do the bidding that was being directed from on high” the present Torvald pointed out in a very tired voice, just as the scenery shimmered and warped hard momentarily. The scenery then slowly faded back to the kitchen in Modesto, California, present time.

Laura looked over to see that Torvald was breathing very heavily, like he had just run flat out for miles on end. He opened his eyes to look at her and his fatigue was quite apparent; this took a massive effort on his part to show her these things. She quickly looked at Victoria to see the femme feline looking at her very seriously.

“You needed to see these things that my husband just showed you” Victoria stated. “You really need to understand that we are not gods *nor* angels, we're just troubleshooters for the gods, nothing more. The higher powers send us to various places to straighten things out for the good of all furkind.”

“The reverend said he saw both of you in *The Son's* celestial home, conversing with him” she stated, remembering what had happened in their living room the night before.

“We have been there and it *is* very pretty” Victoria commented. “You have to understand that we hate being immortal in the worst ways possible. Only a dark agent can seriously injure or kill us and we haven't been terribly unlucky so far.” The tigress was getting that far-off look in her eyes as she said wistfully, “It's beautiful and very serene there in *The Son's* home and in Asgaard too, but we won't be seeing either one permanently for a long time to come. We're agents for the gods and that means we will always be doing their bidding directed from on high until they're ready for us to finally retire.”

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Across town, a male Impala was combing his hair and giving his horns a quick polishing before heading out to his appointment. He looked at the results in the mirror, wondering why he didn't have the large horns of the four-legged feral kind. His small horns weren't more than 4” long, just rudimentary suggestions of what should have been. Many of his kind had even went so far as to have them removed altogether just to be done with the nuisance that they were. He smiled as he thought about it; after his commission was up the end of this year, maybe he would have his removed, too. It was a simple operation and there would be no more destroyed mattresses and pillows, to mention a few advantages.

“Jack? Are you still preening in front of the mirror?” his mate called out to him, jarring him from his musing in the bedroom. “Jack Reynolds, you're going to be late to your meeting as usual” she chided him as she leaned against the door frame to their bedroom and crossed her arms. His whitetail deer mate smiled at him as she assessed the situation.

“I won't be late, Rose” he retorted, looking at his watch. “I have an hour before I have to be at the

meeting. That's plenty of time to get there in.” His wife of 31 years straightened his tie as she made the comment he dearly hated to hear from her.

“I wish you would disassociate yourself from that group” she stated, fixing his tie clasp. “I don't like the values that they stand for, honey. Nobody, and I do mean nobody, has the right to tell a fur where they can live and work.” Rose looked down at her hooves and then back at her husband before she said quietly “This new country was supposed to be a free country with open borders, Jack. You had me believing that breaking away from the USA was supposed to fix everything that was wrong with the NAFTA, NAFTA II and the Northern Immigration Act agreements and now you're helping to keep it less than free. Those agreements literally mean nothing now.”

“My commission on the board ends this December” he pointed out as he brushed the lint off of his suit coat. “After that, I'll get out for you.” He thought for a moment before he added “I don't like what they stand for now myself. This 'Legion' that the council has given their blessings to is probably the worst thing I've seen in my life.” He thought it over before he said to his mate, “I'm sure some fur has ordered this 'Legion' to kill a few furs. I just know it in my gut.” He was shaking his head at the thought of furs being killed for trying to make a living.

***That*** wasn't right at all.

“We're being called to an emergency meeting this afternoon to talk about a tigress that's moved into the area from the US” Jack said to his wife as he slipped his suit coat on. “I hear she's possibly married to an equine and they had no idea about our laws when he took a job with the Modesto Metro police department.”

“What is the board going to do about it” Rose asked. She sat down on the edge of the bed and looked at her husband with a concerned look on her muzzle. “They didn't know about our laws, Jack. Don't tell me the board would force them to leave here.”

“No, I'm fairly sure that won't happen” the impala male said to his mate. “I've heard that they're a nice couple and the tigress was very civil to the staff at the center when they processed her. I heard from Laura at church that she was real nice to her when Laura did her caps.” Rose looked at her husband with astonishment so he added “It's not often that something like that occurs. I remember Laura had said something about a fur going retrograde on her here recently.”

“Well, what *will* happen at this meeting?” she asked her hubby, thinking to herself that maybe this will work out for all concerned. It didn't make sense to make them leave here when they came of their own free will for the stallion to take a job in good faith.

“Here's what I expect will transpire at today's meeting, Rose” Jack began, “I carry enough weight on the board to make sure that the board votes to send a welcoming committee from the church to welcome them to West America and Modesto properly and make sure she has a manual of rights in her possession. They came here not knowing about things so we need to make them feel at home here.”

He was giving his hooves one last buffing as he looked up and said to his mate, “I'm telling you, I can feel for her, Rose. She came from a free country only to find she's lacking several key rights here.” He shook his head as he said “She probably still has the temporary caps in her mouth, keeping her from eating properly. That is just not right.”

Rose thought about what her husband had just said for a few moments before she asked, “What exactly does her husband do for the police department?”

“I really don't know, Rose” was his short answer. “Our scout will be at the meeting to give us some information about them. He's pretty good about doing what he does.”

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Ms. Gebhardt was standing on the front porch to the home in which the deceased skunk had lived, preparing to do a careful investigation for possible clues to his death. She had with her Mike Helguson, a young forensics technician just out of college and it fell to her as head lab technician to make sure that the liver chestnut colored Icelandic equine completed his field training properly.

She had her search warrant in her paw, properly signed by a judge but it still seemed very wrong to her to dig through a furs' home in search of clues to their past. It just wasn't the same to her, even with a signed warrant as opposed to having a fur ask you in, saying “Sure, please do come in and ransack my home, looking for god knows what.” this particular fur, however was totally unable to do such a thing for her so it fell to her to use her best judgment in finding clues as to who might have murdered the poor, unfortunate fur. No matter the outcome, today was going to be a long, tedious day.

“Don't touch the door right there” she pointed out to him before Mike had a chance to knock. “Knock way up high, where other furs wouldn't normally strike the door just in case we have to dust for prints.”

“Gotcha” he replied, knocking on the door real high. They patiently waited for a few minutes but no fur came to the door. “Didn't you say the victim had a wife?” the equine asked, waiting for his boss to answer.

“He had a mate, a zebra in fact” she stated, looking over the notes she had wrote down on a pad of paper. “Her name's Melissa Glaser, same last name as the victim.” The femme okapi knocked on the door herself only to have the door swing open, the door not being latched securely. What they observed next shocked them both.

The house had that look about it that it had been flipped by some fur searching for something in a huge hurry. Things were turned over, thrown about, broken and scattered. It was possible that a struggle or fight might have occurred too.

“Take some pictures but don't step inside just yet” she said, shaking her head in disgust. She opened her cellphone and called in to have a detective to meet them at the house. “I hope this doesn't turn into another murder” she commented as the rookie began to take pictures.

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Laura had spent some time with the immortal couple that afternoon, giving them a basic crash course on how to deal with the tigress' limited rights before she had to leave to fix her brood some dinner. They had found out that the tigress did indeed have numerous rights, the few key rights that she lacked were the inability to own real estate or make purchases over \$5,000.00 in value without a co-signer. It was also necessary for her to wear those blasted caps anytime she was out of the house or face a fine of \$25,000.00 NNAD (New North American Dollars) per incident. She was also prevented from working as an educator or voting, which seemed sort of unusual but par for the course to them. There were other

small rights that she was missing but it didn't seem to be all that bad once she had a chance to read and understand her given rights. There were still many pages of rules and regulations that needed to be read but Victoria decided to rest her eyes for a while from that almost too-small print in the manual.

What was really unusual was the fact that her status as a top level or level 1 restricted rights citizen did allow for her to carry and use a firearm in self-defense, as long as the two of them completed a firearms safety course together and put up a surety bond for her. His status as a sworn peace officer exempted them from the bond requirement or needing Torvald to take the test so the tigress quickly found the study questions on-line and began to brush up on the various things that might be on the test. She was doing this because Torvald had confided in her earlier concerning his conversation with Christopher, letting her know about her terminal score rating and its continued upward climb.

“This regulation doesn't make much sense” she pointed out, reading a particular section of the Food, Firearms and Regulated Drugs regulations again just to be sure of what she had just read. “As long as I don't have more than one layer of clothes over a shoulder or belt holster and as long as the firearm is under .50 caliber, it's not considered concealed carry.”

“You know that wouldn't fly back on our home world” he commented as he cleaned his revolver carefully. It was sort of a ritual for him to at least wipe it down thoroughly after he had carried it for whatever reason. “You know, now that you've mentioned it, I did see a .54 caliber Colt double action revolver at the precinct house. That black equine Officer Moraine carries one.”

“How in the world could you shoot that thing without ending up in the next county from the recoil?” she asked, giving her husband her full attention. “I've fired Barbara's Taurus Raging Bull<sup>®</sup> in .454 Casull chambering and that gun felt like it had a very heavy recoil to me. It would be impossible for me to shoot accurate double taps from a powerhouse pawgun like that, let alone a .58 caliber weapon.”

“I'm not sure how I would handle it either but he did make fun of my revolver, saying that my Ruger Redhawk in .44 Magnum wasn't a major power revolver” he replied. While Torvald sat there, he noticed something was quite different in the room after sampling the air a few times. “It seems your medication is kicking in, sweetheart.” he commented, noting that he could no longer smell her pheromones in the air.

“Thank goodness for that” she commented, giving him a little smile. “I was getting pretty tired of being all wound up, moody and nervous.” She was thinking that she would eventually have to pick out a firearm so she asked her mate, “How about a 4 inch barreled Dan Wesson .357 Supermag for me. Does that sound good?”

“I was thinking more along the lines of a Kimber 1911-pattern Custom II semi-auto in 10mm Magnum Express chambering” he replied. “It looks like it has almost the same knockdown power as my .44 Magnum, it's easy to handle and I can get a huge discount at the shop that supplies the department.”

“How good is this discount?” she asked, looking up from her laptop.

“I priced that particular Kimber for myself at somewhere around \$380 out the door” the berserker replied. This made Victoria's jaw drop in disbelief.

“Valerie gave over \$1,200 for hers in .45 ACP!” the striped femme blurted out. “She would just die to hear that price. I know that she almost didn't buy hers because she thought it was overpriced.”

“The USA price is over \$1,800.00, from what I had read on the brochure at the station” the berserker commented to his mate. She was looking at him like he had just lost his mind so he stated, “It's priced higher in the U.S. due to export taxes. That's the reason we didn't see oranges at the grocery store; the import taxes made them too expensive to sell.”

Victoria was thinking about this particular mission, musing to herself about the myriad of details that were left out of the packet they had looked over before accepting this mission. This was one job that she just couldn't wait to finish and go back home where things were normal again. So much for their promise of a mild mission.

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Carl Parker was sitting at the conference table, waiting for his brethren to arrive for this emergency meeting. He had arrived quite early himself, unable to relax after reading the news delivered by courier to him earlier. He thought back to the first meetings that was held in this very room almost 42 years ago to discuss fixing the things that were wrong with the original NAFTA and NIA agreements. It was the church council's thoughts that they could make things better for all furkind.

How those good intentions had backfired on them in spades.

Those carefully chosen political leaders that the council had worked so hard to put into power had taken the initiative upon themselves to break the 11 western states away from the USA without the council's blessings, forming what is now known as Western America. They then closed the borders to a select set of species, stating it was necessary to prevent violence and unrest. That had only created more violence and unrest from the species that were being sanctioned in West America by the new citizenship and border policies. That was around the same time that Jack Reynolds and Carl had been voted onto the council. The male quagga was snapped back to the present from his musings by the arrival of his friend, the impala.

“Are you OK? You look upset to me” Jack pointed out, sitting down in his seat across from the quagga. Carl thought for a moment before he nodded, giving his friend a pensive smile.

“Yeah, I'm fine, Jack. I was just thinking about the first meetings that were held here” he proffered up, trying not to act nervous. “Do you ever think that we did wrong by what we allowed to happen?” It was clear that Carl was quite on edge this afternoon.

“We did what we thought was right for our country” he replied as he made himself more comfortable in his chair. “Those leaders were the problem, Carl. We supported the wrong furs for the job. We didn't know that they had their own agendas or we would have never allowed this to happen.”

“You're right, we didn't know ...” the quagga responded, taking a sip of his water. He knew in his heart that they *were* responsible, no matter what the other furs said. The council were the very furs that allowed this to happen and he was on the council at the time.

“Who knew that they were reading between the lines of the scriptures” Jack suggested, filing up a glass with some water from a handy pitcher. “I'm not sure how this all happened but we really need to put a stop to it.”

“We need to do something, Jack. This whole deal is preparing to blow up in our muzzles” he said somberly. “Our scout will be here to tell up what he's found out about the tigress and her stallion but I can assure you he won't share what's in this folder” he said quietly as he slid a rather nondescript folder across the table. “Look this over, please? This was delivered to me today, not over an hour ago.” Jack opened the folder and began to read the notes carefully. His jaw went slack as he read further, finally laying the papers on the table as he looked at his friend in total disbelief.

“What does our scout mean when he says, they're agents too? Who were the other agents?” Jack asked, looking to see the color drain out of his friend's muzzle.

“That husband and wife that were killed here recently, the ones that were dismembered” the quagga replied. “They were the other agents. The Lord's agents, Jack.” This information deeply disturbed the impala. He sat there and quietly pondered the gravity of the situation before he spoke again.

“Listen, don't show this information to anyone else” Jack said quietly as he slid the folder back to the quagga. “I'll suggest to the board that you and I go welcome them. Once we're there at their home, we'll talk with them and find out why they're here. If we approach them with open arms and open hearts, the scriptures say that they will sense this and we'll have nothing to fear from them.”

“I do have something to fear from them, Jack. They will no doubt destroy me on sight” Carl proffered up, looking to his friend looked like he had just seen a ghost.

“What makes you think that?” the impala asked, seeming very concerned for his friend.

Carl looked up with impending doom in his eyes as he said very quietly, “It was *The Legion* that killed those agents, Jack. I'm afraid for my life because although I don't control them any longer, I created *The Legion*.”

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Torvald had been called out again, this time to a residence where there was possibly another murder that had been discovered. He parked his metallic red undercover cruiser across the street and walked over to the house in question, taking careful notes of the the situation as he went. He had been a counselor for years but the detective in him was still as sharp as ever. He flashed his badge at the ram standing by the front steps and proceeded up them to meet with Ms. Gebhardt again.

“Another murder?” he asked, still writing notes in his notebook.

“We're not sure just yet” she answered. “We were waiting for you to arrive before we entered the house.” She then added “This is Mike Helguson, my new assistant. Mike, this is Detective Torvald Svensen.” The two males shook paws before they entered the house.

The threesome began a detailed inspection of the home, searching for clues as to what might have happened here. They had all noted a distinct lack of articles missing, just the fact that everything in the house was turned over or broken like a serious fight or struggle had ensued here. There was blood spattered on the floor and counters of the kitchen, starting near the stove and eventually leading out the side door to the driveway. It had pooled here, like the bleeding fur had been standing near a vehicle for a few moments. The garage door was standing wide open and there were no cars inside.

“We need to know if they owned any vehicles” Torvald stated as he took further notes. “Get a sample of that blood and find out what species it belonged to. It might match our missing zebra” he pointed out, asking Mr. Helguson to take a few pictures of a print on the ground made by what looked like a bloody hoof wearing a moulded composite protector of some sort.

“Well, what do you think so far, Detective?” Catherine asked the huge fur standing by her after they had done a very thorough investigation of the premises.

“I really don't know what to think until we have more information on that blood and we see if they possibly had cars that were stolen” Torvald replied. “I'll be sure to put a copy of my report in your box.”

“My guess is that they will assign this case to you” she commented as she packed her gear up. “Well, maybe with a little luck I won't see you at a crime scene again today” the femme okapi said with a smile as they all prepared to head back to the station.

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The council meeting had went off without any major problems, Matt sharing with them some general basic information on the immortal couple such as where they came from, where he works and other small, unimportant tidbits about them. The scout had purposely left out key information such as the fact that they were immortals and they were most likely the Lord's agents. After the meeting was over, every fur had went home with the exception of Carl and Jack. The impala had given the excuse that they needed to round up a manual of rights for the tigress just so he would be alone with his friend.

“They've all gone home now” Carl proffered up as he watched the last car leave the parking lot. He let the blinds close again, turning to look at his old, dear friend.

“You know, I'm curious now; what do you mean when you say you no longer control *The Legion*?” Jack asked, sitting down on the corner of the table. “Tell me exactly what that means.”

“Just that, my friend. I no longer control them” the quagga replied. “I originally created *The Legion* to spread our church doctrine and promote good will amongst the furs. When they decided to read between the lines and enforce that mis-interpreted doctrine, they told me I was too weak-willed to lead them to dominance.” Jack shook his head in disgust as he thought this over.

“Well, now who does control *The Legion* if you don't?” was the next logical question for his friend.

“He's a gray lapin named Vincent Lyle James and that's all I know about him, I swear” Carl stated solemnly.

“OK, let's go see the Svensens and get this over with” Jack suggested, picking up a manual of rights and a King Richard the 7<sup>th</sup> bible for their new neighbors and then motioning to his friend to head out the door.

“You're right ... Let's get this over with so I can die swiftly” Carl muttered quietly to himself as he locked the doors to the meeting hall. He followed Jack out to the parking lot, getting into his friend's Vauxhall Vectra VXR Estate wagon with him. “Take your time getting there, would you?” he asked, swallowing hard from abject fear.

“Will you settle down, dammit!” Jack blurted out, clearly annoyed by Carl's foul mood. “Get a grip on yourself, will you? You don't have a thing to worry about from them!”

“OK, Maybe you're right” he retorted, trying his best to get a grip on his emotions as his friend headed them towards what Carl thought could be his personal Waterloo.

“I'm sure I'm right about this, my old friend. I've heard they're a real nice couple” Jack stated as he made a right turn from Coffee Road onto East Briggsmore. “The tigress, um, what's her name, uh ... Victoria ... treated Laura very nicely when she was processed at the Identification Center.”

“That's odd” the quagga commented, pondering that thought for a moment. “You would think that if she were an Avenger, I'm sure she would have went rampant through the center.”

“I would think that if she were an Avenger, she would have started with the center and would have just kept right on going after that” Jack chimed in. “I'm sure it might just be a case of mistaken identity on Matt's part. She's probably just as normal a fur as you and me.”

“OK Jack, maybe Matt did make a mistake. Let's go meet these furs and welcome them properly.” The quagga finally settled down and relaxed, thinking he might have gotten worked up over nothing at all.

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Torvald had been back home for a while, helping his mate to arrange their armor and weapons on the wall properly. The tigress had their mission assistant Denise bring them a few things from home just to make the place seem more like *their* home. The huge fur had went out to the garage in search of some more nails to hang pictures with when some fur knocked on the door. Not thinking much of it, Victoria answered the door.

There were two equine teens standing there, smiling at her like they knew her. The male, obviously a platinum blond-furred Danish heavy equine, was every bit as big as her hubby Torvald and he even looked like he could be directly related to her berserker husband. The femme, although just a few inches shorter, was still heavily muscled and had a very distinctive ruddy orange coat with a long, jet-black mane and tail. Her eyes were a light copper color and her smile belied the fact that she had some feline genes in her background; she had huge feline fangs in her mouth and her paws looked like they could have claws, too. The two teens at that moment just walked right in like they belonged there.

“Hi Mom” the femme said cheerily as she gathered Victoria up in a strong hug, kissing her on the side of the cheek. “Conrad says he'll just wait until you and Dad come back home to Wisconsin, after this mission is over” she stated as she sat her bags on the floor. “He checked it out online and he says he's not going to get his teeth capped just to visit for a few days. Dana said just about the same thing, too.” The male came over and gave her a hug, giving her a small kiss on the bridge of the nose. She suddenly had a strange feeling wash over her, like this had all happened before at some other time or some other place.

“So, where's Dad hiding?” the male, which the tigress thought might possibly be named Axel, asked her.

She was still trying to sort out her thoughts as she hesitantly replied, “He's in the garage, looking for

more nails to hang our pictures with.” Victoria looked down to see the picture on the top of the pile was of Torvald, herself, Conrad, the two equine teens and a femme teenage feline, blond in coloration with Torvald's pale blue eyes. The tigress' head was spinning pretty badly so she decided to sit down in the wingback chair before she fell down from being light-headed.

“Mom? Are you feeling sick?” the femme teen, who the tigress was sure her name was Gytha asked, kneeling down in front of the feline femme and holding the tigress' paws. It was clear that this tall femme was concerned for her mother's health.

“Um, no ... I ... I'm taking a new medication to suppress my mating cycle, sweetheart” the striped femme finally responded. “It has a warning on the bottle that said it might make me dizzy at first” she added, giving the huge femme a small smile. Victoria then reached up and gave her daughter a hug, things seeming to be back to normal, for the most part once again.

“I did have to get tooth caps, just like you said I would, Mom” Gytha stated, smiling widely to show off her capped teeth. “They made mine in clear so it's real hard to tell if I have them in.”

“How did you get yours so quick?” her mother asked, looking at the upper cap her daughter had popped out of her mouth. “I won't get my regular ones until tomorrow afternoon at the earliest.”

“Grandma Connell and I found a place in Green Bay, over on Shawano Avenue in that big strip mall that made these while I waited” she replied. “I was told to be careful with them because they're just made for visiting, not extended use. These don't have a proper snap-lock system like the regular ones have.” She then noticed that her mother had the purple caps on her claws. “That looks real bad, Mom” she commented, holding her mother's paw just so and expressing her mother's claws very gently to get a better look. “I just got the athletic claw caps like Willi Marie uses for basketball and made sure to use plenty of glue to put them on with, too. I didn't want you and Dad getting fined for my indiscretions. I'm just glad you called and warned me before I came out here to visit.”

“I found some nails” Torvald stated as he came back out to the living room with Axel following right behind him. “I think the kids might be hungry from their trip so I'll order a pizza or two for them” he added as he gave Gytha a strong hug. “I guess you've seen your mother's caps” the berserker queried, giving her a kiss on the cheek.

She nodded in response as she picked up her bags and asked, “Where do we sleep while we're here?”

“There's two bedrooms on the left side of the hallway” he replied as he hunted up the phone number to the Round Table® pizza parlor down on H street. “The bath and paw towels are in the hall closet and the blow dryer is in the bottom vanity drawer.”

“What? No full-body fur drying booth?” Axel commented, looking very dejected at the thought of having to blow dry his mane and tail by paw.

“Nope, not in this house, unfortunately” Victoria replied, still not completely sure that things were totally right with her world at the moment.