

*The characters Torvald 'Tor' Svensen, Victoria Connell-Svensen, Conrad Svensen, Dana Lynn Svensen, Gytha Louise Svensen, Axel Torvald Svensen, Valerie Connell, Joseph 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, Lori Masters, Denise Berger, Pamela Benelli, Frank and Nancy Sarkela, Peter the dispatcher, Thom Thomas, Jeff Ford, Officer Deborah Bailey, Ed Harper, Ben Brisio, Tirrell, Megan Monroe, El Casa Del Burrito® and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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 8**

The tigress got busy and helped Gytha to quickly clean up after their meal. The huge femme fur was a very neat cook in the kitchen so there really wasn't much of a mess to clean up. Victoria then dressed in her favorite casual clothing and headed out to the driveway and her mini-van.

Pulling the key fob from her purse, she hit the remote, unlocking her van as usual. It was just about that time that she noticed the key had a very unusual shape. Instead of the usual Dodge Pentagram on the head of the key, it was in the shape of a very stylized “D” instead. That's when she noticed the garish chrome grille and the name “DESOTO” emblazoned across the leading edge of the hood in huge chrome letters. She smiled at the thought that her Grandfather Joseph Connell would really like her van; he was a devout Desoto owner. Starting it up, she heard the distinctive growl of a small displacement V8 engine with dual exhaust. She was now very sure her Grandpa would definitely approve of this one.

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Victoria made her way across town to find the femme pony's office on 14<sup>th</sup> Street without too much trouble. She found a convenient parking space nearby, locked up her mini-van and went inside. She looked around at the femme pony's office space, finding it very neat and clean and foremost, it felt homey. There were some very nice landscape pictures on the walls, the furnishings were soft and inviting and the plants were well-cared for. Just as she began to sit down on the overstuffed couch, Laura came into the waiting room, startling her momentarily.

“Hi Victoria, you're just in time. My last patient just left a few minutes ago” she said as she directed the tigress back to an examination room. She noticed that Victoria seemed a little nervous to her this afternoon as she got her settled in a exam chair. “You're not on edge, are you?”

“Wh ... who? ... m ...me?” the tigress stuttered out, giving Laura a pensive smile.

“Now come on, Victoria. You did just fine for me the last time I worked on you. Just take a few deep breaths, letting them out slowly, OK?” The tigress did as she asked, trying her best to get calmed down.

“I'm sorry, Laura. I just don't like to have my teeth messed with” the tigress finally admitted to her. “I had a filling done as a young kit and the dentist didn't give me enough Novocaine. I endured feeling that filling being done the whole time.” this made the femme pony cringe in response.

“Well, I think you'll be amazed at how gentle I am with your mouth” Laura stated, getting her equipment ready. “I'll be using an ultrasonic cleaning tool to knock loose the glue holding the temporary caps in place. It uses water to cool it down so you might have to spit out some water from time to time that the suction wand doesn't suck up.” Victoria nodded so the femme pony put a bib on the tigress, turned on her work light and began to take the caps off.

Victoria did her best to sit still, keeping her eyes closed tightly while the dentist began her work in earnest. That ultrasonic cleaner was noisy but the tool didn't seem to be hurting her so the tigress relaxed a bit while Laura continued on. After about ten minutes, the tigress felt the femme pony lift the lower cap out of her mouth. She squirted some water into the feline's mouth and then told her “Spit, please,” indicating the little sink by her chair.

“These usually don't come out in one piece like this. I'm kind of amazed” the pony commented as she began working on her patient's upper teeth. After another ten minutes or so, Victoria no longer had a purple tinged smile.

“Oh yeah ... that's more like it” the tigress said as she ran her tongue around her mouth, feeling her teeth again. “Now what happens, if I might ask?”

“Well, I have to make some slight notches on your fangs for the snap-locks to fasten onto” she replied hesitantly, waiting for the femme feline to lose it completely. Victoria just frowned instead at that information.

“Why didn't I see that coming?” the feline femme stated flatly. “How big are these notches going to be?”

“Um, they have to be this big,” the femme pony stated, holding up a model of a canine jawset with a cap on it. Laura pulled out on the two catches, one on each fang and lifted the cap away to reveal three 1/16” notches on the rear of each fang, near the gum line. “They're not too big like they were in the old days and the notches are placed with a guide to ensure they line up correctly.”

“A guide?” Victoria was looking at Laura kind of strangely. “Oh, let me see this ...” She was shocked by the device that Laura showed her next. It was made mostly from clear plastic with bright blue rubber inserts. This 'thing' went into the mouth, fitting all the way over her teeth top and bottom and it had a brass fitting on the front of it.

“This guide uses suction to hold it snugly to your teeth” she proffered up when the tigress pointed at the fitting. “It lets me notch all four teeth at once without having to set up a single cut guide a dozen times. I then seal the notches with a UV activated polymer and then polish the notches afterwards while the guide is still in your mouth. This is your own personal guide, too.”

“Oh Great ...” the tigress said to no fur in particular. “Well, let's get on with this” she said, sitting back in the chair. “Do it before I change my mind and have you put the purple ones back in.”

Laura put the guide inside the tigress' mouth, having to have the femme feline help get the guide into place. Once it was over her fangs, Victoria felt the guide drop into place. She nodded, letting Laura know she was OK with all of this while the dentist got the suction ready.

“OK, I'm going to put the suction to it. You'll feel it pull your teeth into the guide so don't panic. If you

bite down just a bit, it won't feel so scary” Laura told her, carefully easing the suction valve open. The tigress felt her teeth being pulled together tightly, the guide now holding her jaw at a fixed opening. “It seems like the guide is seated down properly. Are you all right?” the pony asked, waiting for the tigress to nod her head. “I'll give you a little Novocaine so you won't feel the notches being cut” she said, giving her four injections using the guide as a reference. After waiting a few minutes for the Novocaine to take effect, she then began to carefully work on the tigress' mouth, only taking twenty minutes or so to quickly notch, seal and polish the four teeth in question.

“You'll have to help me get this guide out of your mouth” she said to Victoria after she removed the suction from it. Once the guide was out, Laura passed Victoria a mirror for her to inspect the work. The tigress couldn't readily see the notches and she really couldn't feel them, either. Once she sat the mirror down, the pony sat a case on the table beside the feline. “These are your caps.”

Victoria opened the case to view her new caps in all their glory, made from a clear rigid polymer plastic compound. She picked up the upper one and looked it over, seeing the tabs that released the caps once they were on.

“You just push them on” Laura pointed out, watching the tigress slowly slip the cap on. Victoria felt them click three times as the catches went through the grooves on her fangs, finally settling into place on the last click. She felt them with her tongue, giving the pony mare a funny look because she almost couldn't feel the cap on her upper teeth. The feline then put the lower cap into place, pressing it down onto her lower teeth. After a few preliminary tests to see how well they fit together, she took a look in the mirror, smiling to see the net results.

“I don't believe it!” the tigress stated, looking very closely at her mouth. “This is really weird! I can't really tell these things are in my mouth and the clear color makes them darn near invisible!”

“Your teeth are such a pretty color, I felt bad about ordering white caps. That's why I asked for clear ones to be made for you.” The mare was smiling at her, happy that the tigress was pleased with the outcome.

“OK, you'll have to show me the trick to getting them out” the tigress stated as she fumbled with the catches on her upper caps. “I'm just not doing something right here.”

“We need to change your claw caps to a regular style of cap” Laura stated, bringing a cart over from the corner. “Those temporary claw caps aren't designed properly to release your snap locks. I personally think it was done that way on purpose” she added while she uncovered the cart to show a similar set of tools that she had used previously on the tigress. Laura then passed her a cap for her inspection that was a nice glossy black color and it really looked like a feline claw except the tip had a smooth 1/8" radius to it, rather than a sharp point.

“I have that color or I have this one” she stated, passing her a cap that was a cream color with light and dark striations down the length of it. “I think I remember your claws being black, though.”

“I think I'll get the black ones” the tigress told Laura. “They look the closest to my natural claws.”

Laura used a tool that looked like a pair of pliers but with a specialized tip to push out the steel pin holding the temporary caps to the tigress' claws. Another tool made cap removal very easy, each cap literally popping off of its respective claw. The femme pony referred to Victoria's chart, setting the

trimmer to clean up the glue on her claws. After the first few claws, Victoria began setting the machine herself once she understood the settings. She did note that the cutter wasn't taking any material off her claws, just cleaning the glue off of them.

“This acrylic glue will hold your claw caps just fine without a pin” the mare commented as she began to lay out the proper size cap for each finger. Within moments, Victoria's paws looked for the most part normal, the gloss black caps mimicking her own natural claws. She watched as the femme pony filled a clear plastic case with enough caps for 2 changes along with a tube of adhesive. She then wrote down the cap sizes and trimmer settings on a form, folding that document and putting it into the lid of the case.

“OK, now to take out your tooth caps” Laura directed, “You put your claws in behind the tabs with the tips pointing towards the front and roll your fingers inward, pulling out on the tabs. Use your tongue to push the cap loose once the tabs are out.” The tigress followed the directions, the upper cap slipping right off her teeth. Victoria tested the lower cap to find it wasn't any more difficult to remove.

“I am just completely amazed!” the tigress commented after slipping her caps back into place. “I was fretting over having this done and you've managed to make my visit very pleasant.”

“Thanks for thinking I did a good job” Laura replied as she set another case on the table. It contained a toothbrush, a travel sized tube of toothpaste, some floss and some plastic toothpicks. “This is so you can clean your teeth after eating out. These caps sometimes won't fit back into place if you get some food wedged in your teeth.”

“Can I take them out in a restaurant?” the tigress asked, kind of confused about this aspect of the law.

“Any place that sells food indoors. By law, the establishment must allow you to use the facilities to brush your teeth after a meal” was the reply.

“I really thank you a lot for your time, Laura. Why don't you come have dinner with us some night?” she asked her dentist. “Torvald makes a great vegetable stew” the feline femme pointed out while she paid for her services rendered.

“I think I might like that” the dentist replied. “Give me a call when he's going to cook.”

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Torvald was looking across his desk at the latest and hopefully last fur to be counseled today. The male bobcat had been staring at the stallion for some time without saying a word, just sitting there with his arms crossed and a scowl on his muzzle.

“OK, since you seem so hell-bent on not participating in this counseling session, I see no other recourse than to allow them to ...” The feline cut him off.

“Where do they get off telling me I have to cap my claws?” he said in an angry tone of voice. “I had my fangs shortened *substantially* and crowned and I kept my claws blunted to a legal 1/8” radius on purpose to comply with the goddamned law! Now they did this to me!” he pointed out, holding up his paws, the tips of the lime green caps showing plainly.

“Now Sir, the law is pretty clear about this. I appreciate that you tried to comply in your own way but it is required by all felines and other species that have sharp claws to either cap them or have them surgically removed. I have some experience with this” Torvald pointed out as he turned the picture around on his desk to show the feline his family.

“You're married to a tigress?” the feline commented. “You didn't seem like the type” he stated as he looked at the mixed brood in the photo.

“She has to wear caps on her teeth and claws, Mr. Brisio as does my oldest daughter who is out here with us. It's not that bad and I can give you the address of a femme that can cap your claws painlessly. She's done my wife's claws for her.” Torvald wrote down Ms. Dunsmuir's address and phone number on a sticky note and passed it to the feline.

“She's good, eh?” the feline asked.

“My wife had her claws done by Ms. Dunsmuir and she said it was totally painless.” Torvald then passed the bobcat his business card. “You will need to have your claws capped or removed and see me again by Thursday at the latest. If you don't, I'll have to put a warrant out for your arrest.” He looked at Mr. Brisio with a serious look on his muzzle as he said “I don't think you're that irresponsible.”

“You're right; I'm not that irresponsible, stallion. I won't have them removed for obvious reasons so I guess I'll get them capped tomorrow or Wednesday. Can I go now?” The bobcat stood up, waiting for Torvald to allow him to leave.

“Yes, you may go” the huge fur replied, motioning towards the door. He watched the feline leave his office as he scribbled a few notes on Mr. Brisio's action sheet stapled inside his folder. “What a day” he said quietly as he put the folder in his returning visit stack that now had 5 folders in it. He stood, turned out the light on his desk and grabbed his jacket on the way out of his office. He had almost made it to the door to the parking lot when a familiar voice rang out behind him.

“Excuse me, Detective, could I speak with you for a minute?” the male okapi asked, giving Torvald a nervous smile once the huge fur turned to face him.

“Yeah, I have a minute” the huge fur replied.

“How about in my office? It's right down here” Matt asked, motioning towards a nearby hallway. Once they had went into Mr. Black's office, he offered Torvald a seat while he took his behind his desk.

“What did you want to talk about?” Torvald asked, giving Matt his full attention.

“I guess you know by now that I'm a scout for the church elders” he sheepishly replied. He was embarrassed by having to admit to his role in this.

“I have been told that by elders Reynolds and Parker” the huge fur responded.

“I'm more than that, I'm afraid. I'm an operative for a group that seeks to restore the church and the USA” he pointed out. This caused the berserker to pitch his ears forward and lift one eyebrow.

“Have you been told what I am here for?” the huge fur asked.

“No, I haven't been told that yet.” The okapi was getting just a little nervous over all of this.

“I'm a celestial agent.” Torvald crossed his arms across his chest and made himself more comfortable.

“I was right, then. You and your mate are agents for the gods. I need to ask one question, though. You and your mate aren't Avengers, are you?” Matt was almost holding his breath until Torvald answered him.

“No, we are certainly *not* Avengers, we're just troubleshooters for the gods” the huge fur replied.

“Thank goodness for that” Matt stated, giving a sigh of relief. “Well, how about coming to dinner and I will introduce you to the fur that's our coordinator?” he asked, waiting for Torvald to reply.

“I would appreciate that” Torvald stated. “My wife and I are hoping to topple *The Legion* by taking out the top furs.”

“You'll need to be very careful. This Vincent James is a very elusive character from what I have found out.” Matt pulled a folder out of the lateral file cabinet behind him and handed it to Torvald. He examined the contents, nodding at the information presented.

“May I keep this?” the huge fur asked, holding up the folder.

“Sure thing. I have another copy for my own records.” Matt waited just a moment before he shared another piece of information. “This James fur doesn't have a known good address. He's a drifter but he's been seen lately around a mobile home park down in Keyes.” He looked Torvald straight in the eyes as he said “You'll need to build a strong case against him before you make a move, if you plan to use the legal system against him.”

“I can expect your help?” the berserker asked the okapi.

“I will give you all the help I can” was the reply.

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Torvald was driving home, thinking about having dinner and a quiet evening with his family. This had turned out to be a very long first official day on the job. He kept thinking about how the Center saw nothing wrong with taking a fur's clothes away from them and parading them around naked for all the department furs to see. This was just wrong in his thinking; to humiliate a fur and then expect cooperation. He thought this practice to be rather barbaric in nature, along with this whole claw and tooth capping deal.

He was busy looking at the street signs, following some directions given to him by a co-worker that would lead him to a shop on J street that had some dark European ales on sale. As he drove southbound along McHenry avenue, he spotted a uniformed patrol unit with a minivan pulled over on the northbound side of the street in front of a Weinerschnitzel® fast food joint. It was a dark green Desoto minivan with Wisconsin plates and a very familiar tigress sitting on the curb in front of it, cooling her heels in the shade.

Torvald turned on the lights on his undercover unit, the rear package deck-mounted lights, the tail light, parking light and marker light strobes along with the red and blue strobes above the rear-view mirror and the ones mounted in the grill making him look like a Christmas tree. He hit the siren a few times so he could make a safe u-turn at Jones street and after avoiding an elderly driver that might have been rattled by the commotion, he returned to the scene. Pulling in behind the black and white cruiser, he got out and opened his sport coat so the uniformed femme police fur could see his badge hanging on his belt.

The uniformed femme with the badge was giving Torvald the evil eye as he walked towards her, probably unsure of his motives. Once she observed he was carrying a badge, she visibly relaxed and waited for him to approach her. He reached out and offered her his paw, the femme giving him a soft, polite pawshake in return.

“I saw you had this tigress stopped in a bad spot here. What's the stop for?” he asked, giving her his version of his best disarming smile. Victoria had her elbows resting on her knees and her head down in her paws so she had not noticed her hubby standing there just yet.

“I spotted this van with the out-of-country plates turning northbound onto J street from 14<sup>th</sup>, Detective. I decided to pull it over as a courtesy stop to see if everything was in order and in the process I discovered the driver didn't have very good identification on her, Sir. I verified her California Ident Card with no trouble and I was busy trying to run her Wisconsin driver's license and plates when you drove up. As usual, we're having trouble with the computers again. That's why I had her sitting at the curb under the shade there because the search could take a while and it would have gotten real hot in her car with the motor off.” The femme officer seemed sincere in her actions so Torvald tried to be as gentle as the situation would permit him to be.

“Will this help to clarify the femme's situation for you?” he asked, showing her his police identification that was right above his Wisconsin driver's license. The femme officer compared the addresses given on Victoria's and Torvald's licenses and became very embarrassed in response.

“Oh No! I'm sorry, Detective, your tigress didn't show me her family identification, Sir. I would have let her go as soon as I was shown that.” Officer Lori Masters, who was a gray Percheron, was one big embarrassed fur over this.

“Victoria, would you come over here, please” the huge femme officer asked, getting the tigress' attention. The femme feline looked up and saw her hubby, which brought an immediate smile to her muzzle. She was now smiling widely as she got up from the curb, came over and gave her husband a strong hug and a kiss on the cheek. Officer Masters gave her back her license, registration and insurance cards in preparation for eating a huge helping of humble pie. “I'm sorry for detaining you like this. I had no idea your husband was an officer.” She thought for a moment and added, “I hope I got that right when I said he's your husband since you *are* from back east. You need to show your family identification the next time you're stopped for something simple like this.”

“Erm, I'm sorry but I don't have one to those cards for here just yet” the tigress replied sheepishly. It wouldn't have gone well to show her the card in her purse that was issued by the LAPD from their home world.

“You really need to get a family ident card in the morning and you both need to get a California driver's license and get your van's registration changed over soon.” The femme officer was writing a few

numbers on the back of her business card for Victoria. "Here's the information you need and I'll add your vehicle to the broadcast list so every police fur will know who owns it. I apologize again for stopping you and I hope you have a nice evening." The huge femme nodded at them, got into her police cruiser and drove off, leaving the immortal couple standing on the curb by the hot Kali stand.

"Hmm, I think I know what we might be having for dinner" Torvald stated, pointing to the fast food shack behind them.

"That's fine by me but you better call and see what the kids and Denise want to eat. She offered to stay with the kids while I went to get my caps done." Victoria smiled to show off her teeth to her hubby.

"Those caps aren't that noticeable to me" he commented, giving them a close look. "If I didn't know better, I would be inclined to believe you're not wearing caps."

"I also had her give me some nice gloss black caps for my claws" she pointed out, showing them off to her mate. He checked them out, noting that they looked very close to her own real claws.

"It's about time you started to look normal again. I was beginning to think you might have to go back to our home world with all that purple stuff in your mouth and on your paws" he stated, putting his arm around her waist. "Now let's go get dinner."

"What about our cars?" Victoria looked back at their two vehicles, blocking the slow lane of traffic.

"Who's going to complain?" Torvald pointed out. "No fur would dare try to tow a police vehicle."

"No, let's not abuse your privileges and move our vehicles out of the street." Victoria pushed him in the direction of his cruiser while she got into her mini-van and parked it in the lot properly.

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Once the immortal couple had returned home, they were greeted by a houseful of family eager to eat dinner. Denise had retrieved everyone from the Svensen's backstory home in Wisconsin so the issues at paw could be discussed with all the parties involved. Once dinner had been consumed, they all retired to the living room to talk.

Dana had been filled in by Axel and Gytha on what had been happening and she was quite relieved to know why she had these strange memories in her head.

"I was having a little trouble with thinking I might have been a lioness, a femme bobcat, an arctic fox vixen and a femme squirrel at some time or another." She was really thankful that this information had been shared with her because it settled her mind somewhat.

"So, everyone agrees that this is what you all want to do?" Denise asked, waiting until everyone had raised their paw. "OK then, we need to see the Counsel of Elders as a mere formality before it's a done deal." Everyone stood and prepared themselves as they shimmered out of the mission home in Modesto and shimmered into a room that might have been in Christopher's realm by the beautiful view outside.

This room was neatly but sparsely appointed with a very large wooden table in the middle of the room. There were 5 high-backed chairs on one side of the table and a two rows of chairs on the other side.



Denise motioned for them to sit in the front row of chairs and left the room through a side door. Momentarily, she returned and sat down with the immortals and their family to wait for the Elders to make their appearance.

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... A number of minutes, maybe a half hour had went by before the door opened again for the Elders to make their entrance. They were wearing hooded long-sleeved robes as they quietly filed in, five of them. The Elders sat in the high-backed seats, shrugging off their robes as the sat down.

From left to right, there was a male Siberian husky, a femme Belgian equine, a lioness, a male stoat and a human male of extreme age. The human stood, cleared his throat and spoke.

“I am now known only as Ezra, the eldest of this counsel. I once had a last name that I went by but it has been so long that I have forgotten it.” He looked at the furs seated across from the Elders and continued his oratory. “In this matter of Torvald, Victoria and their family, we are inclined to allow this request to be granted with no objections from the counsel. We have come to understand the nature of the request as being a way to repair many wrongs that have been done by a certain member of the mission staff. It will not be necessary to mention that fur's name because I am sure we are all aware of whom I speak.”

“Dana, Gytha and Axel, please stand” the femme equine asked, waiting until they were standing to continue. “I am Narissa, the second eldest of the counsel. Do you three understand what will happen if we allow this to go forward? You will all lose your status as mission assistants and become mortal again, to be children to Victoria and Torvald. Your memories of the other missions will be carefully faded and you will only know a life with them when we are done. This is a very big step you're taking so please hold up your paw to signify you understand this.” The three children raised their paws, waiting until Narissa nodded for them to sit down.

“Torvald and Victoria, please stand” the lioness asked, waiting until they had stood up to speak again. “I am Joanna, and having been on the counsel for only two and one-half millennium, the youngest of the Elders. Do you accept the responsibility of the care and love you will have to give to these children? Your immortality means you may in fact outlive all of them should you be unable to earn your conversion back to mortality within what would be your normal lifetimes. Are you prepared for this possibility?”

“We ... we are p ... prepared for this and w ... we will accept the responsibilities without question” Victoria replied in a very shaky voice while holding on tightly to her hubby's arm. He just nodded in reply, unable to say a word because the huge fur was afraid of bursting out in tears if he tried to say something.

Once the immortal couple had sat back down, the husky spoke up. “I am Tomas, the present lead of the counsel. Valerie, Barbara, John Conrad, James and Wilhelmine, will all of you stand.” Once the remaining furs were standing, the canid spoke again. “Because today's actions will affect everyone connected with the Svensen household, I must ask if any of you have an objection or concern in this matter. If you do not object, please raise your paw to signify as such.” All of the furs standing quickly held their paws up to signify their wishes. The husky nodded his acknowledgment and motioned for them to sit down. The stoat stood up and cleared his throat before he spoke.

“I am the one called Cameron Silas, fourth of the elders. We had anticipated that all of you would answer our inquiries in the manner with which you did and it is my privilege to inform you, based on your responses to our inquiries, your wishes will be carried out in full.” He looked at the immortal couple and stated, “You will be charged with their care, love and guidance, to raise them properly and always look out for them as parents should.” He then looked at the children as he said, “The three of you will become mortal children to your loving parents. You will be charged with obeying them, following their guidance in your upbringing and return their love to them when it is given with no reservations.”

Cameron Silas took his seat while Ezra stood once more. “We will allow this request to be fulfilled in this manner. All of you except Torvald and Victoria will return to the home world and house of the immortals. We will have two assistants watching over you, making sure things are going smoothly during this final transition period for Dana, Gytha and Axel.” He stepped out from behind the table and came out to face the children. “You will begin your transition now, with my touch” he stated, touching each one on the arm lightly. “Your other memories will now begin to slowly fade away, leaving only your memories of your new family in your minds, burning brightly. For the rest of you, you will all be given memories that will make your new family fit in for you. We will let you remain together for a short time this evening before we send everyone to the proper place and home world. Now go and enjoy each other's company.” With a motioning of Ezra's hands, the assembled group shimmered out of the counsel chambers only to shimmer back into the immortal couple's living room in Modesto, CA.

“Well, it's a done deal” Denise stated, hugging the tigress for more than just a moment. “I was afraid that when the counsel brought up your immortality, that was going to be a deal breaker.”

“You know, it wasn't going to be a sticking point for me. I was totally prepared to tell the counsel to 'shove it' if they tried to make an issue out of it” the tigress retorted.

“You didn't seem like you had it in you at the moment” Denise stated as she gave Gytha a hug.

“Trust me, she would have done it” Torvald pointed out. He was busy consoling Dana, who was sobbing on her father's shoulder. “If there's one thing I do know, I know for certain that Victoria would have been all over them like a rabid kali if they would have said 'no' to her.”

About that time, two furs shimmered into the Svensen living room. One was a possible skunk/leopard mix from her unique markings and coloration and the other was a male chestnut colored equine. He was quite striking in his appearance due to the blue patterns painted on his face, neck and arms.

“I am called Tirrell and this is Megan Monroe” the male stated, motioning to his femme counterpart. “We will be staying with you for a few days to make sure everything went well.”

“Those are some wild markings, Tirrell” Torvald commented. “Are you Iceni?”

“No my lineage is not of the Iceni” the painted one replied. “I am from what you now call Scotland and my furs were called Picts by the Romans and Greeks.”

“I've read a little about the Picts” Willi Marie stated, smiling at Tirrell. “You were possibly the first inhabitants of Scotland.”

“I could not say for sure if we were the first inhabitants” he retorted. “What I do know is I need to fix

some snacks for everyone to enjoy and unwind a bit. Do you possibly have some skirret that I might boil for a light porridge?"

"I'm sorry but we don't have whatever it is you were asking for. Let me help you fix some snacks" Victoria replied. "I know where everything is in my kitchen."

Everyone had crowded around the breakfast bar in anticipation of treats and refreshments. Gytha set up the coffee pot while Dana made a pitcher of orange drink. While Tirrell checked out the pantry for ideas, Conrad asked his father a very important question;

"Is Mom's van really a Desoto?" He was smiling at the thought that his mother's van should be Dodge or maybe a Chrysler or Plymouth.

"Yeah, it's a Desoto" Torvald confirmed for him. "I has the ugliest grill you ever saw in a minivan and the chrome letters on the hood are at least two inches high."

"It's not ugly!" Victoria retorted to her husband's description of her wheels. "My Grandpa Joseph Connell would really like it. It has a four liter V8 motor for your information!"

"A 4.0 V8 in a minivan? That's weird, if you ask me" Conrad commented.

"That's no stranger than these apples that taste just like pears and have an orange skin on them" Axel stated. "Come on brother, let me show you an ugly van!" Conrad got up and began to follow his brother out to the driveway to see this Desoto so Victoria made her feelings known.

"Ugly or not, that's the fastest van I've ever had! Don't make fun of it!"

"Hey, I just thought of something; where will we all sleep?" Dana asked, looking at her father strange. "Does our home have enough beds for all of us?"

"It's covered, kids" Denise pointed out. "We'll put bunk beds in the rooms so Axel will bunk with Conrad in his room. Dana along with Gytha will bunk with Willi Marie until we can add onto the house again." She turned and looked at the berserker sheepishly as she said "I guess we'll add on a few bedrooms over the garage now."

"I don't care as long as the kids are going home with us" the tigress stated. "I would even let them have our bedroom if we needed the room that badly."

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The tigress and stallion were laying in bed, listening to the silence in the house.

"It's too quiet for me" Victoria stated, fluffing her pillow a bit. "It's too bad they all had to go back to our home world so soon."

"I agree" Torvald chimed in. "Maybe we'll get this mission over with soon and we can get back to our family." He reached over and set his alarm clock, trying unsuccessfully to stifle a yawn. "Maybe we'll get lucky with a few names tomorrow."

“G’night” the tigress said sleepily. She snuggled up to her hubby and soon was snoring lightly. He made himself comfortable and faded off to sleep behind her.

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“Hey Vinnie! You got a minute?” the goat asked the lapin. “I think I found out where that tigress I saw coming out of the Center lives.” The goat had caught up with his boss and friend at the local Leonard’s Restaurant on the Maze Road exit off the 99 highway.

“Yeah, sure, I have a minute for ya. Have a seat with me, Ed” Vinnie replied, motioning for the horned one to sit down with him. “You want some coffee or somethin’?” The goat nodded so the rabbit motioned for the waitress, a petite Holstein to bring his accomplice a cup of brew.

“Yeah, I was drivin’ down the street this afternoon, mindin’ my own business when I saw her with a big ol’ stallion over at that hot kali joint on McHenry. I circled th’ block, finally following them over to Magnolia, dude. They’re in that temporary rental house for cops.”

“So, is she a cop or is the stallion the cop?” Vinnie asked before taking a bite of his cherry pie.

“It’s the stallion, dude. She was drivin’ a Desoto minivan. He was the one wheelin’ an undercover Ford” Ed shared with his friend.

“Damn, she’ll be hard to get to. You know she’s sharp if she’s shackin’ with a police fur” Vinnie pointed out.

“You’re right as usual, buddy. Maybe I can take her out from a distance, ya know?” Ed was giving a half-baked plan some serious thought in his misguided brain.

“Whatever ya do, make sure to leave a callin’ card” the lapin requested, taking another bite of his pie.

“Yeah, I’ll do that.”