

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, Delores James, Lori Masters, Denise Berger, Pamela Benelli, Frank and Nancy Sarkela, Peter the dispatcher, Thom Thomas, Jeff Ford, Officer Deborah Bailey, Edward Irwin Harper, Muriel Harper, Ben Brisio, Tirrell, Megan Monroe, Caroline Crabtree, Joshua Marshall, Mike Bates, Martin and Jennifer Green, El Casa Del Burrito[®], Leonard's Restaurant[®] and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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 9

Tuesday morning had come to the temporary home of Torvald and Victoria and the tigress was busy fixing breakfast for just the two of them. Torvald was still waking up, having not slept very well last night.

“Is there some of Gytha's coffee left over from last night?” he asked, rubbing his muzzle to wake up further.

“Sorry, the adults drank it all, I'm afraid.” was her reply. “I'll make you some fresh, if you want me to,” she stated, waiting to see if he would take her up on her offer.

“No, not just for me,” he replied, sitting down at the breakfast bar. Within a few more moments, their morning meal was completed.

“You're dressed up early, sweetheart. Do you have something planned for today?” he queried, noting that his mate was fully dressed at 7:30 in the morning.

“I'm going down to take that firearms test this morning.” she told her mate while she was putting his breakfast in front of him. “I hope you wanted pancakes for breakfast,” she pointed out, putting the butter and syrup in front of him.

“That's just fine,” he told his mate, starting to slowly butter his breakfast. She gave him a tall glass of orange drink and sat down with him, beginning to butter her cakes too.

“The office I need to go to opens at 8 sharp,” Victoria stated, giving her mate a smile not impeded by any caps.

“I'm glad you don't have those awful purple caps in your mouth any longer. It made you look funny.” he commented as he leaned over and gave his mate a kiss. “I saw several furs yesterday that had either purple or orange caps. I still don't understand the reasoning for capping teeth. One male feline even had his fangs shortened and crowned so he could comply with the laws!”

“Eewww!” Victoria blurted out. “That sounds too barbaric to me!”

“That's what I thought,” he retorted, giving his mate a knowing glance.

“Well, as soon as we're done eating, I'm going to go over to city hall and take that test,” the tigress stated, giving her hubby a smile. “That should make you feel more secure about my being on this mission.”

Ed Harper had been up since before sunup, getting himself ready for this day. He had cleaned and carefully oiled his favorite small bore weapon, A [Kel-Tec PLR 16 pistol](#) in .223 caliber. He carefully loaded the 30 round magazine in a systematic way, first checking each round to ensure it met the loaded mil spec for NATO 5.56mm rounds and then standing the round up in a row with the others on his bench, checking each one twice with his micrometer and digital calipers before loading it into a carefully selected plastic Ram-line magazine, chosen for its light weight and good feed characteristics.

The goat had parked a few doors up the street, on the opposite side of the road from his mark's house, sitting with a newspaper in his paws trying to not call any unwanted attention to himself. His firearm was sitting on his lap, covered up by a lap blanket. He was actually watching the house intently, keeping his eyes alert for the fur he was after.

After more than an hour of waiting, his mark finally stepped out onto their front porch, turning to give her mate a kiss before turning her back to Ed, heading towards her vehicle once the femme's mate had closed the door to their home. The goat stepped out of his wheels, a stolen late-model Holden Commodore four-door and aimed his pistol, pushing the safety off at the same time with his right thumb while he acquired his target through his 4X power Burris scope. The first round he fired in haste missed his intended victim by a mile, shattering the driver's door window of her vehicle instead. Getting a deep breath to clear his head, the second round he fired caught his victim in her right shoulder, high, staggering her. The next two rounds, a double tap, hit the femme in the torso, both low and right. Those rounds exited the front of her body, punching holes in the door of her vehicle. The last round he fired caught her just about the center of the back, waist level. He smiled as she slumped over against her car, then fell to the ground roughly to lay motionless. He was fairly sure she would now bleed to death from her wounds, her dead, striped carcass making the noon news without a doubt.

The goat carefully put the pistol's safety back on and started to get back into his car when he slipped on a spent cartridge lying in the street, causing himself to stumble. He quickly pitched the firearm onto the front seat of his vehicle to free up his right paw in hopes of catching himself from falling down against the car. That's when the first shotgun slug fired in his direction blew out his windshield, severing the steering wheel in half at roughly the top of the wheel, setting off the steering wheel air bag and spraying the interior of the car with shattered glass. He turned and looked up to see this partially dressed armed male, the belt in his dress pants not buckled, his dress shirt unbuttoned with his tie hanging around his neck not done up, walking resolutely down the middle of the street with a murderous look on his muzzle. This was one *very* pissed-off fur and there was no doubt who he was after.

The fur in question purposefully racked another one ounce Federal brand solid slug round into his Mossberg 590 M&P shotgun, took aim through the ghost ring sights at the goat's chest and fired a round through the driver's door window that first shattered the window, then struck Ed in the left upper arm, spinning him around to face the street and causing him to sit down hard on the vehicle's door sill. Ed looked over to see that a good portion of his shoulder was now missing. Why it wasn't hurting right now was a mystery to him. Hearing another round being racked into the shotguns' firing chamber, Ed

tried to use his legs to push himself back into his car to safety but another 12 gauge slug round took out his right ankle, causing him to fall to the street on his behind, now unarmed, seriously injured and certainly in harm's way. This fur stalking Ed was making an extreme effort to kill him. The hunter had now unfortunately become the hunted.

Hearing that angry armed male approaching ever nearer to him and the sound of that damned shotgun racking again, Ed turned to try and crawl into the car to reach his pistol and at least have some slim hope of surviving this rather one-sided firefight with the male protagonist. His left arm was in incredible, searing pain, almost useless to him at the moment and his right leg had gone numb from the knee down from the almost complete severing of his hoof away from his leg. Ed was bleeding badly, he was in mind numbing pain and just getting to his firearm was proving to be a challenge because his sight was going away from loss of blood. He finally had his right paw on the pistol's grip and he was feverishly working on it with his injured arm to disengage the ambidextrous safety when he heard the huge fur yell out in a firm, deep tenor voice that had a decided North Atlantic accent to it,

“POLICE! DROP THE WEAPON NOW OR I WILL SHOOT! DROP IT NOW!!
DROP IT, DAMMIT!! DON'T MAKE ME HAVE TO KILL YOU!!”

The safety on his pistol finally off now, Ed rolled over in the seat with it, in hopes that the armed fur would be slow on the drop but as usual, Ed Harper had taken one chance too many. The last thing he saw was the muzzle flash from the huge fur's shotgun when Torvald shot him in the head, almost perfectly right between the eyes.

Torvald banished the thought of firing the last four rounds in his shotgun into the goat when he saw the top of the goat's head splatter all over the passenger side interior of the car and instead began running back to his wife, still lying motionless muzzle-down on the driveway beside her minivan. On the way, he racked the shotgun open carefully, removing the live round that he had racked into it and pocketing it. As he grew nearer, he engaged the safety on the shotgun and gently tossed it onto the lawn by the driveway. He knelt down beside his mate, quickly checking her pulse. Her heart was still beating so he looked skyward and yelled “Denise! Denise Berger!! We need help right now!!” in a loud voice, finally rolling Victoria over onto her back. She slowly opened her eyes, looked up at him and smiled just a bit before she coughed up a mouthful of blood.

“I bit my tongue, even with these stupid caps in place,” she said in a whisper, grabbing at her right shoulder and wincing in pain before stating very quietly, “Dammit! This hurts like hell! I hope you killed whoever that bastard was that shot me.” She thought for a second or two and then brought up something very important to both of them. “Sweetheart, you'd better get me into the house before some fur notices that I'm not dead or bleeding out,” she pointed out quietly, trying to sit up. It was then that she got a very frightened look on her muzzle as she said loudly, “Torvald! I can't feel my legs! I can't move my legs at all!!”

“Be still, sweetheart. Don't try to move around until we get you to Valhalla,” her hubby told her, holding her paws to try and comfort her while they waited. Denise shimmered in at that moment and almost couldn't believe her eyes at the sight of the bloodied tigress lying on the driveway with a scared look on her muzzle. Victoria winced in pain again as she motioned for Denise to come closer to her. The black and white striped femme knelt next to Torvald while Victoria wiped the blood from her mouth with the back of her paw before she spoke again.

“You'll have to take me to Valhalla, Denise. I've been shot in the back and well, ... I'm scared.” The tigress wiped her eyes, the tears flowing from them out of fright. “I can't feel anything below my waist at all and I really don't think an earthly hospital is going to be able to fix this problem” the tigress calmly pointed out to their mission assistant despite appearing extremely scared and in intense pain. The tigress did take the time to check her tongue with a finger, appearing not too happy with what she found. “Dammit! I really bit the crap out of the side of my tongue when I fell because of these caps.” she stated sourly as they shimmered out of sight.

“I don't know what to make of this,” Officer Hightower stated, looking at the scene of the shooting once more. “I think these are department-issued rounds, Bill. I also think that shotgun lying in the grass by the van is the one issued to that big detective, if I have my guess right.” The young officer was looking at one of the fired 12 gauge cartridges he had picked up with a pencil, looking at the headstamp on the round and confirming it to be a police department issued solid slug round.

“Has any Fur been able to ID the goat?” Bill asked, looking at the head stamp too.

“Not yet, I'm afraid. He had no ID or wallet on him and the car was stolen so Cathy Gebhardt was going to have to try to ID him from his fingerprints.” John replied to his partner.

“The femme shorthorn Mrs. Crabtree that lives over there at 1022 Magnolia, the one that called it in, described our Detective Svensen to a tee. She said she could see through her front window that the goat was shooting in his direction first and the huge fur was returning fire at the goat afterwards. She said he told the goat to drop his weapon two or three times but the goat wouldn't.” Officer Nellis stated to his partner.

“This bothers me, Bill. Do you think he might have had a family member drive him to a hospital? There was some blood over by the van and his undercover unit's still here.” the appaloosa stallion pointed out while he scanned the scene for clues.

“Better call around to see if the detective or one of his family is in a local emergency room,” the donkey suggested and then he checked his phone list for Torvald's cell phone number. Dialing it, the call went straight to voice mail, meaning it was either out of range of a cell tower or turned off.

“You know, there's something else I need to point out to you. There's an unscratched 5 dollar 'Double or Nothing' Lotto Scratcher ticket under the van's windshield wiper.” the spotted equine stated to his partner.

“Well, you know what that means; our shooter probably has ties to *The Legion*.” the donkey pointed out. “This *Legion* is becoming a major pain in the arse if you ask me.”

“I'll go knock on the front door again to see if Torvald is in there,” John stated, making more notes regarding the incident. “Bill, maybe we should have a few more units keep this area closed to traffic. There might be a second shooter still roaming around.”

“Torvald, you will have to leave before I can go further. You are in my way right now,” Eyr told the huge stallion, giving him a cold, hard stare with her paws on her hips. Sizing the stallion up, the healer was sure she could put him out of the room by herself if need be.

“Why can Denise stay in here but I have to go?” he retorted, still kneeling beside the tigress' bed and holding Victoria's paw while she was laying muzzle down on a healing bed.

“It's a healer thing, honey. Just do as she asks, please? My back is killing me and I really need her to do something about it,” his wife pointed out, giving her hubby's paw a squeeze. She currently had her head turned away from him, not wishing for him to see the tears that were streaming down her muzzle from the pain.

“No, I will stand by the door but I will not leave. She is the love of my life and my partner in our work for the gods so I will stay nearby just in case she needs me,” the berserker stated, giving Eyr a hard stare of his own.

“All right, stallion. You will stand over there by the door and be very quiet. I expect that you *will* stay out of my way until I am done,” the healer stated, waiting until Torvald had complied. She then turned her attention back to Victoria. “You are very lucky, tigress. Those two projectiles that struck your lower back missed your vital organs and this one in your shoulder,” she pointed out, actually somehow physically reaching into her shoulder to pull the bullet out, “Did not do major damage to you. It was the one that struck you here at the waist that did the damage. Your spine is pretty much destroyed.” The femme healer put her paws over that particular bullet wound in her back and concentrated hard, a bright yellow-white light building between them. As she strained to heal the tigress, the light between them grew to an almost blinding intensity, certainly too bright to look at with the unaided eye. Eyr was visibly straining while she worked to reassemble the tigress' spine and after a few minutes, the light ceased and the healer dropped to her knees, her energy sapped by all of this exertion.

“Someone tell me they're touching my right ankle,” the tigress requested, waiting patiently for an answer from some fur.

“That's me. I'm touching your ankle,” Denise replied, giving her ankle a squeeze.

“I felt that,” the femme feline stated, turning her head to look at Eyr, who was still kneeling on the floor, breathing very hard. “Eyr, am I healed?” The old healer looked up at her with tears in her eyes as she replied to the femme feline.

“I don't know, tigress. Your spinal cord was damaged quite a bit. I did the best I could do for you.” was the healer's reply. It was clear from the look on her muzzle that Eyr was in hopes she could have done more for Victoria. The stallion started to help the healer up so she initially waved him off but after a few seconds of thought, decided to take him up on his offer. The three of them carefully rolled the tigress over onto her back before Eyr thoroughly examined her again.

“Well?” the tigress asked, giving her hubby a small pensive smile while she waited for the healer to answer.

“I do not know, Victoria. You were badly injured and I did all I could for you. Whether you recover fully or not is now up to you.” was her quiet reply. “I will tell you this; I do not know if you will ever walk without aids again. This was a bad injury.” That news made the tigress cringe at the thought.

“Now this is a twist; an immortal paraplegic,” she said out loud, scowling at the thought of her possible future life in a wheelchair.

“Do not give up on yourself!” the healer admonished her sternly. “You will heal but it is up to you as to just how well you heal up. Your mental state has a lot to do with your physical healing.” The healer examined the tigress again, checking her over from head to toe. “You have control of your bowels and bladder along with your tail. This is a very good sign that you might walk normally once again.” She ran a claw up the sole of each of Victoria's feet, waiting to see if the tigress could feel her do that, which she could. “Let's see if you can stand.”

“You're sure that I should try this so soon?” the tigress queried, that frightened look returning to her muzzle. Eyr just nodded, helping the tigress to sit up on the edge of the bed. Victoria put her feet on the floor and waited until her hubby had a hold of her for support. She stood, but her legs buckled under her after a just a few seconds. “Oh Crap!” she exclaimed while her hubby put her back on the edge of the bed. “I can't stand up by myself, let alone walk.” she said in a cross tone of voice.

“I can do no more for you, I'm afraid.” the healer stated with a sad look on her muzzle. “You will have to recover at home, my dear tigress. That is where you will ultimately regain your strength in your legs.”

“I'll stay with you until you recover.” Denise offered up.

“OK, I guess we'll have to give it a try.” Victoria agreed. “If I need to, I might have to go to my real home where my sister and children can help me out for a while.”

“Um, we better make this story believable.” the huge fur pointed out. “Denise, bring Victoria some clean clothes to wear home. Eyr, I need you to do something to me that you won't like.” While his wife was putting on her clothes with Denise' help, Torvald cut his left pants leg off about half way between his hip and knee with his buck knife. “Eyr, make a grazing bullet wound that heals slowly right here,” he said as he pointed at his left thigh. “Denise, I need some gauze pads and a roll of gauze so I can make it look like I tried to bandage it up.” he asked.

“Right here?” the healer asked as she touched his leg, finally understanding what the huge fur wanted her to do. He gritted his teeth, preparing himself for what would happen but he still winced when the healer did something that felt quite wrong to her. “There, it will take a few days to begin healing normally again.” The injury did look just like a round had made it, Torvald's blood flowing freely from the raw meat of the wound. He took the pants leg that he had cut off and used it to soak up some blood to add authenticity to the situation.

“A few days is long enough to be believable” he commented as he bandaged himself up with Eyr's help. “Denise, help me hold up Victoria while you put us back into our home, as close to the kitchen table if you can.” The striped femme did as requested, helping to seat the feline femme at the table once they had arrived in Modesto. Just about that time, a knock came at the door.

“I dunno, Bill. If he's home, maybe he's injured and he can't answer the door” the stallion commented to his partner.

“Knock again and ring the doorbell some.” his donkey partner suggested. “I’ll go around back and see if the back door’s unlocked.” Just about that time, Torvald answered the door.

“Hey, you OK, buddy?” Officer Nellis asked, giving his fellow officer the once-over.

“Naw, the goat I had to kill tagged my leg,” he replied, indicating the bandage on his leg that was getting redder by the moment with his blood. “He grazed me but it’s deep and it’s still bleeding.” Officer Hightower used his radio to call for a paramedic unit to the scene only to have the dispatcher let him know a unit was already en-route, all of the furs standing there nodding at that information.

“Can you tell me what happened?” Officer Hightower asked, getting his notepad ready.

“My wife went out to her car this morning at about 7:50 a.m. and that goat started shooting at her. I ran out to protect her and the goat ended up shooting me instead. I got my shotgun out of my cruiser’s trunk and returned fire on him. He wouldn’t heed my request to drop his weapon so I shot him in the head.” was Torvald’s narrative of the goings on.

“Is your mate OK?” the spotted officer asked for the record, spying her sitting at the table with Denise.

“She’s plenty shook up but she’s doing OK for now” he replied.

“That’s good” officer Hightower commented. “If you’ll pop the trunk on your cruiser with your remote fob, I’ll put your shotgun away for you. Um, you’ll most likely be on mandatory administrative leave for three days because of being in an officer involved shooting.”

“What about my caseload?” he asked, concerned that some of the cases he had open wouldn’t be closed properly. His leg was beginning to hurt in earnest now, the pain becoming very distracting in intensity.

“Your cases will most likely be postponed until you’re back to work” officer Nellis pointed out. “Uh, here’s the paramedics now” he commented, walking out to the street to show them where to park their truck. Torvald hobbled out to the paramedic’s truck, the pain from the injury finally sinking in. He sat down in the truck’s back doorway so the firefur/EMT could work on him.

“That looks painful, buddy.” the EMT, a gazelle whose nameplate said ‘Joshua Marshall,’ commented as he put his nitrile gloves on.

“Yeah, it hurts like hell” Torvald replied, being entirely serious about it. The gash in his leg was now beginning to really hurt on him, becoming extremely painful once the raw nerve endings had a chance to start firing from exposure to damage and the air.

The EMT’s partner, a pronghorn buck whose name tag said ‘Mike Bates,’ began to take down the huge fur’s information on a form that he clipped to a clipboard. “Your name and address please?” he asked in a professional tone.

“Torvald Svensen, 1040 Magnolia Avenue, Modesto, California 95350.” was the huge fur’s response.

“Middle name?”

“Arend.” he replied. The huge fur saw the buck smirking so he pointed out, “Don't laugh, it means 'eagle' in Danish.”

“Birth date, height and weight, please,” he continued, switching pens when the one he had in his paw quit writing.

“My birth date is July 8th, 1952, height is 6 feet, 11 and ½ inches tall and I weigh 275 pounds. I've lost some weight here lately.”

“Hey, you look like you're in pretty good shape for 56 years old, Torvald.” The buck was scribbling a few more notes as he went through the form, making sure he filled it out completely.

“Yeah, I try to work out a bit, here and there. You know, when I have time.” the huge fur proffered up.

“Where did this injury take place, for the record?” Mike asked, waiting for Torvald to be able to think again after his partner John wiped the wound with an antiseptic.

“Right in my driveway, over there by the driver's door of the van,” he responded, gritting his teeth when the EMT working on him used some more antiseptic on him.

“Employer?”

“Modesto Metro PD. My rank is Detective if you need that.” he replied. John finished by using a coagulating powder to staunch the bleeding and then wrapped the huge fur's leg back up with some clean gauze.

“Take one of these every four hours for the pain if you need them.” Firefur Marshall instructed as he passed Torvald enough pain pills to hold him for a day. “I can only give you 6 of them, though. You'll need to see your regular doctor for a bigger prescription.”

“OK, thanks, partner” he replied, signing the forms for his services rendered. He hobbled back to his home, taking a break at the front door to wave off the news furs wanting to interview him before hobbling on into the kitchen to get some water to take a pill with.

“Are you OK, sweetheart?” his mate asked, giving him a concerned look. “You look like you're in a lot of pain.”

“I am in some heavy pain, honey. Eyr opened a pretty big gash in my leg.” he proffered up. He made his way back to the table and sat down by his mate, giving her a hug. “I'm really sorry you got injured, sweetheart. I should have taken this mission by myself.”

“If it's any consolation, I'm not hurting at all.” she let her hubby know. “I'll get better, you'll see. I'll be hobbling around here in no time flat.” That made Torvald smile just a little.

“Well, it appears I have two furs to look after,” Denise commented, beginning to look for some food to fix. “You two sit still while I prepare both of you a snack to eat.”

“You know, Dana, you had better toast maybe half a loaf of bread for this mob,” Valerie suggested, trying to juggle a pan full of scrambled eggs and a griddle covered in bacon. Tirrell was standing next to her, keeping an eye out on the pan full of ham that he was helping out with.

“It wasn't too bad when it was just Barb, Conrad and myself, but this mob we have now is a beast to cook for.” Valerie was wiping her brow, the sweat rolling off her forehead from the work being done just to fix a simple breakfast.

“I don't understand why all of you can remember things from the before-time. Something must have went very wrong with the transition for all of you.” Megan, the leopard-skunk mix was sitting by Axel, watching the two femmes and the male equine cook breakfast while she thought about the situation at paw.

“I remember what I think was my first life.” Axel proffered up to her. “It was a primitive life, if I remember right and I might have been a danish heavy equine in that life just as I am now, more or less.”

“I think I might have been a blond danish equine in my first life, too,” Dana commented while she was busy buttering the toast. “I'm sure had a brother and a sister, too.” She gave it some more thought, getting a very shocked look on her muzzle. “I think our father was my first father, too. Conrad, doesn't Dad have a very big pair of scars on his abdomen from a broadsword and another scar that runs across his belly, above his navel?” she asked, her jaw hanging open as she thought about it more. “My first father had exactly the same scars too.”

“*Can you speak the language of the hedni?*” Conrad asked her in Torvald's native tongue, having been schooled most of his life in speaking proper ancient danish by his father.

“*I don't know how, but yes, I can speak the language of the hedni fluently,*” Dana replied to her striped brother, still in a state of shock. “I'm fairly sure I can speak Gaelic, French, Latin, Greek and German, too,” she counted off on her fingers, giving the notion much thought.

“Wer ist Ihre Schwester?” James asked the blond femme feline as a test.

“Meine Schwester ist Gytha, korrekt?” she responded, finally having to sit down because she was shaking badly. “Ja, Ich spreche Deutsches fließend.”

The femme hare was watching the news at noon, just passing the time until her sister would arrive to go shopping with her. She was just half paying attention to the newscaster until a certain name was mentioned in the news.

“Hey Vinnie!” she shouted through the house, getting her mate's attention. “Vinnie, you better take a look at this!”

“Yeah, what is it, Dolores?” he asked as he came into the living room of their leased mobile home, giving her a cross look. “What ... a stupid soap commercial? You want me to watch a stupid laundry soap commercial?”

“No, after this commercial break is over,” she pointed out. “The news femme is talking about a shooting over in downtown Modesto, honey.” Vincent sat down with her, patiently listening to the commercials that rattled on. He was giving much thought to the possibility that Ed had probably done the deed this morning for *The Legion*, taking care of that damned striped feline femme. The newscaster, a very slender, perky femme tapir, came back on after the last commercial.

“We have some late breaking news on that shooting that occurred this morning just before 8 a.m. on the 1000 block of Magnolia Avenue. Apparently the fur that was involved with this mornings' shooting has now been identified by the Modesto CSI unit.” The images switched to a collage of video clips taken in front of the immortal couple's home of police, fire, ambulance, and coroner's furs milling about.

“Edward Irwin Harper, age 38 from Keyes, California, a fur that had a long history of run-ins with the law and with connections to *The Legion*, was shot and killed this morning by police. Mr. Harper, for reasons unknown, opened fire on a police fur's tigress mate this morning with a high powered semi-automatic pistol.” The image changed to the side view of Victoria's damaged minivan, the bullet holes, broken glass and the blood being highlighted by the camera fur. The view then switched to a shot of a police fur removing the goats' firearm from the stolen vehicle and rendering it safe. “The femme's mate then returned fire with his department-issued 12 gauge shotgun, allegedly killing the goat when he wouldn't surrender his weapon.” The images switched to the stolen vehicle, glass everywhere inside, blood and gore still on the passenger door. “The police fur was injured but not seriously according to the paramedics that treated him. The officer, a detective, declined to make a statement on air as did the department, citing an ongoing investigation into the shooting. The deceased left no next of kin that could be found.” The next scene showed Torvald, apparently in a great deal of pain, waving off the camera crew on his front porch, saying “Sorry, no comment.”

“Dammit!!” Vinnie shouted as he jumped up off the couch. “Dammit! That stupid, stupid, son of a bitch went and got himself killed! Dammit to hell!! He was just like a brother to me!! That idiot!! Dammit!!” Dolores got up and tried to comfort her mate but to no avail. He continued to circle the living room , ranting and raving about his friend's untimely death.

“Honey, sit down for a minute, will ya?” she asked, trying to calm him down. “You've declared war on a number of species with this whole *Legion* thing. It was only a matter of time before one of your furs got killed.”

“Why in hell did it have to be Ed of all furs? He was just like family to us!” the desert cottontail blurted out. “Jeez, now I'll have to go tell Muriel her live-in is dead!” While he thought about it some more, his mate tried to reason with him.

“Hon, why don't you quit this *Legion* thing and we can go back east to live with your relatives. Don't you still have a cousin that works for that big porn studio in Columbus? Maybe you could get a job there doing security or something.” Dolores wanted Vinnie out of this before he became a statistic just like Ed had become.

“Yeah, Crystal still works there but I don't think she acts anymore. I think she just does online photo galleries the last I heard anything about her.”

“Well, OK then. You wrap up your business with *The Legion* and we'll move back east.” The femme hare was hoping to leave here before anything else could happen to them. Vinnie finally sat back down once the shock set in on him.

“I've lost five good furs in just a few days,” he mused, thinking the matter over carefully. “Yeah, I have to do something to keep our hides from ending up like Ed but not until I get even with that stallion and his tigress. They'll pay for Ed's death.”

Torvald was sitting patiently at the kitchen table, drumming his fingers on the table top while waiting for the fur on the other end to take him off hold and return to his call. The Century insurance fur on the other end of the call was checking to make sure an attack on Victoria's minivan by a high-powered pistol was covered by their policy. He was sure the berserker was just pulling a prank on him in the beginning but after Torvald offered to email a few pictures of the damage and a copy of the police report, their insurance agent began to believe the story.

“Sorry for keep you waiting, Torvald. I checked it out for you so yes, you're covered. Just take it to any Chrysler-Desoto dealership and they should be able to repair your mate's minivan.” the agent stated.

“I'll have to have it towed, Marty because it won't start up. I think one of the bullets damaged the engine or computer somehow.” the huge fur retorted. “How much towing do we have, anyway? I can't find that on our policy.”

“You're good for at least 50 miles, I think. That's the regular policy. Uh, yeah, here it is ... you have 100 miles of towing and \$250 USD deductible on the repair work.” Marty replied.

“Thanks, Marty. Tell the wife we said 'Hi', will ya?” Torvald said, waiting for their agent to hang up. Once he did that, the huge fur went into the living room where Victoria was resting on the couch, taking a light nap. “Why did I ask our insurance agent to say hi to his wife?” he mused, sitting down in the recliner and making himself comfortable. Giving it some thought, he could remember that Martin Green's mate was named Jennifer and that they were both Fennec foxes. He was sure, however that they had never actually met muzzle to muzzle.

“Who wha ...? Did you say something to me?” the tigress asked, not quite woken up from her nap all the way.

“I'm sorry I woke you up, sweetheart. I was musing about our insurance agent.” he replied.

“Who, Martin Green, our car insurance agent?” she asked, giving her mate a smile.

“Yeah, Martin. OK, what's his mate's name?” Torvald asked, just to see what she would say.

“It's Jennifer, silly! She prefers to be called Jen, though.”

“Have you ever met her, muzzle to muzzle?”

“Um, I'm not sure ...” the tigress said, trying to think if she had. After a few moments, a scowl spread across her muzzle. “I swear, that Pam Benelli! I'm really sure that I read that in the backstory binder so it must be a memory that was given to me! Grrrrrr!” Victoria scowled again as she mock growled, thinking about how many things in her mind were possibly just implanted memories from a mission.

Torvald had retrieved the phone book again, looking for a tow company that honored Century insurance towing. "I hope your van isn't a write-off," he mused, scanning the pages for a good company to use.

"I don't think it's too bad" she commented, making herself more comfortable on the couch. She was bringing her knees up to her chest slowly, trying to get her body working again. After just a few repetitions, she let her legs straighten out as she wiped her brow. "I'm just not too sure how well I'll heal up, sweetheart. It took all I had to get 2 reps out of each leg right now."

"Victoria, don't overstress yourself," Denise told her, giving them both a hard stare. "Will you please rest for a while before you try to do that again and Torvald, you sit still for a while and take it easy." She took the phone book away from him and searched the yellow pages, eventually finding a Century-authorized tow company. She picked up the cordless pawset and looked at it, giving it a funny look. "You'll have to tell me how to use this," she asked, still looking at the buttons.

"You're kidding me," the huge fur stated, looking to see if Denise was really serious. "OK, bring it over here and I'll show you what to do." he requested. The black and white striped femme went to kneel by Torvald, following his careful instructions. Within a few moments, she had given the tow company the address to the Immortals' home and the information on where to take Victoria's minivan for repair.

"Thanks for helping me with the phone" Denise told the huge fur, putting it back on the charging cradle. "We didn't have that kind of telephone technology as you call it when I was still a mortal."

"Um, when did you ... gee, this seems odd to ask. Erm, ... when did you live here as a flesh and blood being?" Victoria asked, feeling odd to ask such a question.

"OK, for you two, here's my story, short version. I was born Denise Alissa Foster on April 4th, 1872 in upstate New York, the Khatskills. I married a young gray fox named Roger Paul Berger when I was 16 and we moved out west to seek our destiny, finally settling in Denver, Colorado. I died September 21st, 1893, a victim of a robber that had broken into our home." She had to stop and compose herself, the memories causing her some heavy heartache. "He killed my husband and myself while we slept, slitting our throats with a knife from my kitchen. Even though it meant nothing to me by that time, I did get to see him being sent to Hell and eternal damnation when his soul arrived at the pearly gates, his life terminated by an executioner's paw on the gallows trap door handle. My murderer had been convicted of the rape and murder of a 11 year old femme squirrel several years after my death."

"What made you start doing the work of the gods?" Torvald asked, curious as to the reasons why. "surely just that alone wasn't the reason?"

"No, that wasn't the reason. Our friend Peter the dispatcher thought I might like to help out with things when I would visit him and watch what he was doing, directing all the missions that were going on. You're my first assignment, by the way. I was told to watch out over you, Torvald" she said, looking the berserker square in the eyes. "After your mage Mr. Johnsen was killed so prematurely, I was told to carefully guide you in your education, both in schools of learning *and* the school of hard knocks. As our dear filly would say, you attended LSU which stands for Life SUcks." Denise was getting up and heading towards the kitchen while she told them, "I'll fix us something filling to eat and maybe we can find a movie on the television to watch. I still get amazed by the technology, as you put it." Torvald looked at his mate and smiled, the tigress smiling back at him. They both knew Denise would take good care of them as long as they needed her to.