

*The characters Torvald Arend 'Tor' & Victoria Angela 'Vicki D'nan' (nee Connell) Svensen, Conrad & Cathryn 'Cathy' (nee Hunter) Svensen, Brett & Dana Lynn (nee Svensen) Kashnikov, Roger, Gytha Louise (nee Svensen) Roger Jr. & Heather Delancey, Axel Torvald & Madelyn (nee Barrett) Svensen, Valerie Connell, Walter & Harriet (nee Bishop) Connell, Walter Lee Connell Jr., Robert James & Elizabeth Ann (nee Caine) Sands, Barbara Caine, Edward and Mary (nee Leese) Caine, Richard & Wilhelmine Marie (nee Kurzweil) Delancey, James William & Nancy (Nee Roland) Kurzweil, Peter the dispatcher, El Casa Del Burrito<sup>®</sup>, Leonard's Restaurant<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 and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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 19**

Now that Valerie had been awake for a while, the doctors came in to set her broken right forearm properly. They had waited for the swelling to get as bad as it might get and the anesthetic to wear off before proceeding.

“This might hurt a bit while we set your arm,” Dr. Martin Curtis, a rather stocky otter told her, setting up a portable real-time scanner to ensure that the bones were in proper alignment.

“Well, it's hurting pretty bad right now,” she retorted, gritting her teeth while they carefully removed the soft cast from her arm. Now she was in pain, the arm no longer supported properly and nothing to dampen the pain for her.

“I'm right here, Sis. I'll stay here while they set your arm,” Wally told her, holding her other paw while they worked on her.

“Wally, this is bad,” she commented, looking over at him with tears streaming from her eyes. “I've never hurt this bad bef ...” She shrieked loudly when the doctor and the technician tugged on her elbow and wrist slightly to get a bone back in alignment.

“I'm sorry, Valerie. That was the worst of it, though.” the doctor said, wiping her tears for her. “It won't be as bad from here on out, now.” The technician, a male terrier, began brushing out her fur carefully before he rolled the stockinette sleeve over it. He would then wrap her arm with padding afterwards to make the cast as comfortable as possible for her.

Valerie gritted her teeth while the cast was being built up, the pain being somewhat intense. They had started almost at her armpit and they had the cast wrapped down to the first joint of her fingers. This meant it would be hard for her to use her CAD program and more importantly, her digitizing pad to draw plans with.

“Wally, I need you to do something for me tomorrow,” she said, giving him a weak smile. “I need you to contact my insurance carrier and let them know I need to file for our disability insurance. I've paid a fortune for it over the years so now I intend to use it. Neither one of us can work much until we get out of these casts.”

“Sure, I can do that,” her brother replied, kissing her on the cheek. Conrad and Cathy returned from dinner about that time so he left his sister in their good paws until he returned from eating a bite himself.

“That's a pretty blue cast,” Conrad commented as they sat down by her bed, both of them giving her good paw a squeeze. Valerie nodded, smiling back weakly.

“It was rough while they put this thing on me,” she pointed out, trying her best to get comfortable in her bed. Cathy helped her, pulling her gown down in back where it had rode up on her. This was a common thing for feline furs, to have these ridiculous hospital gowns ride up in back. It must be something about their fur that caused this.

“Barbara just got out of surgery for her wrist,” Conrad felt compelled to tell his aunt. “The doctor said it went very well for her. She only needed one pin and one screw, which would stay in place after she healed up.”

“Where's your Grandparents?” Valerie asked Conrad, since they didn't come back up with them.

“Um, they were going to wait for Uncle Walter to come down so they could eat with him.” he replied.

“That doesn't sound very good ...” Valerie said nervously. There was no fur down there in the cafeteria to referee them if it turned ugly.

“They were in tears down there, waiting for him. I've never seen them so upset before.” Conrad stated.

Well, your grandpa let the church tell him what to do and I'm sure he regrets it now.” Valerie knew in her heart her father regretted it. It really boiled down to whether or not he could let Wally back into his life again. After all of these years, she thought maybe he could, after all. Her mom and dad did say a prayer for Barbara so maybe they have changed.

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Noting the tigress was awake now, Detective Nelson had made his way into Valerie's room, stopping to knock lightly on the door frame before he entered.

“Valerie Connell, I'm Detective Dan Nelson and I need to ask you a few questions, please.” She nodded, motioning for him to stand near her. “I ... I need to ask a few questions that might sound odd to you so please indulge me. Have you been off the planet with your sister lately, like in the last two months?”

“I've been to Christopher's realm by myself a long time ago but that's it,” she replied, looking at him funny. “What does this have to do with me or my sister?”

“This is the problem, Ms. Connell,” he replied, taking out a picture from his coat pocket. Looking closely at it, it appeared to be Valerie and her sister, inside a gloomy, gothic style building of some strange origin. They were dressed in black military-styled jumpsuits, armed with pistols and carrying some rather evil-looking rifles. He placed the picture into a base and pressed a button, the picture turning into a high quality video. She watched as the various security cameras captured the two figures

slipping through the halls, finally arriving at a particular room. They stepped in after blowing the doors off the hinges with explosives, quickly killing more than a dozen furs, some of them winged furs that might have been from the underworld.

“I'm sorry but this isn't me or my sister, regardless of how it looks. My sister and I haven't been off-planet together at all, ever. Besides, we would never do what these furs just did. All of that was cold blooded murder by mercenaries, if you ask me.” Valerie pointed out.

“That's what I thought myself,” he said, putting the photo/video frame on her bedside, touching another button to show a recent picture of her and Barbara. “When was the last time you were with your sister?”

“More than eight years ago, before she went missing.” was the response. That made the leopard frown. That was when this whole mess started, about eight years ago.

“At any rate, you and your sister are being hunted right now.” he shared with her. “My job is to make sure you're safe while we sort this out.” He gave her a rather substantial bracelet, motioning for her to put it on.

“What's this for?” she asked, looking at the bracelet that might have been made from platinum, due to the unique frosty white appearance of the metal.

“Um, that's in case someone tries to get at you to harm you,” he replied. “You press and hold the gem in the center to activate it.”

“What will it do?” she asked, putting it on. The clasp clicked shut loudly as the bracelet quickly auto-sized itself to her wrist. It was snug but not too tight on her good wrist. After a few moments it loosened just a bit more, allowing her to flex her wrist fully without it being pinched.

“That bracelet monitors your physical condition so it might summon me or or one of my partners. It could possibly transport you to our medical facilities if your vital signs showed evidence of heavy stress.” he related, showing her that he wore a similar one on his wrist.

“What if I want to take it off?” she asked, looking the catch over carefully. It really didn't look like she could, anyway.

“Press a claw into that slot by the catch,” he directed, indicating where to do so. “It will open up for you with no problems. You're the only one that can take it off, though and I suggest not removing it for any reason.” She tried it, smiling when it came loose. She put it back on, nodding her satisfaction in the deal.

“Who's watching over my sister?” she asked, now concerned for her sibling's well being.

“We actually have two agents with her currently and another agent en route.” He replied. “All three agents will watch out for your sister and her family until they leave that planet they're on.”

“I suppose you're not going to tell me who you work for, are you?” she asked, hoping to at least know who her protectors were.

“We're a privately operated group that works for various agencies, such as the Celestial Police. Most of us are former police or investigators.” he confided in her. This information seemed to settle her mind a bit.

“So, who is it that wants us dead?” she asked, hoping it wasn't Lucifer.

“Rumjal, a rather minor underworld figure is our main suspect,” he replied, giving her a crooked smile. “Um, I'm feeling pretty confident that there are no other players, though.”

“OK, I hope you're successful with this, Detective. I'm not ready to die just yet.”

“Just remember to press that gem on your bracelet if it looks like you're being attacked,” he reminded her, walking across the hall to give Barbara a matching bracelet for her protection.

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Willi Marie had been awake for a few moments, trying to decide whether or not to open her eyes and see what she had done with her magic. She felt horrible inside, like her life at the moment was a runaway train in search of a place to derail, crash and burst into flames. She had never wished to be a sorceress and now to know just how powerful she really was, she felt so alone and afraid. More than anything, she missed and needed her husband Richard and his strong, loving embrace that would comfort her. She absentmindedly conjured up her cell phone and dialed his cell phone in hopes he would answer.

She heard the phone ring a few times then the sound of her totally confused hubby on the other end.

“Willi Marie?” he questioned, looking down at the empty spot on the coffee table in their family room where her cell phone was sitting just moments earlier.

“Hi Richard, I was really missing you so I decided ... to ... call ... you ...” Her voice tapered off when she realized what she had just done.

“Sweetheart, where are you?” he asked tentatively, slowly sitting down on the couch.

“Um, I'm still on another planet,” she replied, thinking maybe she was still asleep and dreaming this.

“Are you all right?”

“Yeah, I'm fine, Richard but I have something I need to talk to you about.”

“Well, I thought you might want to know your compound bow is missing along with some clothes out of your closet.”

“Um, that's what I needed to talk to you about. I guess I'm actually a very powerful sorceress after all. I summoned my clothes and bow from home.”

“I see ...” Richard wasn't really sure how to handle this information.

“Now Richard, I'm still you dear, sweet wife, I'll have you know,” she pointed out, wishing she could

see him muzzle to muzzle to judge his expressions and really figure out what was going through his mind.

“Sweetheart?” he questioned, his voice sounding slightly different to her now.

“I’m still here, honey.” she reassured him.

“I know you are. So, where are we again?” His voice sounded slightly strained, maybe a little frightened or apprehensive to her.

“Well, I’m on this other planet with Aunt and Uncle Svensen, my cousin Axel and Joe Latrans. My guess is you’re at home, honey, in the family r ...” Her voice tapered off as she thought about it for a moment. “Hold it ... what do you mean, where are *we*?” She emphasized the word 'we'.

“Well, I seem to be able to see you lying on a blanket on the ground, right by me.” Her eyes flew open in a heart beat, looking over to see her hubby, still sitting on their couch from their family room, situated just a few feet away from her.

She gave him a nervous smile as she slowly closed her cell phone, getting up to go sit down by her hubby and give him a warm hug. He was looking around himself, thinking that this was all a dream and he was still napping on the couch at home. That had to be the explanation. He was still asleep ...

“Honey, I didn't mean to summon you here,” she pointed out to him, turning his head to look at her. “I’m sorry, I really didn't mean it. I was just missing you so badly.”

Nope, Richard knew by her soft touch, he was here, it seemed.

“I’m really here, aren't I?” he asked, giving her a little peck on the lips. It was clear he was totally confused by all of this.

“I’m sorry, honey, you’re really here because of my selfish wishing.” Their intimate, quiet moment together was interrupted by Mike and Doug.

“Willi Marie, you’ll need a shit-load of training to be able to control your powers,” Doug stated, handing her a pair of narrow gold bracelets that had some very intricate runes carved around them.

“What are these for?” she asked, looking them over carefully.

“If you put them on, they will dampen your power to a degree, making you have to say what you want to happen,” he related, helping her to put them on. “I should have given you those things when we first met since your mother would have given you these before your sixteenth birthday to help you control your magic.”

“Thank you, I think ...” she said, trying to materialize an object in her hand without speaking. Satisfied that they actually did what the jaguar said they would, she thanked the male for the help. Richard felt he needed some more information, though so he asked his question.

“Honey, who are these males?”

"I'm sorry, Richard, I'm Douglas Muir and this is Michael Wilson. We're here to ... um ... make sure all of you get home safely." the jaguar told him. Richard stood up, shaking both of their hands that were offered.

"So, I'm on another planet with my wife and her family, doing lord knows what ..." It was clear his mind was in complete overload at the moment.

"Willi Marie, is this your husband?" Victoria asked, coming to see what the commotion was about.

"Um, yeah, he's my husband and his brother is married to your oldest daughter Gytha," Willi Marie proffered up, causing the tigress to get a confused look on her muzzle.

"I wish I could remember something about my family!" she said in an exasperated tone of voice, looking at her hubby with an upset look. "I need my memories back!"

Hess tapped the tigress on the shoulder, giving her a sheepish look.

"Well, I can try to give you back your memories, if you're up to it." she suggested.

"OK, let's do it. Right now if not sooner, please?" Victoria replied. Hess led her over to a log that they could straddle, facing one another. Taking the tigress' hands in hers, Hess concentrated on making her way into Victoria's mind.

"Where are we?" the tigress asked, looking at a very ornate hallway with doors and side halls to it. The walls were paneled with fine oak and the carpeting was lush, thick maroon pile, possibly wool.

"This is a representation of your mind, Victoria. Your memories are in these rooms, stored until you need them."

Victoria walked up to a door, attempting to open it. The door was locked.

"I didn't wipe your mind, sweetie, I just locked the doors. Apparently I didn't get all of them, since you have some recollection."

Hess was fiddling with a ring of keys, getting a symbolic key out to use. She unlocked the door but it still wouldn't open.

"Victoria, I'll need your help opening this," Hess suggested, waiting until the tigress had a firm grip on the knob with her. After a brief struggle, it finally came open for them. Inside was a ghostly 3-dimensional image of Conrad practicing receiving with Torvald throwing the football for him. Another equine, a blond femme was with them, talking with Torvald and giving him balls to throw.

"That's Tor, Conrad and Aslaug! I remember that day completely now!" she exclaimed, this memory coming back strong along with a few associated memories.

"Come on, Victoria, we have a lot of doors to open." Hess motioned for her to follow her to the next door, fishing up the particular key needed for that one as they walked.

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In a clearing about a mile from the Immortal couple's location, a Malamute was holstering his energy weapon, looking at the group of ruffians that had made the dire mistake of jumping him. He had stunned them with a focused burst of energy, knocking them out. They were an odd lot, humans and canids, proclaiming they were only taking his gold and silver that was rightfully theirs in the name of the Archem. He had given them the chance to move along but they had adamantly refused, claiming him to be their captive and he would die if he didn't surrender his wealth. He had reiterated his request for them to move on but they refused for a second time.

“Well, Phillip, you've managed to make a mess, haven't you,” he mused while he tied them up with some rope he found amongst their gear. “You were just supposed to be inconspicuous, you know.”

He finished tying up the last one, making sure he could keep them under control to move them somehow to the castle for punishment. He looked up to see a lone rider across the meadow, headed his way. Using his miniature binoculars, he observed a dragon or dragon cross on a black steed, riding at a good pace. It struck him as being odd that a dragon, who could normally fly, would use a horse instead.

Teric slowed his mount, taking in this sight before him. The raiders were all subdued and securely bound by this one lone canid, without a trace of blood anywhere. He could sense something was wrong here so he decided to take it very carefully.

“I mean you no harm, kind Sir,” Teric called out after he lifted his visor, showing the canid male his open palms. “You seem to have subdued the Archem Raiders I was in hot pursuit of.”

“Ah yes, Archem Raiders, they called themselves,” the canid mused, checking the ropes on one individual. “It would seem I have created a conundrum of sorts. I have no means with which to move these 'gentlemen' to a place where they may be interrogated and prosecuted.”

“Give me a moment to round up one of their horses for you then we will lead them to justice.” Teric replied. He wheeled his steed around, headed at a trot towards a nearby loose mount.

The canid squatted down, watching the dragon carefully approach the stray mount, using his knees to control his horse while he prepared his rope. Gently tossing it around the bay-colored mare's neck, he gently got her under his control.

Leading her back to the canid, the dragon dismounted and let the mare to Phillip.

“I am known as Sir Teric, a knighted subject of the crown of Halsteighr.” he informed the canid as he gave him the horse's lead rope.

“I am Phillip Cooper, a lawfur of sorts. I have been in search of Miss Vicki D'nan, with whom I must meet.” He took the mare's lead, tied her to a tree limb and began to place his gear on her saddle.

“Interestingly enough, I was in search of her, until I observed your abilities at detaining my quarry.” Teric tied up his horse temporarily, assisting Phillip with his gear. “We need to continue this way, towards Whitehall. She is within an hour of our position.”

Phillip thought about this for a minute, thinking it over.

“Yes, let's get this group of ruffians to their feet and we will march them in that direction.”

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Gytha was fixing a quick dinner for her clan, broiled chicken and steamed vegetables to make a healthy, rounded meal. Roger Jr. was coloring at the kitchen table while Heather was watching her mother cook from the safety of her highchair, nibbling on some fresh vegetables to keep her occupied.

“Mommy! More carrots, Peese?” she asked, holding up the remains of the last baby carrot in her little paw. Unlike her brother, who looked like a small version of his father, Heather had her mother's equine build, ruddy orange and white coloration, her mom's jet black mane and tail and more importantly, Gytha's feline claws, dentition and phantom tiger striping.

“Heather, you're going to spoil your dinner.” Gytha admonished her daughter, giving her a kiss on the forehead.

“Peese?” she asked again, giving her that 'Sad Eyes' look of hers, finally using her claws to grab her mother's apron to get her attention.

“Come on, little one, don't use your claws to grab people, understand?” Gytha got ahold of her paw, waiting for her to retract her claws. Eventually, the little femme's claws slowly slid out of sight. “That's better, honey.” Turning back to her work, she saw her hubby drive up, get out of his car slowly and walk up the path to the front door very slowly.

“Roger, sweetie, are you OK?” she asked, watching him set his lunch box on the counter. The huge gray equine looked up at her, shaking his head 'no' in reply.

“Listen, hon, I went by Richard and Willi's place to see about my brother but he wasn't there.” he stated very cautiously.

“And ...?” Gytha asked, feeling something was wrong here.

“And he wasn't there.”

“And that is ... Good? Bad??”

“Hon, the front door's deadbolt wasn't set, their couch in the family room was missing, a plate of food was on the coffee table untouched and cold, the TV turned on to a sports channel and the coffee maker was on, almost full. He's wenter missing, I'm sure of it. His wallet was on his dresser in the bedroom and all of their cars were there.”

“Erm, so ... what do we do now?”

“I don't know, hon, maybe call Conrad? I really don't know what to do.”

Gytha gave it some thought before calling her brother, waiting for the call to go through. After a few rings, she was connected to his voicemail.

“Conrad, this is your sister. Give me a call when you can, please?” she stated, pushing the button for

priority message. She then called Cathy's cell phone and left a similar message.

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Conrad had been messing with the picture video frame for a while, waiting for Cathy to finish making motel arrangements for them. He had discovered what the functions of the buttons along the bottom of the base did more or less by trial and error. One function amused him, the 'Frame At A Time' function. It was a stop motion feature that let him look at the video one frame at a time in surprisingly good detail. As he advanced the frames, one caught him off guard. Backing up to that frame, he noticed his aunt's tail was missing in that frame. Not just not caught on video, but there was no slit in the jumpsuit for a tail at all. Moving ahead slowly, another frame showed his mother and aunt were not felines, but his mom was a canid and his aunt was actually a hairless ape, maybe what was known as a hoo-man.

Taking the frame with him, he went to the sleeping form of Detective Nelson.

“Detective Nelson?” Conrad said softly, rousing the sleeping feline carefully. “Sir, you need to look at what I've discovered.”

“Sure Conrad, what is it?” he asked, rubbing his eyes to wake up. Detective Nelson had been totally out of it, sleeping soundly for a change.

“Sir, I've found something in that video that's not a glitch. You better take a look for yourself.”

Conrad gave him the frame, set to 'Frame At A Time' setting, motioning to advance the scene. Daniel's eyes grew wide when he observed the first anomaly.

“What the heck ....???” He slowly advanced it, stopping at the next anomaly. He gave Conrad back the frame while he pulled a comm piece out of his pocket and put it in his ear. Tapping it, he waited for a connection while a scowl crossed his muzzle.

“Hey, this is Nelson, give me Jason right away, priority code Alpha One.” he almost shouted, taking the frame back and looking at more frames until he found one that showed the two 'femmes' had wings. Dark, leathery wings of underworld minions. He sat the frame down as he began a conversation with his boss.

“Listen, Jason. Look at that video frame by frame. It's doctored up, dude. We've been duped hard on this. Rumjal is probably working for Beoram on this, trying to take out Victoria and Torvald again!”

“Hold on Danny, you sure of this?”

“Listen, I've felt something was wrong since this all started. Look at these time marks,” the leopard stated to his boss, getting the first one. “Look at 0:58 seconds, 1:28 and finally 2:03 and then tell me it's not doctored.”

“Ho ... ly Shipyard, Danny, this is a totally faked video we were given. Dang it ...”

“Jason, you know that this means, don't you?”

“Yeah, I need to call out the cavalry.”

“OK, just make sure you're out of her hexing range when you do it.”

“I know! I know! Geez Louise!” Jason shook his head as he thought about the need to call in *Her*.

“Well, call me back when you have something new for me,” Daniel said cheerily, trying to keep his boss' mind cheered up.

“Yeah, I'll do that,” Jason said as he cut off the conversation cold.

“Jason?” the feline queried until he heard the carrier tone for an ended call.

“Well?” Conrad queried, looking at the now-upset leopard.

“Yeah, we're gonna have to shift gears here. There's another player we have to flush out.”

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Hess was supporting Victoria, keeping her from falling over while she recovered. The two of them had spent a great deal of time working at returning the tigress' memories.

“Victoria? Can you hear me?” the femme canid asked, holding her chin up to see her face better.

“I ... I can hear ...” she was tired, exhausted from having her mind worked over again.

“Torvald, help me lay her down, please?” she asked, pulling her towards her to support her better. The huge stallion and his son helped to pick up the tigress and lay her down on Willi Marie's couch, which seemed handy to them.

“Well?” Torvald asked Hess, giving her a very stern look.

“we got a lot accomplished, I think,” Hess replied, looking up at the huge equine. “You have to realize, it took me two days to close off her memories and I almost killed her several times in the process.” The femme canid had tears forming in her eyes as she choked out what she wanted to say. “Dammit, I'm a minion, I shouldn't care but I do! I want to give her back her memories and I don't want to hurt her again!”

“So, how long will it take you to restore what you did to her?”

“Torvald, I won't lie to you. It may take a long time for me to repair the damage. I don't want to go too fast and hurt her or worse, kill her.” Hess was clearly upset, wiping at her eyes and sniffing from her runny nose.

“I suppose you could stay with us while you repair the damage, then.” The stallion was not happy with the prospect of a former minion living with him, even if it was for his wife's sake.

“I'm not sure you would want me around your family, since it might bring Beoram's wrath down on your loved ones.”

“Beoram?” he questioned, thinking that sorry SOB was still in Surt's realm, being tortured.

“About that,” Hess replied, now looking very sheepish. “Nevaeh found another marker for Surt in exchange for releasing Beoram.”

“Oh No ...” Torvald was shaking his head, thinking things had just went into the crapper.

“Yeah, well, I know about your run-ins with Zagam and Thammuz. That's why I'm not so sure you would want me living in your home.” Hess gave him a pensive smile and then said, “Maybe I can fix things before you leave here. That way, you won't have to deal with evil entities invading your home.”

“OK, let's see how this works out. Do what you can do for her until we prepare to leave here. If you still need more time, then you will have to come stay with us.”

“Well, I guess that would be fine, then.”

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Jason looked up from his paperwork to see the femme that was being brought before him. The lioness was dirty, her standard issue prison clothes were a filthy wreck, her hair was pulled back into a matted ponytail and she was heavily shackled paw and foot. She was also staring a hole through the rottweiler sitting behind the desk.

“Tasha, nice to see you again,” he said cheerily, cringing when she gave him an evil stare in return.

“Drop the niceties, Jason. Take these damned shackles off me ... NOW!” she bellowed, shaking herself free of the two huge bulls that were holding her arms. Jason gestured towards her but the taller bull made his thoughts known.

“Sir, we were told not to unshackle her for any reason,” he pointed out.

“I'll take the heat,” he told them, motioning to her bonds again. They unshackled her, stepping back from her quickly afterwards.

“About damned time,” Tasha spat out, rubbing her wrists as she sat down across from Jason.

“Listen, I need you to ...” She cut him off cold.

“I already heard what's up. I'm not helping out until we agree on some terms, buddy. ”

“Like what?”

“After this, I'm free again. No more jail time, Jason. I've paid for my indiscretions.”

“OK, I can live with that.”

“And my old job back.” This made the rottweiler cringe. “No job, no deal.”

“All right, I can live with that too.”

“And ... I want my powers back, all of them.”

“Tasha, I can't ...” She cut him off again.

“No deal, then. See ya later, Jason.” She stood and turned to the two guards as she said, “Go ahead, boys, shackle me up and throw me back into that hole again.”

“Tasha?” Jason called out.

“Yes?” The lioness turned to look at her former boss in a demure way.

“You can have your powers back.”

“And my office, too.” Jason nodded, knowing he was whipped.

“Yeah, you can have your office back, too.”

“Good. That was a deal breaker, you know.” The lioness made herself comfortable in a side chair, taking a sip of his coffee. “You know, I was starting to like that damned solitary confinement cell. I really hope you never think about putting me back in one, however because I would have to destroy you for that.”

“Well, I'm so very sorry, Tasha, I couldn't keep you from being prosecuted. You can't kill innocent bystanders and not catch some flack! I'm sorry ...”

“You're sorry?” she asked, giving him an incredulous look.

“You were my best operative, sweetheart. I hated to lose you.”

“Well, I'm back now.”

“Please be careful. I don't want to see you jailed again.”

“Sure Jason. Anything you say.” She stood up, stretching out in a provocative way. “I'm going to go clean up in a guest suite, Jason. Have my clothes sent over to me so I can get going on this deal as quickly as possible.”

“Sure Tasha, use my suite. I'll bring you some clothes myself.” She took the key offered by Jason, smiling at him as she turned and left the room.

Jason touched the intercom, waiting for his secretary to answer.

“Yes, Jason, what may I do for you?” the female voice queried.

“Have staff go unbind Tasha's powers. She's in my suite, cleaning up.”