

*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 Jr., Michelle Annette (nee Kazinski), Walter Lee III, Joseph and Sarah Connell, 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El Casa Del Burrito®, Leonard's Restaurant® and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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. (Gah, this is tedious!)\*Note\* More rambling credits/warnings below! Please read and heed!*

*Aslaug "The Angelbreaker" Larsdatter is the copyrighted property of Joan Jacobsen, 2005-2008. Her writings may be found at a wonderful place called "Aslaug's Axe Shed" and the URL is as follows; <http://www.aslaug.eu> Please have a look and enjoy her writings. The characters of Joe and Annie Latrans are copyright The Silver Coyote 2003 - 2008, and are used here with permission. Stories containing Joe and Annie Latrans along with The Silver Coyote's writings may be found at <http://thesilvercoyote.net/> Tell them Kellan sent ya. ;-) Note\* This is a shameless plug for Aslaug and The Silver Coyote! What are friends for, anyway? Teric is the intellectual property of Rob 'Teric' Wilson© 2008, 2009 and is used by specific permission.*

*Copyright© 2008 Kellan Meig'h All Rights Reserved <http://www.kellanmeigh.com>*

## **"A Loss Of Rights"**

By Kellan Meig'h

### Chapter 23

All hell broke loose once Beoram materialized in the Royal Hall to complete his destiny, to destroy the Immortal Couple. Tasha struck out at him with a focused beam of energy from her hands, sending him flying across the room to slam into a wall, causing it to cave in slightly from the impact. She reached for her blaster just as he returned an energy beam back at her, making her have to forget about the blaster for the moment and put both hands up to shield herself.

Everyone else in the meantime had scrambled for cover, finding it in any form, such as a suitably sized alcove, an overturned heavy wooden table or in the Royal Couple's case, behind King Andath's throne which was made mostly of stone.

Mirelda had fallen, dead from Sir Tamal's sword just as the battle started. The human warrior and his contemporaries took refuge in a side hall for their safety, allowing them to look for an advantage, any advantage.

"Willi Marie, we need something to hide behind that's more substantial than this table!" Joe pointed out just as a stone projectile flew over his head, impacting the wall behind them, sending shards of stone everywhere. The femme equine made a rampart of sandbags appear in front of their position and the others seeking shelter behind another table across the Royal hall. Joe finally looked around the side of the sandbags to see three obsidian black stone golems that looked like they might have been football players, albeit eight to nine feet tall.

"Joe! Are you all OK over there?" Torvald shouted from behind his sand rampart, ducking when another golem launched his stone oblong projectile, missing him by mere inches. Teric, Victoria and Axel were with him, mom and son trying to get off a shot with their firearms at Beoram.

"Yeah, I think we're OK," the coyote shouted back, ducking again as another golem gave him another reason to take shelter. Theresa was kneeling at his feet, quaking in fear while she prayed to her god for intervention. Joe looked down to see that the young acolyte was absolutely frightened out of her mind. She was young, probably not over 15 or so, Joe thought, and it was a shame for her to be subjected to this situation. He kneeled down by her and hugged her, hoping his presence would settle her nerves.

Across the hall, Tasha had dropped down on one knee, still holding off Beoram's energy attack on her

but she was weakening from the exertion. She was still putting forth her energy, keeping the winged whippet pinned solidly to the wall. That was when the demon king decided to try another method of dispatching the Immortal Couple.

"I summon Cerberus to do my bidding!" Beoram shouted, making a gigantic three-headed kali appear behind the Immortal Couple's position.

"Wha ... Dad, look at that thing!" Axel shouted as he spun around to confront the giant beast, getting his father's attention as he pointed at the three-headed giant kali. It was clear what they needed to do next; try to defeat this monster from Hell's gates before it killed them first.

Victoria dodged two of the heads en-route to making her way up onto the beast's back, stabbing at his neck/shoulder junction between two of the heads in an attempt to make the demon beast bleed out. Axel was trying his best to shoot one of the heads in an effort to injure the beast and slow it down. Torvald had joined the fray, using his broadsword to take a head off if he could. In a show of solidarity, Teric pulled his sword, taking one of the heads of Cerberus to task.

Cerberus was shaking his body, trying his best to dislodge the femme on his back but he was having trouble with this, since she had her claws on her off hand sunk deep into his hide to hold her on like a bronc rider. She was also just out of his reach by any head, preventing him from biting her. His slobber was being slung over all of them, the stench being similar to a dead, decomposing body.

"Victoria, get off his back, please!?! He might bite you!!" her hubby shouted, still hacking at one of the heads. He finally took that one off only to have the monster begin to grow another one at a very accelerated pace.

"We need to get all three heads at once!!" she shouted back as she observed the regenerating head, finally finding a deep artery in his body with her longsword that began spurting black blood on the floor.

Across the room, Beoram had tried several times to overpower the lioness but it was clear she was using her emotions to amplify her powers, giving her near-Master-level capabilities. The winged whippet could sense her powers were growing, gaining strength from her thoughts and feelings. Another complication that he did sense were the King's regular infantry knights that were coming to their aid so he gestured in the general direction of the advancing warriors, giving them a little 'surprise' to deal with.

Joe, using his experience with other missions, had finally come up with what he thought would be an approach to take care of the golems. Confident his plan would work, he turned to Willi Marie, getting her attention.

"Conjure up something that goes 'Boom', please?" he asked, smiling when the femme extended her hand, making a hand grenade appear in it. "All Right! Take this golems!" he commented, pulling the pin on it and sending it flying. Amazingly enough, one of the golems dropped his stone football and caught the grenade.

"What the ...?" Willi blurted out, watching the golem's hands being blown off his arms. To their utter dismay, the stone creature quickly grew new appendages to replace the missing ones.

"Willi, I need something that goes 'Boom' a lot bigger than that," he stated, trying to think of what she could conjure up. The femme quickly produced a grenade and a block of plastic explosives for her canid fighting partner to use.

"Our demolition team in the Army used this C4 plastique, Joe. I packs a hell of a bang," she stated, producing a detonator cap to place in the brick.

"Oh Willi, you were reading my mind," he said, taking the block and quickly molding the material around the grenade's body. "You know, I had completely forgotten you were a demolition expert," he stated, getting his improvised implement of destruction ready. He pulled the pin, lobbing it in the general direction of the nearest golem. The ensuing explosion showered them with a sand-like material, reducing the golem's strength down to two.

\*\*\*

Conrad and Wally had materialized not far from the gates of the castle, the two felines picking up their armament and preparing for battle. Conrad instructed his uncle in the loading and operation of the M60 Squad Carbine, making sure he knew how the ammo belt laid in place before closing and charging the breech.

"Alright, let's rock and roll the place," the younger feline said with a wicked smile, heading in the general direction of the castle gate, casually flipping the ammo belt over his shoulder to keep it out of the dirt. At that moment they almost ran over Mike and Jason, materializing on the planet themselves.

"Hold it!" Jason blurted out, fumbling with his blaster. He finally got it in hand when he noticed Conrad already had him covered, putting his automatic weapon to fire. Jason shuddered when he observed the young felid's finger tighten on the trigger of his weapon as he gave Jason a grim look of death.

"Who the hell are you two?!?" Conrad barked out, getting the two specialist's attention. Jason gave him the once over, finally making a connection.

"You're Victoria's son?" he asked, hoping he was right. If he wasn't, he was most likely dead by the hands of this pair of very angry looking felines.

"Yeah, I'm her son. Who the hell are you??" he snarled, his uncle pushing the safety off on his rifle to back up his nephew. This made Jason almost wet his drawers.

"Hey! Hold on just a second! We came here to help your mother and my wife!" he stated, dropping his blaster on the ground. Mike had had his hands in the air the whole time, hoping like hell the two felids would hold their fire.

"Prove you're on my side!" Conrad growled, his eyes narrowing, a sneer creeping across his muzzle.

"You've came here by Gabriel's ability to send you here to get your mother back," he replied quickly, hoping it would prove he was aware of the tiger's mission.

"Well, yeah, Gabriel did send us here," he said quietly, feeling somewhat shocked the canid knew about the angel.

“Your mother has been here eight of your years and she disappeared on a mission where you were pulled into it by Pamela Benelli's overzealous work.”

Conrad thought about this for a minute; the canid did seem to know a lot about them.

“So, who is this that came with me?” the young tiger asked, knowing Wally's existence had not been known to him until just a few days ago. This made the canid smile.

“That question is just too easy! That's your Uncle Walter Lee Connell, Junior!” the canid replied with a smile.

“Well, OK then,” Conrad said somewhat apologetically, lowering his rifle. “Go ahead and get your stuff so we can go kick some behind.”

\*\*\*

A quick jog to the castle found the King's knights fighting a battalion of the demon's minions and not making particularly good headway at it, either. There were many of the King's warriors that were scattered about either dead or injured. This made Conrad even madder still.

“All right, you lousy %^\*&^%\$ minions! Prepare to be destroyed!” Conrad shouted, letting fly with a phalanx of bullets, mowing down the demon's denizens. That brought their ire in return.

Wally kneeled and fired, taking out more of the approaching underworld warriors. That's when Mike began firing his energy weapon, doing his part to decimate the demons. Once all of them were in the fray, the knights retreated, allowing the foursome to do the deed.

\*\*\*

“Who in the kingdom are those four warriors?” one young canid knight asked his feline partner from their hiding place.

“I don't know but they seem to be winning,” the gray feline replied, hunkering down behind the wagon they had chose to take refuge behind.

“Should we help them?” the canid asked, checking his pistol to see if it was still ready.

“Yes, we should assist them.” the feline stated. “If you look, the one young felid seems to be related to Miss D'nan.”

“Well, in that case we should help then,” the canid agreed, charging back into the battle. The feline nodded, following his lead.

\*\*\*

Conrad saw two of the knights heading back into battle so he motioned to give them some fire support. Mike was hot on the job, trying to keep the minions pinned down enough to let the knights finish them off. Between the knights and the foursome, the minions were falling like autumn leaves.

\*\*\*

Willi Marie had finally had enough of this nonsense so she stood up and made a motion with her hands, making the remaining golems disappear. She then walked around the end of their sandbag revetment, headed towards the winged whippet.

Beoram saw her coming but it was his misfortune to be currently occupied keeping Tasha from destroying him. He watched while Willi Marie took up a stance, shook out her mane and looked at him with a look of death. She lifted her hands towards him, the energy sparking from her fingertips. She then motioned with a quick pushing motion, making him knock out the wall and fly out into the courtyard as if he had been hit by a huge battering ram.

\*\*\*

Conrad looked up, shaking Jason's arm to get his attention. He was shocked to see the winged whippet come flying through the wall, the material from the wall's collapse wiping out most of the remaining demon contingent in the process.

"That's Beoram!" he said in an evil tone, checking his ammo. He put another belt in and headed that way, motioning for them to follow.

"OK Mike, here goes nothing, buddy. See ya on the other side," Jason stated, slapping the huge giraffe cross on the shoulder as he headed out, following Conrad to their possible doom.

\*\*\*

Beoram shook his head and gathered himself up, staggering to his hands and knees. His head was ringing like a bell and he just couldn't remember ever being hit that hard in all of his evil existence. Momentarily a dark shadow moved over him so he looked to his right to find there was a pair of hooves standing by him.

"Stand UP, you mangy, evil cur!" Willi Marie commanded, a motion of her hand making him stand up whether he wanted to or not.

"You listen here, bitch!" he spat out right before she struck him hard in the face with a backhand, leaving him seeing stars. It really felt as if she had hit him with a medium sized planet instead.

"Shut Up!" she commanded, an invisible fist driving him down to his knees again. "You have messed with my family, my friends and now you have messed with me!" she shouted, another invisible fist driving him down into the cobblestone surface, leaving a body shaped indent. She then roughly jerked him back to his feet again to receive more punishment.

"Please! Stop it!" he begged, knowing now that she was a master sorceress or higher. He was positive his life was sure to be taken from him.

"Why should I?" she questioned, picking him up at least shoulder-high and slamming him head-first into the ground. "You were trying to destroy my family and friends so what's the difference? War is war, you ASS-HOLE! Now Die!!"

Beoram was hoping to summon help but each time he was brutally hammered by the femme equine, he lost his concentration. It was clear she was going to beat him to death and he was most likely not going to survive this.

\*\*\*

Nevaeh and Hess had taken cover in the kitchen, observing the battle between the foursome and the minions through a window. The shorter one watched as a few of the underworld tried to make their way through the cooking area. She nodded to Hess, giving her a rolling pin and motioning to the far side of the door. She then picked up a steel skillet and covered the opposite side.

\*\*\*

“Come on, Reger, we'll go this way and flank them,” the minion told his fighting partner, headed for a partially open door. “No one will suspect us of sneaking in this way.”

“All right, Trask. I will follow you but this had better not be a trap. Master will be mad if we mess up.” the other warrior replied. He watched as his partner opened the door and stepped inside.

\*\*\*

the door slid open slowly, the point of a spear appearing, nudging the door open further. The first being stepped through, a canid of indeterminate origin. He was followed by a rather scruffy wolf. Once they had taken a few steps into the room, the two femme former minions hammered them with their improvised weapons. One dropped like a stone but the one Nevaeh hit in the face didn't seem phased by the skillet.

He turned to see who dared hit him, scaring the smaller femme. That was up until Hess hammered his skull with the pommel of the other warriors' sword, dropping him like a bad habit.

“Thanks, Hess. I owe you one,” she said, taking the sword from the downed former warrior. The hole in his skull meant he was most likely not getting back up and asking for the return of his weapon.

“You're welcome,” the taller one replied, pointing out the door. “Let's go see how many we can stop.”

“WHAT!?! Our lives are forfeit! The tigress will kill us when this is all done!” Nevaeh pointed out.

“So? Let's live it up until that time comes!” Hess retorted, dragging her counterpart out the door.

\*\*\*

Joe had joined up with his friends, fighting against the huge, deadly kali. He was elbow to elbow with Sir Varn, giving support to Axel and the head he was trying to dispatch. Sir Tamal had went to see about Tasha's condition so that left Sir Marc and Sir Jac to retrieve a small cannon to attempt to kill the creature from the underworld.

“Teric! Look Out!!” Axel shouted just as the creature grabbed the green winged one up in his jaws, dragging the half-dragon off his feet. The kali from hell was trying to eat the drac but it seemed his

scaly hide was protecting him far better than any armor.

“See if you can help me overwhelm this head!” Teric shouted to his fighting partners, listening to his armor being destroyed by the demon kali's immense teeth attempting to chew him up. The pain was horrible, the pressure of Cerberus' jaws trying to crush him was intense but at least the kali couldn't actually bite into him. Why this was, he didn't know. His father had never told him about any special powers he might have as far as this went.

Torvald threw a short sword up to Teric, allowing him to at least try to put the hurt on this demon monster. His armor, however would need replacing after this episode. The kali had managed to chew his armor beyond use, reducing it to metallic shreds. After a brief struggle to get into a position to do something of importance, he waited almost too patiently, waiting until Torvald distracted the head holding him. Teric finally got his point across to the hell-kali literally, stabbing the huge cur in the eye, forcing him to release his grip on him.

Torvald was knocked to the floor by Teric's weight falling on him after Cerberus let go of the scaly one, trying to cushion the drac's fall when the kali released him.

“Thank you for catching me,” Teric told the tall stallion, helping him up from the floor.

“I'm not sure I would call that a catch,” Torvald replied, tossing Teric his long sword before wading back into the fight himself.

\*\*\*

Tasha had fell to the floor when Willi Marie interrupted Beoram's energy, possibly now unconscious from her exertions. Sir Tamal checked her over, finding her still breathing with a faint heartbeat. He hoped that Willi Marie would be able to do something for the lioness when she was done beating on the winged whippet.

\*\*\*

Conrad and Jason had made their way to the site of Willi Marie's demon beating, finding her having no trouble at all kicking the demon's tail. Jason took one look at the hole in the wall that Beoram had came through, getting a feeling of dread in the pit of his stomach.

“Conrad, let's see what going on inside,” he suggested, motioning to head that way.

The young tiger followed the rottweiler into the castle, finding the knight still tending to the lioness. Jason wasted no time in checking his loved one over, trying to determine the extent of her injuries. In the meantime, Conrad went to see about his family that was still in the fray.

“Hey! Everybody *PLEASE* get clear of that beast!” he shouted, kneeling down to get a better platform to fire at the demon-spawn from. He checked the chamber, making sure it was charged and the belt wasn't fouled.

“Victoria! You heard your son! Get off him NOW!!” Torvald shouted, catching her when she leaped from the kali's back. They all scrambled towards Conrad, getting behind him for cover. Once Conrad made sure his family and the others were safe, he motioned to the confused beast. Beckoning the beast

closer, he gave it a very pointed command;

“Come to Papa and let me destroy you, you sorry @#\$%@#\$ hell-kali!” he said with an evil tone right before he pulled the trigger.

The hail of 7.62mm armor piercing bullets seemed to have some effect on the huge beast but it just wasn't enough. Conrad was trying to concentrate on one spot, stopping just briefly to let the barrel cool. He was contemplating what to do next when a huge hand '*gently*' pushed him aside.

“My turn!” Mike told him as he kneeled and drew down on the beast from hell, pulling the trigger on his disruptor rifle. It whined for just a second, then a gout of blue-white energy leaped out of the barrel, knocking the kali back against the opposite wall. He fired again, keeping the best pinned but not much else. That's when Jason yelled at him from across the hall.

“Mike! Both of us together!” he shouted, giving the huge giraffe cross a three count with his fingers.

“Here goes nothing!” Mike groaned, the pair hitting the beast with twin beams of pure focused energy. The beast shuddered, screaming out a horrible sound right before it disappeared in a blinding flash of light. Something about this bothered Mike, since they hadn't been showered with little chunks of demon bits.

Everyone present was relieved to see the demise of the huge beast, hugging each other and checking each other for any severe injuries. Victoria was hugging her son when she spotted another male striped feline standing behind him, trying to be inconspicuous.

“Um, Wally?” she asked, letting go of her son and walking over to him. “You're my brother, aren't you?” she queried, putting her longsword away and lifting his chin, making the male look at her.

“Uh, yeah, it's me, Vicki. I came with Conrad to help you out,” he proffered up, leaning his rifle against the wall and taking off his helmet. “I suppose you're still mad at me,” he proffered up, looking down at the floor in embarrassment. Victoria surprised him by hugging him fiercely.

“Wally, I've had a lot of time to think about this.” she told him, giving him a kiss on the cheek. “I should have let things go a long time ago. I know you've been in touch with Val for years.” She pulled him towards the rest of her group, meaning to introduce him. “This is Torvald, my ... WHERE'S WILLI MARIE????” she shouted, looking around at the confused faces looking back at her. The tigress then took off in a dead run to find the palomino colored femme.

\*\*\*

The femme equine sorceress was still beating on Beoram, giving him the very thrashing of his existence. He was cut, scratched, bitten, broken and battered, barely able to stand anymore due to his mortal avatar's life essence failing.

<<You are nothing but trash, you bastard from Hell's gates!!>> Willi Marie spat out at him in her native tongue, so upset she abandoned English for German. <<You have been a thorn in my family's side, causing us all pain and grief!!>> she screamed, sending him into the outer wall of the fortress, knocking some of the wall down from his impact. <<When I'm through, you will be destroyed for all time!!>> she said in a malevolent tone, kicking him in the gut with her hoof, making him fall down

again.

“Please!” he begged, trying to move away from her grasp. “Just destroy me, please?!?” he asked, knowing he was done, finished. Even Surt's minions hadn't done this much damage and pain to him. He knew he wouldn't live, based on the fact that he had almost blacked out several times. He was sure Willi Marie was forcing him to stay alive just so she could punish him further.

Everyone stopped when they observed Willi Marie pick him up and whisper something to him that made him nod back in response. She stood him up against the wall, lifted her hands and allowed a huge energy orb grow between them. She stepped back, waiting for him to close his eyes before throwing her orb. Beoram clenched his fists right before the orb struck, the defeated winged whippet disappearing in a bright flash of light and smoke. Willi Maire then dropped down to her knees, sobbing.

\*\*\*

Tasha was still out, totally drained by her encounter with Beoram. Theresa and Mike were seeing after her, making occasional checks of her vital signs.

“Is the felid still alive?” Queen Morgeth asked, concerned that the lioness was near death.

“She still lives, your highness,” Mike replied, still checking her pulse. “She is very drained by her exertions, I'm sure.” The femme equine nodded, still looking very concerned.

The group came in through the hole in the wall, all of them making a bee-line to see about the femme felid that was still out.

“Tasha! Can you hear me?” Jason said loudly, lifting an eyelid to see if her pupils were reactive. After a moment, a smile slid across her muzzle.

“I can hear you, my husband.” she said softly, reaching up to hold her head. “I also have a splitting headache,” she added, wincing in pain. She observed Willi Marie coming into the keep, heading her way.

“Tasha! Tell me if I can do something for you?” Willi Marie asked, kneeling down next to Jason, scooping her up and hugging her to her body.

“You're doing just fine, Willi,” the lioness replied, sure that the femme equine was totally unaware of the blinding light beginning to envelop them. She slowly put her arms around the equine sorceress, hugging her back. “Willi, you're giving me your strength, sweetie. Concentrate on just hugging me, please.”

“I was just so worried about you,” the palomino mare retorted, the light diminishing around their bodies. Eventually the light went away, leaving them crying in each others arms.

\*\*\*

Everyone had enjoyed a meal in the formal dining hall courtesy of King Andath and Queen Morgeth. Neither one would hear of a soul leaving the castle before they had a chance to feed them. Their meal consumed, everyone gathered in the newly restored Royal Hall to say their goodbyes.

"Miss Vicki ... I mean Victoria, I am sad to hear you will be leaving us," the King stated, trying not to show a lot of emotion. Inside he was hurting, since he felt a deep loss for a warrior and a friend. "Is there any chance I can persuade you to stay?"

"I wish I could stay," she replied, looking at her husband momentarily. "I have a life and a family on my home planet so that is where I need to be," she replied, wiping the tears from her eyes. She then walked up to Sir Varn, taking his hands in hers. "Varn, please don't take this hard. You and I both knew in the back of our minds I had a husband. You even said yourself you would step aside if he made his appearance. Well, he's here to take me home so I just wanted to tell you that you shouldn't lose hope of finding a mate. There are plenty of good, loving females just waiting for a husband like you."

"Alas, you were correct as always," he retorted, giving her a kiss on the cheek. "I will keep looking for a mate and I will promote Morri to the King's Royal Guard, as you have asked."

Teric and Willi Marie stood off to the side, saying their goodbyes. It was clear that the half-dragon was sad to see all of them go.

"What will you do now, Sir Teric?" the palomino mare asked, giving him a hug.

"I had thought of writing a story about my adventures." he replied. "Your aunt had suggested that so I could leave behind an account of my travels and tales once I pass on."

Willi Marie smiled widely as she said;

"I guess that would make you a ..." Teric cringed because he could see this pun coming a mile away.  
"... a book wyrm."

Teric just groaned in response.

\*\*\*

Everyone had left planet IS-23440 for their respective homes, the ordeal finally over with. Hess and Nevaeh had taken up temporary residence with the Immortal Couple so Hess could finish her work with Victoria. Tasha and Jason brought a few things from their home world so the lioness could assist Willi Marie with her magic. Tasha had brought some bands with her so they could at least put a damper on the filly's magic until it was more under control.

"Um, so these silver bands will bind my magic?" Willi asked, looking at the very petite bands that just slipped onto her wrists.

"That's the idea, anyway," the felid replied, giving Willi a concerned look.

"I had better test them," Willi commented, pointing to the table. A full table full of food appeared.

"I was afraid of that," Tasha stated, shaking her head. "We have no other method of stopping your powers except this." Tasha made a pair of blackened metal bands appear in her paws.

"What are those?" Willi picked one up, noting how light it really was.

“Well, these are an extreme method, I hate to admit,” Tasha stated. “You will not be able to remove these by yourself. Only the designated key keeper can do that so I hope your husband will take that responsibility.”

Willi Marie removed the silver bands and slipped one of the new bands around her wrist, checking the fit. After she put the second one on, she tried to remove the food that she had conjured up. To her surprise, the food did not disappear. Willi, however went ahead and used the key to remove one of the bands by herself, just to see what would happen.

“Well, just remember to wear the bands and maybe we can work with this.” Tasha finally stated. “You must be a Master sorceress, to be able to remove those binding bands.”

“At least I can keep my powers under control while you teach me what I need to know,” Willi commented, giving Tasha a hug.

“Let's hope I can,” the lioness retorted, silently hoping she really could.

\*\*\*

Beoram looked around himself, wondering where he was. It was a castle of sorts, it seemed but something was really wrong. The whippet first noticed his wings were gone. Then he noted he could not sense good or bad near him.

“What's the matter, old buddy?” Lucifer asked, making the canid turn to look at him.

“What have you done?” the whippet asked, approaching the demon king.

“You should ask, “What have you done?”, you idiot! You let Willi Marie strip your powers from you in exchange for not killing you! Now you're in a nether region, stuck here for all time!” Lucifer pointed out.

“I'm where?”

“This is a nether region, you fool,” the Prince of Lies told him rather tersely, pushing past him to point out the window. “This is where all of you fools end up! You will be here for all eternity, roaming the realm, in search of everything, finding nothing. Enjoy!” With that the demon king vanished.

\*\*\*

Victoria had been roaming the house, checking it out just to see what was where. After an afternoon of poking around upstairs and down she cornered her stallion, sitting on the couch, relaxing.

“Torvald, we need to talk. I feel like something's bad wrong here.”