

The characters Torvald Arend 'Tor' & Victoria Angela (nee Connell) Svensen, James 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, Jason & Natasha 'Tasha' (nee Porter) Cummerow, Peter the dispatcher, El Casa Del Burrito[©], Leonard's Restaurant[©], Hunter Auto Parts[©], and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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 27

“Torvald, are you and your mate OK?” Clyde asked as he cautiously approached the pale stallion.

“Yeah, Clyde, We’re fine.” He then ducked his head back inside the front door to let his wife know what was going on. “Victoria, we’re coming inside. Lower your pawgun, please?”

“I put it on the table, Tor.” she told him, still standing over the squirrel with her claws expressed fully. “You move an inch and I’ll flay your sorry ass alive!” she hissed at the bad fur.

“Lady, you’re scarin’ the crap outa me,” the small male replied, trying to keep still. “Listen, don’t kill me, please?”

“Why shouldn’t I?” she asked, putting her paw on his shoulder as she knelt down by him, breaking the would-be assassin's skin in several places with her long, sharp claws. “I could just accidentally tear your jugular out while I helped you to stand up, you know? You tried to kill me just minutes ago so what’s so different about it right now?” she growled in a very dark tone, narrowing her eyes and showing a lot of teeth. “You have no idea who you’re screwing around with.”

“Ye Gads, Torvald, this place looks like a battle zone, not a simple shooting!” Clyde remarked once he was near the hallway, sending a few of his officers to secure the house. “You might not to be able to sleep here tonight,” he mused, getting the henchfur into his possession.

“Take good care of him, please?” the tigress requested. “I don’t want to see him missing a long stay in a cozy state prison cell.”

“Oh, I will make sure he gets downtown in one piece,” Clyde replied. “Um, Victoria Ti ... I mean Victoria Svensen, are you OK?”

“I’m fine, officer Moraine. Thanks for asking, by the way.”

“You’re right, Clyde. This place does look bad,” Torvald agreed, now that a few lights had been turned on in the house. They had done some serious damage to the walls and door frames with their firearms,

especially Torvald's shotgun.

"Uh, Clyde, they picked up another fur around the corner, waiting in a stolen van." the uniformed elk at the front door told him after he got the black stallion's attention. "He's wanted for weapons and probation violations in Arizona."

"Well, let's get them downtown and interrogate them. I want to find out why you two seem to have targets drawn on your backs." the dark stallion stated, roughly grabbing the henchfur's arm to lead him out of the house.

It was around noon and the red sciuridae had not give up anything of any interest to the detectives that had been interrogating him. Torvald was standing next to the technician that was doing a video of the goings-on in the room from behind a one-way mirror.

"He won't give us anything," the gazelle stated, seeming to be perturbed by the situation.

"Lieutenant Cahill, you mind if I took a shot at him, my way?" the tall stallion asked, looking to see his boss' reaction. "Look, I know I'm technically still off the clock but I think I can get him to start talking."

"OK, Svensen, what do you have in mind?" the ursine asked. After a few moments of discussion and Torvald agreeing to not mark up or kill the squirrel, the lieutenant called the fur's cellphone that was in the room with the henchfur, letting him know to leave the room.

The smallish crook looked up to see the lights come on in the observation room, making it easy to see them milling about inside. The technician turned off the video camera, taking the DV cartridge out afterwards. The furs then left the room, leaving the camera facing the wall. Moments later, the interrogation room door opened and Torvald stepped inside with a scowl on his mug.

"I understand you don't want to cooperate with us," he asked, sitting down on the edge of the table the fur was cuffed to. "I suppose your boss forgot to tell you I was a cop?"

The smaller fur looked down at the table, trying to ignore the stallion in front of him.

"You know, you're in mortal danger right now," he spat out, making the smaller fur look up at him. "I don't like furs that try to kill me and my loved ones."

"Whadda ya gonna do about it, tough fur?" the squirrel spat out.

"Well, since nobody is watching us, I'm gonna kill you, that's what. You're of no use to me alive, punk." Torvald took his tie off, wrapping one end around his left paw. "You know, a quality silk tie is very strong," he commented, wrapping the other end around his other paw. "I could strangle you right here and nobody would know what happened. No camera, no audio. Just you and me."

"You ain't got the guts, smart ass."

"Want to bet on that?" Torvald put the tie around the punk's throat, crossing it to pull it tight. "Well?"

“You won’t ... Aarrghgh!” the punk choked out as the stallion pulled the tie very tight for just a few moments, long enough to soundly scare the crook.

“I will kill you, asshole.” Torvald replied. “You see, not only am I a cop, I’m an Avenger.”

“You can’t be an Avenger,” the punk spat out, only to see Torvald take out his Buck knife and slice his palm deeply. Once the stallion used a paper napkin to clean it off, there was no sign of injury present.

“If I’m not an Avenger, then what am I?” he asked, seeing the squirrel’s eyes growing wide with fear.

“... Oh ... Hell ... No!!”

“Oh Hell No is right, punk. Ready for me to judge you?” Torvald began preparing his tie again.

“Please, can we talk about this?” the punk asked, starting to sweat bullets.

“I’ll pass on judging you for right now *IF and only IF* you tell my cop buddies everything about who you are, who sent you and why they sent you.”

OK, I’ll tell you everything, just don’t kill me!” the squirrel blurted out, hoping to save his hide. In response, Torvald tapped the door twice. The technician re-entered the observation room, putting a fresh tape in the camera. The detective that was interrogating the bad fur returned, smiling just slightly.

“Is he ready to talk?” the detective, a gerbil named Alex Towne asked.

“Yeah, Alex, he’s gonna talk for you right now.” Torvald looked at the scared punk and nodded. “Start talking, buddy.”

“My name’s Bob Marshall and I was sent up here from Phoenix by this chipmunk that I work for, Ralph Hemmings ...”

Torvald was smiling as he left the room and headed for the parking lot. He was stopped before he made it to the side doors by Matt Black.

“What the hell did you do to him in there? Alex couldn’t get him to say a word worth recording!” the smaller detective pointed out. Torvald pulled him into a side hall, making sure they weren’t being overheard.

“I told him I was an Avenger and demonstrated my immortality to him. I told him to talk or I would judge him.”

“You are such a rotten stallion!” the okapi stated, giving Torvald a pat on the shoulder. “I wish we could have you do that every time a fur doesn’t cooperate.”

“Sometimes, I wish the exact same thing.” Torvald retorted, smiling a crooked smile. “I think I’ll go home now and see how my wife is doing.”

Bill pulled out of the Shell gas station in Needles, California, headed for his destiny with the fur that had murdered his relative. He looked in the mirror again, looking at the black goat staring back at him. He was thinking just how much he looked like his younger brother, the one that didn't come back from Iraq. He remembered his mother begging Steven not to join the Army, whatever he did. She told him that's how their father was killed in Vietnam, joining up instead of waiting out the draft. Maybe his late mother was right. Setting the cruise control, he settled in for another long run until he needed fuel again.

Torvald parked his cruiser across the street from their home, unable to park in the driveway due to a number of work vehicles parked in front of it. The department had sent a crew over to clean up the mess they had made earlier in the morning when they had thwarted that attempt on their lives. Walking up to the front door, he kept thinking about what Cathy had said yesterday. Maybe they did need to quit before they were killed or seriously maimed by a dark agent. They still didn't know if this Vincent James was a dark agent in charge of *The Legion*.

"Hi Sweetheart," the tigress bid from the couch, still looking just a little jittery. She had obviously been drinking and a pack of smokes sat by a makeshift ashtray on the coffee table, several missing from the pack. She also had one of her pistols, a full sized Kimber 1911 pattern in .45 ACP laying in her lap, loaded with the safety off.

"Um, you've been smoking again?" he asked, sitting down by her and hugging her tightly. "I thought you quit when we got married."

"Well, I've smoked just a few," she admitted, burying her head in his chest. Torvald felt her sobbing softly as he held her, trying to comfort her.

"When did this all start?" he asked, thinking to himself that they needed to finish this mission as soon as possible.

"Uh, when I came down off my adrenalin high, about fifteen minutes after you left this morning," she told him between sobs, now somewhat embarrassed. "I walked down to that Walgreen's on the corner," she added, offering him a sip of her Jack Daniel's over ice.

"Gah!" Torvald spat out after taking a sip of her drink. "You always get the good stuff, huh?" That sour-mash whiskey was burning all the way down his throat, chilled or not.

"Well, it's an incentive not to enjoy it," she retorted, getting herself another smoke. Her paws were still shaking so badly she couldn't light it, however.

"Tell you what, Sweetheart, Let's go out for an early dinner," he suggested. Victoria sat the cigarette and the Bic[®] disposable lighter back on the table, nodding her head. "Where would you like to go?" he asked.

"I want to go to Perko's in Turlock, hon. You know the one. Right off the 99 freeway at the Main Street exit."

“You WHAT?!?” Torvald looked at his mate in shock. “After what happened there the last time?”

“I didn’t get to eat my steak the last time. It looked very juicy.” she offered up. “Their coffee is delicious, too.”

“You’re sure?” the stallion asked, concerned she was saying this because she was slightly intoxicated.

“I’m very sure, Tor.” she replied. “I just feel ... compelled to go eat there again. If the Turlock police show up, they’ll end up with egg on their muzzles.” She looked up at him and added, “You’ll have your badge and I have my ID now so they *will* have to listen this time.”

While they were discussing where to eat, one of the carpenters, a rather rotund gopher, came over to them.

“Ma’am, Sir, we fixed the holes, the carpet and the door frame but we need to let the taping mud set up a bit before we can paint the patches. Would it be OK if we came back tomorrow and finished up?” he asked.

“Yeah, that would be fine,” the tigress replied. “What time would you be back here?”

“How about 8 in the morning?”

“That’s good. I’ll be up by then.” she stated, letting them get their mess cleaned up.

Once the cleanup crew had left, she looked at what they had done. The crew had patched the walls where they had shot holes in them, fixed the bedroom door frame and replaced the bloody carpet in their bedroom and the hall. They had even put the furniture back where it belonged.

Looking at her clothing, some gray sweats and a white knit top, she decided to get cleaned up. “You know, let me put on some clean clothes and we’ll go get something to eat at that Perko’s.”

“OK then, I’m going to change clothes, too. I think my black polo shirt is clean,” he stated, grabbing his bluejeans from his dresser.

“Torvald, you’re not going to wear jeans, are you?”

“And what’s wrong with my jeans? They’re clean and almost new.”

“Well, OK. In that case, I’ll wear my black slacks and that leather bustier with a navy blue blazer over it.”

Once they had both changed into some clean casual clothing, she literally dragged Torvald out the door to go eat.

Torvald had noticed how Victoria was tugging at her blazer when they had gotten into his cruiser to go out to eat, smoothing it down several times after she put her seatbelt on. He waited for a while but curiosity eventually got the best of him so he decided to ask. Just as he opened his mouth, she spoke up

first.

“I know what you’re going to ask. Yes, I’m armed with both of my AMT long slide Hard Baller .45 Auto pistols in my double shoulder holsters and I have four spare clips in the small of my back.” she stated casually. “And yes, that’s one of my Colt Officer’s models in my holster purse.”

“Yipe!” he retorted, shaking his head at the thought of his dear, sweet wife armed to the teeth. “I’m not even packing that much heat! All I have is my Ruger .44 Magnum in a shoulder holster.”

“I’m sorry but I felt very vulnerable back there at the house,” she said softly. “Now that we’re out and going somewhere, I feel better.”

“Promise me you won’t flash your iron around in the restaurant, please?” he asked as he merged with traffic on the Southbound 99 freeway.

“I have my carry permit card attached right to my holster,” she pointed out, tugging at her blazer again. “OK, I’ll keep my blazer on, then.” She sat there for a moment before she added, “I kind of wished I could have brought my staff in with me, too. That would have looked totally out of place.”

“My collapsible baton is in the glove box, hon.” he pointed out.

“You don’t mind if I carry it?”

“You have a CCW so that baton is covered by it. Go ahead.”

Victoria nodded, retrieving the baton and slipping it into the spot provided for one in her purse.

Willi Marie was sitting in her living room, straightening things on the coffee table one more time. She had been to the doctor, then to the ‘other’ doctors, confirming what she had been told earlier. She was just waiting for Richard to get home so she could tell him the news. She straightened her clothes one last time as she watched her soul mate walk up to the house from his car.

“Wilhelmine, what’s up?” her husband asked, setting his coat and briefcase by the front door. He could tell something was amiss because the house looked too clean.

“Um, honey, you remember that weekend in Half Moon Bay, about a month ago?” she asked, giving him a pensive smile. “You know, that bed and breakfast we were told about by my aunt and uncle?”

“That weekend was a little hard to forget, love.” he replied, sitting down beside her, giving her a hug. “Is there something you want to tell me?”

“Um, yeah, there is,” she replied, snuggling up close to him. “You know we have talked at length about having little ones?”

“Are you pregnant?” he asked carefully. It was starting to add up now. The house, her mood ...

“Twins,” she replied, trying to stifle a sob of joy.

“Oh My ...” Richard blurted out, hugging her tightly while he slumped back in the couch. “Uh Oh ...”

“What, hon?” she asked, looking up at her huge husband.

“Will our little ones have magical abilities?”

“One will for sure,” she replied. “Our son might have some minor powers like my brother James but not like our daughter.”

“Will she be like you?” he asked, starting to stare out into space.

“Um, yeah, she will, Richard. She will just as powerful as I am.”

“Oh ... No ...” He slowly looked over at his beautiful wife with tears in his eyes.

“Now don’t panic, Richard! They will not have any powers until they turn sixteen!”

“Well, ...” Richard was trying to formulate a sentence when Willi spoke her mind.

“Richard, I grew up not knowing I was a sorceress. If I had just known, it might have made a big difference. Our little ones will grow up knowing exactly who and what they are.”

“So, you’re sure they’re twins? A male and a femme?”

“I’m very sure, Richard. They’re about a month along now and they’re a male and a femme.”

“OK, ... so ... we decided on Brianna Marie if we had a little femme ...”

“I think our little male should be named after his father. Richard is a nice name.”

“So, uh, I guess my hobby room will have to go, then,” he mused, thinking about the possibility that he could make enough room in the garage for his one hobby bench.

“No, not right away,” Willi replied. “The two can use the same room until they’re around 2 years old. That’s almost 3 years from now.”

“Well, my band will have to find a different place to practice for sure.” he stated.

“That’s a given,” she retorted, snuggling against him tightly.

“Do you think one of them might turn out to be a musician?” he asked, trying to be funny this time.

“I’m a sorceress, not a mind reader!” she blurted out, finally laughing with her husband.

Torvald pulled his cruiser into a slot in the parking lot, turning off the engine afterwards. He looked at the diner, noting there weren’t very many furs inside.

“I’ll keep my blazer on,” the tigress stated, smoothing the front of it again.

“Sweetheart, go ahead and take it off or at least unbutton it.” the stallion instructed as he stepped out of the car and shut the door afterwards. “You’re being very conspicuous by fidgeting with the way it lays.”

“Well, I guess I’m a little over-armed,” she finally admitted as she shut her door. “I probably look funny, my blazer bulging from my pistols.”

“Yeah, that too.” he agreed.

They walked inside, waiting just a moment for a waitress, a llama, to seat them. The young femme showed them to a corner booth, giving them strange looks as she did so. After she walked off to get them some coffee, Torvald made a comment.

“Isn’t this the same corner booth?” he asked, thinking it was the very one she had been roughly ‘removed’ from by the Turlock police.

“It is,” she replied, setting her purse to allow easy access to the pistol inside. “I’m glad it is. I need to get this over with before it bugs me to no end.”

Vincent looked up from his menu to see a sight that he had hoped to never see; it was that damned stallion that had murdered Ed and his mate, obviously none the worse for wear.

“Ralph! Don’t look to your left!” he whispered loudly, trying to get the chipmunk’s attention. “It’s them!”

“What the ... they’re supposed to be dead!!” Ralph spat out after looking up from his menu to confirm what the lapin had told him.

“Let’s get the hell out of here!” Vinnie suggested, laying his menu down.

“No way in hell am I movin’! They’ll see us from where they’re sittin’!” Ralph had a point there.

“Whadda ya suggest?”

“We just sit here an’ act natural like.” he suggested to his boss. “If we play it out, they’ll leave long before we do.”

“Torvald, I hate to say this, but something’s bugging me,” the tigress stated, trying to shake that feeling in the back of her mind that something was wrong.

“What is it this time?” he asked, nodding politely at the waitress that had brought them their coffee.

“I ... I can’t focus on it,” she admitted, finally dismissing the thought. “Maybe it was nothing after all.”

The waitress returned after a bit, taking their order. Victoria ordered the New York Strip platter, medium rare, just like she had done the last time. The stallion ordered the vegetarian platter, noting it had a nice mix for this time of year. He then added a side of tomato soup to that order.

“You seem on edge,” Torvald commented, noting his mate was fidgeting a bit.

“Well, ... I keep waiting for the police to show ...” She slowly sat her cup of coffee back on the table, unbuttoning her blazer carefully. He noticed she was looking intently at the front door of the restaurant, her pupils dilating, her breathing getting deeper, more controlled, her whiskers twitching slightly. He then heard the distinct sound of her Colt’s safety being disengaged.

“Honey, what do you see that’s so interesting?” he asked, not wanting to turn his head to look.

“Torvald, what might be two cops just walked in, looking this way. They’re talking with our waitress.” she replied evenly, shifting ever so slightly to the outside of the booth.

“Shit!” he spat out, taking his badge and setting it on the table in plain sight. “Victoria, if you’ve got your Colt in your paw, set it on the seat, please?” He relaxed just a bit when he heard the safety being re-engaged.

“So help me, Tor, if they lay a paw on me this time ...” Her ears laid back ever so slightly, giving away her anger.

“Let me handle this, please?” he asked, turning in the booth far enough to see they were coming their way, both of the officers releasing their holster’s safety straps on their service weapons.

“Um, excuse me, I received a report that you might be armed,” the male donkey officer stated, paw on his weapon as he looked straight at Victoria. He was rather relieved to see that both of her paws were on the table, in plain view.

“I have a carry permit,” the tigress said rather point-blank, keeping eye contact with him. She carefully put it into view by sweeping her blazer open on the right side, making it clear she wasn’t breaking the law.

“Please stand up for me, carefully, keeping your paws in plain sight,” the second officer, a pronghorn antelope asked.

Her eyes were beginning to get a faint glow to them, her powers building, surging. She was silently praying to herself that they wouldn’t try to abduct her again because she swore to herself that she wouldn’t go quietly this time.

“If either of you lay a paw on me improperly,” she said firmly as she stood up, “My husband is a police fur. We will bring both of you up on charges.”

“Is that right, Sir? Is that your badge?” the donkey asked, then gave them both a shocked look once the facts made a lap around his head. “Oh Damned No!” he exclaimed as the numbers added up. “You’re the ...” Victoria cut him off.

“Yeah, I’m the tigress you bound and muzzled up so roughly just here recently. Right here, in fact. This very booth.” She pointed at the seat she had just vacated.

“That was you ...” the officer said softly, looking over at Torvald. The stallion was holding up his badge for them to see it better.

“Now don’t you wish you had asked a few more questions before you acted the last time around?” Torvald inquired. “My wife was born here before January 1, 1968, just up the road in Hughson.”

“Oh ... Hell ...” the antelope exclaimed. “Roger, you didn’t ...”

“Yep, Andy, I did. I even transported her up to Modesto myself.” he replied to his partner. “I suppose a huge apology would be appropriate right about now?”

“I think that would be a start,” the tigress stated. She was greatly relieved that she wouldn’t have to hurt these two furs.

“Geez, where to start ...” the donkey mused. “Um, well, I’m so very sorry for subjecting you to the humiliation of dragging you out of here the last time we met. It was a very unfortunate incident,” he stated, looking very embarrassed. “And I’m very sorry for all of the bad things I said about you,” he added, looking down at the floor, unable to look her in the eyes.

“Apology accepted,” she replied to him, smiling ever so slightly.

Excuse me, Ma’am, I still need to run your ID and your permit,” the antelope stated, holding out his paw to her. “Regulations, Ma’am. And could you please put your weapons on the table for now, unloaded? Please?” He was trying to be nice about it, since his partner had caused such a scene already. They were both shocked as she removed her pistols, taking the magazine out of each one and jacking the live rounds out of the chambers before tabling them.

“Uh, I have one more, laying on the seat in the booth.” she pointed out.

“Would you carefully retrieve it, slowly, please?” the antelope asked, paw still on his service weapon. He breathed a sigh of relief when she unloaded and tabled it with the others. She then grabbed her purse, getting her wallet out to get her California Driver’s License out for him.

“Is that a baton or a can of mace in your purse?” the donkey asked, backing up a step. This lady was armed to the teeth and it was shaking him up just a bit.

“It’s a baton,” she replied, taking it out and giving it to him to examine.

“My God, lady, you’re just ready to declare war!” Roger commented.

“Listen, we had four armed males break into our house this morning and try to kill us.” Victoria stated reverently. “I have to be honest with you; I still feel just a little bit jumpy right now.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. That’s enough to scare anyone.” the junior officer commented.

“That’s why we came down here for an early dinner.” the stallion told them. “She was so shook up, I found her taking up smoking again after I went over to the station for a bit. She hasn’t done that since right after we married.”

“We’re sorry to have disturbed your peace and quiet,” the antelope told them, giving Victoria back her ID and permit card. “Please try to enjoy the rest of your evening, Detective, Ma’am,” he said, nodding at both of them politely.

“Thank you,” Torvald replied, nodding back as the two officers vacated the area. The manager, a middle-aged male onager, came to their table right after the officers had left, looking rather upset about the situation.

“Please enjoy your meals on the house,” he told them, putting a check on the table with “NO CHARGE” wrote on it in bold, red letters. “I will get you a different waitress and please have dessert on the house too.” Before they could say something he left, motioning for a different waitress to come over to where he was heading so he could give her directions.

“Did you here that, Vin? The boys failed!” the chipmunk said very quietly.

“Well, ya know what? Can you feel that? They’re agents!” the lapin replied. “The power they possess is giving me a huge effin’ headache! That’s why they failed!”

“Are you sure, Vin? You could just be havin’ a migraine or somethin’,” Ralph suggested, looking over at Victoria, who was putting the clips back in her pawguns. “Geez, I can see why the boys mighta failed. She’s a regular Bonny Parker, dude. She’s packin’ enough heat on herself to wipe out this entire restaurant single-pawed.”

“Listen Ralph, I’m sure about them being agents. She touched his paw and I had the worst pain shoot through my head at that exact moment.” Vinnie pointed out. “Besides, when she got pissed at the cops, my head felt like it was gonna explode.” He stopped to massage his temples, his head still pounding like crazy. “Furthermore, her eyes were gettin’ that glow that the bible speaks of. She scares the hell out of me, Ralph. She packs some serious power that I’m not sure I wanna tangle with.”

“Vin, if they’re agents, we can’t hurt them! You know what the bible says about that!” the chipmunk pointed out.

“Ralph, I know what it says but I heard they’re lookin’ for me.” he replied. “I’m in a ‘Catch-22’ situation here; If I don’t do somethin’, they’ll kill me. If I do somethin’ to stop them I’ll go to hell. I’m screwed either way.”

“Vinnie, you ...” The lapin cut him off.

“Ralph, there’s one other thing, too. I heard through the grapevine they might be Avengers.” he stated, taking a sip of his water to clear his throat. “If they are Avengers, we can’t kill ‘em. Avengers are immortal.”

“Vin, you’re screwed, ya know that? We gotta get you out of here before they figure out who the hell

you are and catch you.”

“Yeah, I’ll have to figure out what to do. I am so hopelessly screwed.” The lapin looked down at the meal that had been sat in front of him, suddenly realizing he had lost his appetite.

“Tor, maybe we need to quit, soon,” his mate suggested as they tried to finish their desserts of strawberry shortcake.

“I was thinking the very same thing,” he admitted, finally setting his fork down. “I’m full. Poke me with a fork, I’m done.”

“I’m full too.” she concurred, pushing her plate away from her. “Don’t poke me, I might pop.” she retorted. Her eyes were almost closed and he could hear her purring just a bit.

“Well, unless you want another cup of coffee, we should head home.” Torvald looked at the bill again, shaking his head in disgust. “What did that young femme think she was accomplishing, anyway? Concealed carry here is not as uncommon as it is back home.” He put a \$10 tip on the table, since the waitress they had been given was very attentive to their needs.

“It was probably because I’m a tiger, that’s why. What would normally be an RRC, not a full citizen. You know, it’s noticeable when a feline hasn’t had their claws capped.”

“I dunno, hon. Let’s go.”

They went to the cashier and gave her that check, noting that she just nodded and accepted it, no questions asked. The young goat bid them a safe trip home as they went out the door. Once they got to their car, Victoria asked her hubby a question.

“Tor, there’s a bunch of outlet stores here in town. Would you mind taking me over to them?”

“No, I don’t mind.” he replied. “I might like to find another black vest to replace my old one.”

“There’s a Big & Tall outlet store there. I know that for a fact.”

“Now you’re talking.” he commented, smiling at the thought of a shop with clothes that would fit him.

“Gah!” Vinnie spat out, trying to stand up on his shaky legs. Victoria and Torvald had been holding paws from their table, all the way out the front door. The power flow between them had almost killed the unfortunate lapin.

“Vin, you need me to take you home?” his partner asked.

“Naw, it’ll pass in a few minutes, Ralph. Thanks for askin’ though.”

“Geez, your nose and lips look pale, buddy.”

“Yeah, I know. That almost killed me, Ralph. Ya know, if they ever capture me, they could kill me very easily. That’s the danger of being a scryer; white power is like a poison if ya can’t control it an’ I was never trained to control it.”

Bill Harper was enjoying a quick meal at the Leonard’s Restaurant in Bakersfield, just off the 99 at the Rosedale Highway exit. He looked out the window, noticing the two furs paying too much attention to his vehicle. Maybe they were just gearheads. All he knew is he needed to find a Wal*Mart somewhere between here and Modesto this evening and find that Budget Inn the waitress had told him about.

This had been a long, expensive trip but he felt it was worth it. To find that sorry stallion, kill him and any family he had would make it all worth the trouble.

In the warehouse area of the Hunter Auto Parts[®] store in Fresno, the police had Brett and Randy cuffed to a post while they went through and cataloged the exotic parts that were in the ferret’s car outside.

“Well, we have a situation here,” the fox, Detective MacCallum stated, smiling at the two suspects. “We have you two on tape with audio, stealing exotic car parts and selling them to other furs.”

“We really don’t want you two,” The femme panther, Officer Miles told them casually. “We want the furs you’re selling the parts to.”

“Officer Miles?” the manager, a male tapir asked, holding a cordless phone in his paw. “I have Cathy Svensen on the line for you.”

“Thank you for coming down here at such short notice,” the femme feline said as she took the phone. “Mrs, Svensen, this is Officer Miles, Fresno PD.”

“Good evening, officer. What did you need to talk to me about?”

“I thought you might like to know that we might have a breakthrough on this theft ring.”

“You caught the thieves?” Cathy asked, biting her lover lip in anticipation.

“Yeah, your counter fur Brett Bunch was ordering parts then stealing them with a little help from his friend, Randy Knox.”

“Thank you for catching them in the act,” Cathy told the officer, glad that some of the problems had been taken care of.

“If I could get your permission, I would like to mark the parts, then get Randy to lead us to the buyers.”

“Sure, if this means the gangs that are buying this stuff get busted.”

“OK then, let me fax you a release, Mrs. Svensen so I can get this happening this evening.”

Willi Marie had given her cousin Dana a call to tell her the news. She knew Dana would call all of the other family members to let them know she was now expecting.

“Sweetie! I’m so glad for you and Richard!” the femme feline mix blurted out. “I just hope you don’t have the same problems I’m having.”

“Oh, I didn’t know you were having trouble with your pregnancy.” Willi commented.

“Well, yeah, I’ve had a rough go of it.” she admitted. “Because of my half-equine heritage and Dad’s size, my little one is enormous to the point that I look like I’m having twins. I’m also still having morning sickness, too.”

“Yeah, that could be a problem for me, too.” Willi mused. “You know, my little ones will be 2/3rds equine and 1/3 feline. That’s opposite your little one. Besides, I’m bigger boned than you so I might have less trouble with my pregnancy.”

“I see your point, Willi. You might do better than I am.”

“Um, I have to go, Hon. Richard fixed dinner tonight so I had better eat my tuna sandwiches while they’re fresh.”

“Take care, Willi. I’ll let everyone else know.”

The dark goat finally made it to Modesto, finding the Budget Inn without much difficulty at all. He checked in, carrying his luggage, a bag from Wal*Mart and his tool box up to the room. It might be a long night before he could get some sleep.

Setting up the small table in the room as a work bench, he took apart a common household digital timer for its guts, the timer and display. Soldering some leads to it, he added a battery and a holder with his hot glue gun. He then removed a block of Semtex and some Primacord from his luggage to create the package. He taped a primer to the Primacord, then wrapped that around the block of plastique.

Attaching the leads to the timer, he wrapped the block in cheap duck-tape to protect it. Using his glue gun again, he mounted the timer to the face of the package. Noting that everything was as it should be, he cleaned up his mess he had made, showered and turned in for the night.

Laying in bed, he thought over the next things he needed to do. He needed a van that looked like a service van so he could park near the doomed stallion’s home. He had driven by the houses on the block, noting the one that looked like the house from the news clip he had watched. The one at 1040 Magnolia had dried blood in the driveway so that must be the place. There would be plenty of room for him to crawl under that house, set the charge and get out, all the while looking like an inspector or something to that effect.