

*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 'Misha' (nee Kazinski), Walter Lee III, Joseph Franklin 'Joe' and Sarah Noel 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Hunter Auto Parts[®], Right Way Groceries[™] and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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!*

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“A Loss Of Rights”

By Kellan Meig'h

Chapter 30

In a non-descript office on an Earth-like planet, an aging human male investigator tallied up the body count on his tablet. Looking at the total dead, he shook his head in disgust. His partner, a tall capybara wandered in, looking at his daily load of paperwork.

“Well, how bad does it look?” the large rodent asked as he shuffled his workload.

“Enough for a conviction, at the very least.” the man replied. He then turned and looked up at his partner. “Reme, you ever had to prosecute an immortal?”

“Naw, never had to do that.” the huge furred one replied. “Mitch, you really intend to go forward with this?”

“No choice.” the male replied. “The boss already filed an official complaint with the court. I have to go forward.”

“You do know their adopted niece is untouchable?” Reme pointed out. “She’s a Master sorceress, Mitch. Think you want to lock horns with her? Besides, she’s a member of the Consortium’s review board *and* she’s pregnant with twins. Just think of what the Consortium would do to us if we harmed her.”

“Should have never given those witches and warlocks so damned much power,” the man mused, putting his paperwork in a folder. “Well, their sons are untouchable, too. Seems their absence would disrupt the timeline on their planet too severely.”

“I wish you luck with this deal. Maybe the Gods won’t come looking for you.”

“Whaddaya mean, Reme?”

“The Gods came after the last Celestial Investigator that brought charges against one of their warriors. He’s a very nice orange tree in the main plaza now.”

“You’re kiddin’ me, right? Reme, not that one lone orange tree?”

“Sorry, Mitch, I wish I were kidding. Ask Bill Fletcher the next time you see him. He was there when it happened.” the tall rodent replied. “The Gods do not find humor in our actions.”

“Should have never given them such latitude, either. Totally reckless.”

Barbara and Valerie walked around the vehicle again, looking at its overall condition. It was very clean for an eleven year-old Ford Explorer, having been partially restored when it was converted to fuel cell electric.

“How much power does it have?” the ocelot asked the mechanic that was selling it.

“It has a ninety horsepower AC motor coupled directly to the automatic transmission.” he replied, opening the hood for them. “I’ve added an auxiliary electro-hydraulic pump to operate the transmission and power steering when the primary motor isn’t turning. You’ll feel at home in it and you’ll appreciate the smooth acceleration from a dead stop.”

“How does that ninety horsepower relate to gasoline horsepower?” Valerie asked. No use in buying an underpowered vehicle.

“It’s about the same as the two hundred horsepower gas V-6 that was originally installed.” he replied.

“How far can you go on a tank of hydrogen?” Barbara asked, looking at the level of craftsmanship that had been displayed in the execution.

“About five hundred and fifty miles on the freeway,” he replied. “So, how about a test drive?”

Conrad looked up at the huge wolf opposite him, staring him down. This fur had already hit him hard a few times during this pre-season game against the Portland dolphins, so he knew this fur meant to play for keeps. Conrad closed his eyes and made a silent prayer to the gods for some inspiration just as Jack Meadows, their quarterback, started the play in his familiar voice.

“Thirty-seven! Thirty seven! Hut! Hut!” the gray equine shouted, then the scrimmage began when the ball was snapped.

Conrad slipped past the canid linesfur, sprinting through a hole in the line to look over his shoulder for the ball. Just a simple down and out play. No problem. In The Zone. Simple.

He looked back at the line just as Jack threw the ball his way, high. The tiger watched the ball spiral slowly, time compressing as the play ran its course.

“Under it, looking good. Quick glance around, no furs near me. Quick wipe of the paws on the jersey. That spiral ... ball’s almost in my paws.”

Conrad could hear the blood pumping in his ears as he sprinted down field, keeping an eye peeled for that ball.

“Got it! Pull it close, trapping it. Got it. The endzone. About forty yards. Gotta go. Now.”

He was picking them up and putting them down in a maniac sprint. There were few players that were faster than him, as far as he knew.

“Some motion. What’s that? Quick glance the other way. Where the devil did he come from? Oh well, gotta go!”

The wolf had managed to catch up to and actually get in front of Conrad, now headed back at an angle towards the tiger to stop him from making an endzone sprint. The feline put his head down, slamming into the gray canid with his left shoulder, hard.

“Uunngghh!” Conrad grunted as the two of them collided, the sounds of bone breaking being plainly audible. He fell to the ground hard, ball still in his paws, watching the sparks in his vision as it momentarily faded to black. Somewhere off in the distance, a whistle blew. Was the play over?

“Svensen! You OK?” the referee asked as he tried to pry the ball from the feline’s grip. “Svensen!”

“Uh, yeah, I’m fine,” he replied, trying to blink away the stars in his line of sight and shake off the cobwebs.

“No, don’t move,” the referee told him, putting a paw to his chest to make him stay down. “You took a serious hit, Svensen. You had better let the medics look at you.”

“I’m fine!” the feline stated, then attempted to sit up. The world started spinning violently around him, convincing him otherwise. “Well, maybe I’m not,” he finally admitted, laying back down and closing his eyes, swallowing hard to keep the meager contents of his stomach down.

“And it looks like number eighty-nine, Wide Receiver Conrad Svensen of the Sacramento 49’ers was hurt on that play, running the ball thirty-four yards for a first down until he was stopped by number sixteen, Cal Worthington. It’s possible that Cal was injured on that play, too.” the announcer pointed out.

“Conrad, how many fingers am I holding up?” the team’s doctor asked after he arrived and knelt by the injured player.

“Geez, Doc. Hold your paw still, will ya so I can see it!” the injured tiger replied. “Look Doc. I just got my bell rung, that’s all.” His head was really swimming from the violent impacts with the wolf and ground and nothing seemed to be in focus at the moment.

“Alright, sit up,” the doctor suggested, smiling slightly when Conrad kept his groceries down after doing so. “How do you feel?”

“My head’s ringing,” he admitted. It wasn’t the whole truth but it would do. “Um, get me to my feet, please? I’m walking off.”

“We can put you on a stretcher ...” Conrad cut the doctor off.

“No, Doc. I’m walking off.”

Two of his teammates got him to his feet, waiting for him to get his legs again. He nodded, letting them support him as they walked over to the sidelines. He remembered to wave at his family that were sitting up in the seats at the forty-five yard line, just so they would know he was OK. Conrad was thinking it might have been less painful to have ran into a brick wall.

“It looks like number eighty-nine, Conrad Svensen might have just had his bell rung. He’s looking pretty good as they help him off the field. Number sixteen of the Portland Dolphins, Cal Worthington, is still on the ground while the medics look after him.” the announcer added.

Conrad looked back to see them putting Cal on a backboard while they supported his neck. He hoped he didn’t injure that fur too badly. They put the player on the small vehicle used for transportation, then started driving slowly off the field with him. The field scooter was taking him towards the gate reserved for an ambulance, so this didn’t look good. Maybe it was just a precaution.

“Conrad, you’re hurt, aren’t you?” Ron Marshall, the ursine center asked while they headed for the sidelines.

“Got my bell rung,” the tiger replied to the brown bear, patting him on the back. “No worse than usual, Ron.”

“Geez, I heard you hit him from where I was tackled!” Jack stated. “It sounded like a damned car wreck!”

“Wasn’t that bad,” Conrad retorted as they sat him down on the bench. His head was still ringing a bit from that heavy pair of impacts.

“Good play, Svensen,” the head coach said to him as he walked by. “Take a rest, son. You played a good game.”

“Thanks, coach.” Conrad replied, taking a drink offered to him by the team’s medical crew. He stole a glance at the scoreboard, noting they were ahead 33 to 12 with three minutes left in the game.

“Alright, Svensen, let’s try his again. How many fingers am I holding up?” the team doctor asked for a second time. Doc Bellingham was very concerned, considering just how hard he had hit the canid.

“Three. You’re holding up three.” Conrad replied. He was still afraid to try to lift his left arm, though. He was positive he had broken something ... He then shook his head, remembering he was immortal at the moment and whatever had broken was most likely healed by now. Lifting his arm, he did a few windmills to confirm his suspicions. No pain. Yup, still immortal. Darn.

“Good Grief! Did you see how hard Conrad hit that linesfur?” Axel asked, nudging his twin sister to get her attention.

“Yeah, I did.” Gytha replied. “You know, that reminds me of Coach Aslaug, when she would play in those pick-up games in the park near our home. Just like a truck hitting a brick wall.”

“Mommy! Is Unka Conrad OK?” Roger Jr. asked, tugging at her sleeve.

“Yes, he’s fine. He waved at us, honey. That’s his sign he’s OK.” she replied.

“Are we going to Unka Conrad’s house for dinner?” the small gray colt asked his mother.

“You just want him to make you a peanut butter and pickle sandwich,” Gytha pointed out, tousling up his mane.

“Yeah! An Unka Conrad sammich!” the little one shouted, smiling widely. “I like Unka Conrad’s sammiches.”

Cathy looked back at her nephew in the next row up, wondering if it was a Svensen, Connell or Delancey thing concerning those mixture of flavors.

“Little Roger, you really don’t like those flavors, do you?” she asked, patting him on the knee.

“I like Unka Conrad’s sammiches!” he squealed, smiling at his aunt.

“Cathy, did the police set up a sting on those parts thieves?” Gytha asked. She really needed some direction so she could reconcile the books for Hunter Auto Parts.

“Yeah, they’re going to move in the next few days. I just can’t believe those two were stealing from us.” she commented.

“Not to change the subject but, um, did you two buy that Explorer?” Axel asked, looking over at his aunt Valerie and Barbara.

“Yeah, we did,” Barbara proffered up. “It seemed like a good buy and the test drive cinched the deal.”

“Why didn’t you drive it up here, then?” he asked.

“We came up with Brett and Dana.” she pointed out. “It made more sense to carpool and split the bio-fuel between all of us.”

“I had forgotten Brett’s four door Ranger was a dual-fuel diesel.” Axel offered up.

“I just wish it was bigger, cab-wise. It’s not big enough for tall people in the back.” the tiger pointed out.

“Are you afraid your little one will be tall?” Willi Marie asked Brett.

“Look how tall Dad and Axel are! Do you think my little one might be short like me?” Dana pointed out.

“Dana, Honey, I’m not sure that six and a half feet tall is considered short, Sweetheart,” her husband

brought up. “You’re taller than me by several inches.”

The Immortal couple and Clyde arrived at their destination, Matt Black’s house. They were preparing to go inside when Torvald’s cell phone rang.

“Detective Svensen,” he answered, noting the number was not available to him.

“Detective, this is Vincent James,” the voice on the other end stated. “I want to talk with you for a few minutes, just you and me.”

“What’s the matter with right now?” the huge stallion asked.

“Well, nothing, I guess,” the lapine replied.

“What is it you want to talk about?” Torvald felt there was something ‘odd’ about this conversation.

“I wanna arrange my surrender.”

“How about you just come down to the station and give yourself up?” the stallion suggested.

“Um, no, it’s not that simple. I want to plead guilty to some misdemeanor charge and do two years, tops.”

“I’m not sure ...” Vincent cut him off.

“Let me do that and I’ll disband *The Legion*. Scout’s honor.”

“Let me get this right; you’ll disband *The Legion* if you can do only two years in jail?”

“That’s what I’m tellin’ ya. I know what you and your wife are because I can feel your power. I have no inklings in tanglin’ with either one of ya.”

“So, how do we do this?”

“You talk with the DA and have him set this up. I trust you have the ability to make this happen.”

“I can’t make any promises,” the stallion warned.

“Ya know, somehow I know you’ll make this happen.”

Torvald frowned as the line went dead. Looking back at the display on his cellphone to confirm what he had observed earlier, he noted the number wasn’t available. That made sense; use an unregistered cellphone to remain anonymous.

“Who was that?” Victoria asked, noting her husband’s unease.

“It was Vincent James. He wants to bargain his surrender.”

“You are kidding me!” Clyde blurted out.

“No, he seems to think I can arrange this,” Torvald replied. “I ... I just don’t know.”

Conrad was smiling as he fixed Roger Jr. a peanut butter and pickle sandwich, somewhat of a tradition with them. The rest of the now-huge extended Connell-Svensen family were milling about in his home, enjoying an after-game victory celebration. Even Conrad’s father had made it up from Irvine to see him play. The elder Parks was busy telling Wally how Conrad had always been a very good athlete in school.

“Conrad, that was a gruesome hit you put on that number sixteen player,” Axel commented as he pulled another slice of pizza from a box on the counter by his brother.

“Tell me about it!” Conrad shot back, then leaned in close to Axel. “Listen, don’t spread it around but my bell is still ringing a bit,” he proffered up to his brother quietly as he gave his nephew his sandwich and retrieved himself a piece of pizza.

“You reminded me of Coach Aslaug, the way you hit him like a ton of bricks,” the tall equine admitted.

Conrad gestured for his brother to follow him out to the garage. Once Axel was through the door, Conrad pushed it shut with his foot. Conrad then opened the tailgate of Cathy’s 1953 Chevrolet 3100 pickup and motioned for Axel to have a seat on it.

“Is this something serious you want to talk about?” the taller Svensen brother asked.

“Yeah, it is. Axel, you remember that mission where Willi, James and I were pulled into it by Dad making a wish?”

“yeah, I remember that clearly, even though Dana, Gytha and I weren’t technically there. So what about that mission?”

“Well, we were all kinda shot up with arrows and such.” Conrad stated. “You know what, let’s face facts; Willi and I were dying. Hrist and her sisters took us to Valhalla where we were all healed up.”

“That’s when Mom thought they had made Willi immortal, huh?” Axel queried.

“Well, they didn’t make Willi immortal, they made me immortal.” Axel dropped his pizza and soda on the garage floor from shock.

“No ... Shit ...” he said reverently to his striped brother’s statement then scooped up his mess.

“Eyr mistakenly made me immortal when she healed me.” Conrad pointed out. “She’s working on a plan to make me mortal again.”

“Um, let me get this straight; you’re immortal now. I thought you and Dad tested that theory while you were still up there.” the tall one mused, pointing at the ceiling.

“We did. If you want me to show you, I’ll be glad to.” Conrad told his brother. “It must have been a delayed reaction or something like that.”

“So, Cathy knows about this?”

“Yeah, Mom and Cath were both there while Eyr examined me.”

“I suppose Mom had a fit?” Axel asked. He was kind of stunned by this news that his brother had laid on him just now.

“You know, Axel, she wasn’t that upset like you think she would have been. She was very concerned but she didn’t try to kill Eyr or anything like that.”

“That seems kind of amazing, Conrad. I would have guessed she would have went berserk.” Axel suggested. “sometimes I wonder where it will all end. You know what I mean?”

The tiger nodded his head, musing about the possibilities.

“Yeah, I do. I wonder if I’ll be dead and gone, lying there in my casket with Mom and Dad looking down at me. I’ll be all gray and they’ll look like they do right now. Seems plausible, doesn’t it?”

Before Axel could reply, they were interrupted by some fur opening the door.

“Hey you two!” Wally said loudly from the doorway, startling the brothers. “You two hiding out here?”

“Oh, hey, Uncle Wally. No, we were just getting ready to come back inside.” Conrad proffered up.

“That was a great game, Conrad. You looked in exceptional form on the field.” the white tiger stated.

“Thanks, Uncle Wally.”

“You know, If I hadn’t messed up my life, I might have played professionally.” the white tiger proffered up. “I was pretty good as a receiver in my day,” he added, holding the door while they made their way back inside.

“So, do you think I could get you to come look at my garage?” Axel asked his uncle. “I want to get the service upgraded to a two hundred ampere panel and a 220 outlet put in to run a compressor.”

“Yeah, I could do that.” Wally replied. “You get the permit, then I’ll assist you. That way, I don’t have to pay wages to one of my furs and you can have a legally installed service upgrade.”

“Is it that complicated?” Cathy asked, having overheard that conversation.

“Yeah, I do a lot of re-fits for furs that have no clue what they’re doing, then they have their electricity cut off by PG&E until the work is certified by a licensed electrician.”

“They can do that?” Axel inquired.

I'm afraid so, Axel. I had to do one just a few days ago, over in Ceres. I'm surprised it didn't burn down or the furs that did it didn't get killed. The main service wires had been twisted together at the drop to the house and taped. Nothing to actually crimp them or connect them. Way scary."

"OK, if you give me a list, I can get what we need." Axel stated.

"Yeah, um, you take some pictures of your current service panel, then make some measurements where you want the new service for a compressor and email them to me. I'll make you a list of things and I'll drive a truck down with a bunch of hardware in it, just in case. We'll do it on a weekend." Wally replied.

"That would be great," the tall equine said with a smile. "Then I wouldn't have to unplug the dryer every time I wanted to use my compressor."

"I'm sure Madelyn will appreciate that," Wally said as he patted the tall one on the shoulder.

In downtown San Francisco, in the offices of Dewey, Cheatem and Howe, attorneys, a gopher sat at his desk, going over some last minute paperwork. He shook his head, noting the Salt Lake City area still hadn't attracted a big following to his ranks. His furs in that area needed to bring up *The Legion's* numbers so they could keep that area strong.

"Mr. Ross, call on line 3, a Mister Vincent James," the intercom announced, breaking his concentration.

"Thanks, Velma," he said after keying his secretary's button. He took the pawset off of the hook, resting it on his shoulder so he could work and talk at the same time. "Good evening, Vincent."

"Hello, Kerry. Listen, I called ya back to tell ya I set up a deal with that stallion," the lapin told his next-in-command.

"And how did he take this?" Kerry asked.

"Well, he seemed apprehensive, ya know." Vinnie admitted.

"I'll tell you what; I'll drive out there tomorrow and you'll set up a meeting with him." Mr. Ross suggested. "We'll hash this out and I'll act as your legal counsel. I don't want to underground the organization for two years unless you're going to be safe in jail."

"I told him I would disband the organization." Vinnie proffered up.

"That's fine, Vincent. He doesn't have to know we're planning differently."

"OK, let me set this up, then."

"Make sure this meeting is in an out of the way place, will you?" Kerry asked.

"Will do. Talk to you tomorrow."

“I will be seeing you tomorrow, then.” Mr. Ross said as he ended the call.

The gopher paged his secretary, asking her to come into his office.

“What do you need, Sir?” the shapely mouse asked.

“Wanda, make sure my calendar is clear for tomorrow. I will need my chauffeur to drive me to Keyes, wherever that little cesspool in the central valley is. I need to meet with Mr. Vincent James.”

“Right away, Sir,” his hired help said as she quickly left his office.

Dinner at Matt Black’s home was finally over, so the assembled furs were making their way out to the living room to discuss things. Alan Samick pulled the tigress aside so he could talk with her privately.

“Um, Victoria, about that comment I made at the Identification Center about wearing the stripes off of your back in bed ...” The tigress stopped him from continuing.

“Alan, I was in my mating cycle with no meds to hold it back, so I don’t expect an apology.” she said as she held his wrist in her paw.

“I still feel bad about it.” he admitted to her.

“No, listen, Alan. You had no idea who I was. It was a regrettable incident so let’s put it behind us.” she suggested.

“Well, I guess so ...” Alan looked up to see the tigress kind of staring off into space. “Victoria?”

“Everybody get down! Now!” she shouted, pushing the roan stallion to the floor.

Just as everyone hit the floor, machine gun fire from outside tore through the front of the house, breaking windows, destroying furniture, knocking pictures from the wall and generally causing havoc.