

*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Hunter Auto Parts[®], Right Way Groceries[™] and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Kellan Meig'h and may not be published or reproduced in any form without express written permission.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 31

The room became quiet as the sounds of a fast-accelerating car outside diminished as it drove away. A female voice could be heard moaning from the area near the couch.

“Jo! Are you hurt?” Matt asked as he made his way across the floor to his mate, staying low on purpose.

“My right leg,” she replied, scooting herself up against the couch. “It’s bleeding pretty bad, Hon.” Matt looked it over, then put pressure on her femoral artery to staunch the flow of blood some. It wasn’t completely stopped but it would save her life, preventing her from bleeding out.

Torvald was using his cell phone to make a call, most likely for backup.

“Modesto PD, are you reporting an emergency?” the femme fur on the other end asked.

“This is Detective Torvald Svensen, badge 3781. There’s been a drive-by shooting at Detective Matt Black’s home.” he replied. “Respond units and an ambulance. We have one fur down.”

“Will do, Detective. Is the furson down a perp?”

“No, it’s Matt’s wife Joyce Black.”

“Oh No! Tell her I’ll have an EMT unit there for her in just a few minutes.” the fur stated as she used another line to get things rolling. Momentarily, sirens were heard off in the distance, headed their way.

“We have a problem, here,” Alan offered up. “The Reverend Roundtree is dead.” The zebra was staring at the wall lifelessly, lying in a pool of his own blood that was growing larger by the minute. Alan reached over and closed the reverend’s eyes out of respect for a trusted friend and fur of the cloth.

“There’s a huge leak in one of our organizations,” Clyde pointed out. “There were very few furs that knew about our meeting tonight. Someone was hoping to get us all, by the looks of it.”

“Listen, all of us are going up to a safe house after we’re done here.” Alan proffered up. “As soon as Jo can be moved, I’ll arrange for a doctor to bring her up to the house afterwards.”

“No, either we all go together or not at all,” the injured gray femme pony said from her resting spot. “We will all stick together until it’s over.”

“As soon as we can, we need to go after this Vincent James,” Torvald stated. “He’s most likely the major part of our problem.” He then turned his attention back to the phone in his paw. “Yeah, I’m still on the line. You had better send out a coroner, too. We also have one DB, one of our furs.”

Matt got in the ambulance with his wife to go with her to the hospital to be by her side while she was being patched up. The paramedics that had tended to her had stopped the bleeding enough to transport her, telling Matt that it didn’t look too bad.

“Um, Tor, do you think we need to ask for backup from the boss?” Victoria asked, still trying to get her nerves under control. This incident had really shaken her, to the point she was almost ready to just go home and say forget it. This was all out of paw and it needed to be stopped at any cost now.

“You know, maybe that wouldn’t be such a bad idea,” the stallion replied, giving thought to it. They usually didn’t ask for help unless the situation was out of control, like right now. “As soon as we’re alone enough for me to do so, I’ll call for some assistance.”

“Are you both all right?” Alan asked as he came back into the house. “I don’t mind sharing with you that I’m pretty shook up.”

“I think we are too.” the blond stallion retorted. “How is Joyce? Did the EMT’s give you anything?”

“She’s doing fair, according to the EMT’s. She’ll probably just need stitches and crutches to get around on if she’s lucky.” Alan conveyed to them.

“We seem to be drawing a lot of excess attention, you know,” Torvald offered up. “I especially hate the fact that Johnnie Roundtree died. He had so many other good things he could have accomplished in his lifetime. Maybe the gods will be listening to me and give him a reprieve.”

“Look, I think we all understand. This is getting out of paw so we need to move quickly to shut this down.” the smaller roan stallion suggested. “Let’s go to the safe house and regroup. I think we might be able to move tomorrow or the next day to end this insanity, as long as we know where to find Mr. Vincent James.”

Willi Marie finished setting up some chairs for the Review Board to meet for a second time in her home. She was glad they had decided that until she gave birth, they would meet here. The various sentients that made up the board were very nice, all of them welcoming her warmly. That went doubly so for the huge femme wolf-like creature that gave her name as Mala, no last name. Mala had come bearing snacks for the members, a hard candy that was very sweet yet fiery beyond description.

Mala had come early again, helping to set up things. Willi was still kind of shocked by her appearance; her fur being a very vivid turquoise color with white accents down her front from her throat to her elbows and knees. What really amazed her was the fact that Mala wore only a heavy gold necklace and matching bracelets. Apparently on her planet, the female wore no clothing while the male had to cover up completely from head to toe or be jailed for improper appearance in public. It wasn't as if Mala needed clothing, anyway. Her fur was dense enough to obscure her private bits from view.

"I think we are ready," the huge vulpine said as she straightened up a few chairs.

"Um, did you hear what we were going to discuss?" the femme equine mix asked.

"I understand a sorcerer was caught using his magic for personal political gain," the blue fur replied in her deep, resonant voice. "That breaks about fifteen laws at the very least."

While Mala was giving Willi an overview of the major laws governing personal gain, the others began to filter into her living room.

The meeting was started and the male skunk named Melvin Bosch presented the entire case. Apparently the fur in question had used his magic to become what amounted to a governor of a precinct, which violated a total of twenty-three basic laws.

"I move that we vote to bind his magic for twenty years, the same number that he used them for personal gain." Mel offered.

"That is overlooking the fact that he manipulated mortal minds to skew votes." the human female Rhonda Fleming offered up. "That is a capital level offense." the red-haired female pointed out.

"Um, what's the punishment for that?" Willi asked out of curiosity. She was flipping through one manual that didn't seem to have the punishments listed alphabetically.

"Wilhelmine, the routine punishment would be permanent binding of his powers." Mala told her.

"Is that a fitting punishment?" she asked, trying to play the voice of reason.

"It is very fitting but somewhat drastic," the green lapin named Bill Newsome offered up. "We would have to put him under watch for a while. Some beings cannot survive without using their powers at least once a day. Some ... die ... without it."

The review board then decided to pick apart each charge, studying whether or not it was fairly charged. It was tedious, deciding if the individual was actually doing what he was charged with or if it was an overzealous police-being using too much latitude. Eventually it came down to charging him with excess use of a 'guiding spell', trying to get others to see his viewpoint by magical means.

"The individual will have his powers bound for a period of no more than five years. After the time has expired, he will be unbound." the tall green dragon, Hal, said formally and banged his gavel on the coffee table. "Wow, that sounds better than my podium," he mused afterwards, giving the table another authoritative tap with his gavel. "I'll have to study this sometime to see if I can reproduce this sound." he added, looking the table over.

“Come on, Hal. You’ve been looking for that ‘perfect’ gavel sound for centuries. Why don’t you just face facts; there *is* no perfect sound.” the mustelid pointed out.

“This is kind of confusing,” Willi Marie offered up. “I still don’t understand how you find the information so quickly. I can’t even see a pattern to the way this one manual is laid out!”

“Maybe I should stay behind for a bit so you can learn to navigate the manuals,” Mala stated. “It’s really not too hard once you know the layout.”

The filly nodded, smiling at the thought of some much-needed instruction.

“I would appreciate it if you would stay,” Wilhelmine told the blue wolf-like femme. “I would really benefit from some help here.”

While the others filtered out slowly, the two femmes put the family room back together, putting the spare chairs back around the dining table.

“Willi, would your husband be startled by my appearance?” Mala asked as they swept the family room for anything out of place.

“Now that you mention it, he would.” Willi replied.

Mala made a motion with her paws, making an black knee-length ‘A’ line dress appear on her.

“Is this better?” the big vulpine femme asked.

“That looks good on you.” the filly commented.

“It sure feels weird, though. I never wear clothes unless it’s necessary, like right now.” the huge blue-white femme wolf creature commented. Richard came through the front door just about that time, putting his jacket on the coat rack in one smooth motion.

“Willi, I’m home!” he said with a cheerful note. “Hey, are you interested in going out to ... eat?” he said, his voice trailing off at the sight of the huge blue and white femme standing with his wife. “Uh, Hello?” he offered up with an unsure tone, giving Mala a nervous smile.

“Hi, Sweetie. This is Mala, a member of the review board. Mala, this is my husband, Richard.” Willi said as she introduced them to one another.

“Uh, nice to meet you,” he said softly, noting the femme in question was almost as tall as he was. Her eyes were the thing that drew his gaze; they were a very pale violet color with an oval pupil.

“It is nice to finally meet Wilhelmine’s mate,” she replied, walking up to him and taking his paw in hers. Mala held it up so the palm faced her and sniffed his fingers, then licked his palm lightly. “You are a very loving fur, Richard. You speak truthfully and you’re possessive of Wilhelmine. You are also afraid of her powers and your unborn children’s powers.” she stated for the record.

“You could tell all that by my paw?” he asked.

"I am 'somewhat' psychic," she offered up. "What I did with your paw is a custom on our planet, like kissing is here on yours." She looked Richard up and down appreciatively. "I now see why Willi Marie took you as a mate. You are very .. um ... exciting to be near." This made the huge gray one blush noticeably.

"Um, thank you," he finally said, obviously embarrassed.

"No, I am very serious," Mala stated, stepping back a few steps. "You're having a very profound effect on me."

"Um, sorry, I don't know how to not be exciting," Richard offered up.

"I will get used to your presence in time," she told him, smiling at his dumbfounded appearance.

"Well, I hate to be rude but I need to get into some comfortable clothing," Richard told Mala as he excused himself.

"You have found the perfect mortal mate for a sorceress, Willi. He will stand beside you no matter what," Mala stated once Richard had left the room. "You are very lucky."

Outside the Immortal Couple's temporary home in Modesto, CA., one of the policefurs guarding the house stepped to the curb to have a smoke. The black and white lapin safetied his CAR-9 carbine and pulled a pack of Lucky Strike non-filter cigarettes from his right shirt pocket. Casually tapping a smoke out of the pack, he lit it up, taking a long drag afterwards.

"Gah, this has been a long night," he stated to nobody in particular as he enjoyed his one vice. His cell phone garnered his attention by vibrating, letting him know he had an incoming call.

"Carl," he said in his way of greeting furs on the phone, taking another long drag on his smoke afterwards.

"Hey Carl, this is Tim. We think we took out the tigress and stallion with a drive-by," the fur on the other end stated, making the lapin's jaw drop in response.

"Who the hell told you to do that?" he asked, seeming to be stunned by that information. "We were just supposed to try to scare them off, you idiot!"

"Kerry or Vinnie haven't called with orders lately. We did it on our own," the fur replied.

"You stupid shit! They're the Lord's agents! You'll go to hell for killing them!" he spat out.

"No fur will know we did it, Carl," the fur on the other end stated confidently.

"Erm, too late. They know," he said nervously as a rifle barrel was pressed into his neck and the cellphone removed from his paw.

Lieutenant Cahill looked at the lapin sitting in front of him, trying his best to resist the urge to disembowel the traitor sitting in his midst.

“Sir, if I could offer up ...” The two-tone rabbit was silenced with a backpaw across the face.

“Don’t you fucking even think of making up an excuse!” Deke hissed. “I trusted you! You broke that trust, you worthless piece of shit! You’re unworthy to wear that uniform, Sergeant Barrows!”

“Sorry, Sir.” Carl offered up. He was met with another backpaw to the other side of the muzzle, causing the lapin to taste blood in his mouth.

“You know Bruce wants to take you out and execute you right now for high treason,” the ursine stated in a malevolent tone. He sipped his coffee, thinking this over. He looked around his office at the awards and merits he had earned for himself. He was a good soldier and an outstanding policefur. He would have never done this; went over to the side of *The Legion*.

“Sir? I can give you names, addresses and phone numbers if that would help?”

“Start talking and I’ll see if you know enough to keep you alive.” the lieutenant suggested. “The Reverend Roundtree died in that drive-by, something that was totally uncalled for. Matt’s wife Joyce was injured, too. I want the trigger-fur’s name so I can kill him myself. Slowly. No, very slowly.” It was clear the ursine was very upset at the moment.

“Sir, If you would take the pawcuffs off, I could write down what I know.” the lapin suggested. The fur in question had his paws cuffed behind him, the chain wrapped through the center rungs of the chair back.

“Not a hope of that happening, soldier. You’ll stay just like that until I decide to let you go with a court marshall or just kill you where you sit.”

“Court marshall?” he blurted out.

“Well, currently you are classified as a traitor, soldier. I have no choice in the matter now.”

“Aw dammit,” Carl muttered under his breath. “Sir, if I’m gonna go to prison, here’s what I know ...”

Joyce Black had been patched up at the local hospital emergency room, stabilized enough to move her to the safe house as soon as their transportation arrived.

“Torvald, we’ll send a scout to check out the location of this Vincent James,” Alan stated. “Once we’re sure of his location, we’ll move in and try to take him alive.”

“He wants to meet with me to arrange his surrender,” Torvald replied, giving some thought to the situation. “If I had a tracking device on me when I went to this meeting, you could follow me and capture him that way.” Clyde thought about this for a moment, then spoke his mind.

“I would rather use a blackout van with a small detachment inside. Once Torvald goes inside wherever this meeting is to be, we can surround the place. I want Vincent James alive to stand trial.” the dark stallion suggested.

“I can try to arrange for an armored blackout van,” Alan told them. “I’ll call Deke and see what he has at his disposal. We can figure this out later because our ride is here.”

Outside, a van with a local bakery’s logo on it pulled up and backed into the emergency room’s unloading area. A hedgehog casually slid from the driver’s seat, walked around to the back and opened it, allowing another fur, an armed chinchilla, to step down. They came inside with a stretcher for Joyce to loaded onto so they could subsequently head up to the safe house.

“Torvald, I’ll have a fur bring your cruiser up to the safe house for you,” Alan told him as they prepared Matt’s wife for transport. “My fur will take every back road known to furkind to ensure he’s not being followed.”

“Thanks, Alan,” the tall blond stallion replied, giving him his keys to his car. “Let’s get Joyce in the van and get out of here.”

A tall, muscular leopard appaloosa filly and a rather fit lioness padded stealthily through a building, looking for a certain room. Finding it, the femme equine used her strength to carefully ‘open’ the locked door as quietly as possible.

Crossing the room quickly, they found the proper small compartment in the wall, carefully opening it as to not make a lot of noise. Sliding the drawer out of the wall, they took the covering off the object on the tray.

“Hrist, is this the stallion we’re looking for?” the lioness asked, grimacing slightly at the blood on his chest fur. It was coagulated, dark and somewhat offensive to her feline sense of smell.

“Yes, Elin, it is him.” the taller femme replied after looking at the tag hanging from his ankle. They gripped his arms, closed their eyes and shimmered out with the dead stallion in their possession, leaving a coroner’s assistant to explain the missing body the next day.

The Reverend Roundtree slowly opened his eyes, squinting at the light in the room. He was hurting, his chest felt like a feral bull had run into him full tilt.

“Oooohh,” he moaned softly, taking a deep breath that hurt badly. He let it out slowly, trying to keep from hurting himself further.

“John Roundtree, how are you feeling?” the huge femme fur, maybe a canid asked. She felt his pulse, then his forehead.

“What hit me ... um, I remember now ... I was shot in the chest.” he replied carefully. “Who are you and where am I?” he asked after looking around at the room he was in.

“You are in Valhalla and I am Eyr,” the huge fur stated for the record. “You were dead, my striped friend.”

“I see the stallion is awake,” Hrist stated from the doorway, smiling at him. “I am glad you were able to heal him.” she added.

“This was not easy, Hrist. He was dead for some time before you retrieved him.” the healer retorted.

“Now hold on a minute, ladies. You’re telling me I was dead?” he asked carefully, trying unsuccessfully to prop himself up on his elbows. It was just too much for him at the moment so he decided to just lie back and rest some more.

“Yes, you were dead, John. Odin decided you had more to do before you reached your final reward.” Eyr responded.

“So ... I’m no longer dead.” he mused. “Will I go back to my home now?”

“When you are ready, my striped friend. You are still too weak to travel at the moment.”

Conrad was busy cleaning up his garage, his usual chore when he had time to take care of it. He was sweeping the floor, getting rid of the leaves and debris that had blown in with the breeze. The feline was worried about his parents and he really wished they were home again, out of harm’s way.

“This is just crazy. I really wish there was some way I could help out to get Mom and Dad back home,” he said to no one in particular.

“Would you really wish that?” a female voice asked. Conrad turned to see a black feline femme with the most expressive copper eyes, leaning against his workbench.

“Who are you and how the hell did you sneak in here?” Conrad asked, concerned there may be more intruders in his home.

“I am Maria Consuela Cortez and I just appeared here,” she replied with a slight smile.

“Are you an angel or a demon?” the tiger asked, very concerned for his and his wife’s safety.

“No, I told you already that I’m Maria Consuela Cortez. I was born in what we now call Florida on August 8th, 1722. I’m neither an angel or a demon. I am just me.”

“Erm, you’re scaring me,” the tiger stated carefully. “If you’re not an angel, a demon or a sorceress, then what are you?”

“I really can’t answer that because I don’t know. I just know I never age and I can facilitate things. I came here because I heard your request to help your parents.”

Conrad sat down on a stool and looked at the femme, studying her. She still hadn’t moved from the

spot he first saw her in.

“Do you really wish to help your parents?” she asked again.

“I do,” he replied, giving her a crooked smile. “I want them home before something bad happens to them.”

“I can help you to help them out by sending you to them.” she stated.

“Conrad, who are you talking to?” Cathy asked as she came into the garage. “Are you a neighbor?” she asked, spotting Maria standing by the workbench.

“I am Maria and I have offered to help your husband to assist his parents.” the black femme responded. “He seemed very sincere in his request so I felt obligated to help him.”

“You know, did you help my sister-in-law recently? Willi Marie was sent to the planet where my in-laws were after she said a prayer for them.” the femme cougar asked.

“I did assist her.” Maria replied. “I can help Conrad, since he seems upset by his parent’s absence.”

“I can’t go to that parallel world looking like this. I could be detained for not wearing caps over my teeth, from what Dad told me.” Conrad stated.

“Maybe if you looked like your father?” she suggested. Conrad looked down at his paws to see they were covered in a blond coat with cream colored fingernails.

“What the heck?” he blurted out, lifting a leg to see a hoof where his foot was earlier. He looked up at Cathy to observe she was looking back at him with a strange look on her face.

“Oh My ... Conrad! You look like Axel, only shorter!” his wife blurted out. “You even have that very faint tiger striping on your arms!” He got up from his perch and went to a mirror mounted on the wall to look at himself, discovering Cathy was absolutely right. He did look like his brother.

“Am I stuck like this?” he asked, noting he could stand and walk on his new hooves just fine.

“No, when you return to this parallel world, you will go back to looking like yourself again.”

“How long will I be gone? I have a game coming up in a couple of days.” he pointed out for the record.

“All of you will be home in two days time.” she stated. “This I know for a fact. It is possible you are the catalyst that ends the struggle where your parents are.”

“Conrad, you remember your promise to me? You promised that you would stay out of the business?” Cathy brought up.

“I know, Hon. It’s just that I can’t shake this feeling Mom and Dad are in trouble again.” he replied. “I need to go there and help them.”

“Give me a moment to locate your parents, then I will take you to them.” the dark femme told him.

“Well, I might need to take some weaponry,” Conrad retorted as he went to give his mate a hug and a kiss. “Cath, I’ll be home soon. I love you.”

“I love you too, sweetheart. Please be careful?” she asked in return.

“I will, Hon.” Conrad replied as he looked over to see Maria had made a neat stack out of his firearms.

“It is time to go, Conrad.” the dark femme stated as they both shimmered out of sight.

Dana Kashnikov sat her highly customized Ruger 10-22 rifle down on the bench, took off her respirator and looked through the spotting scope to see her last five rounds were just one ragged hole in the target, right where she intended to put them. Setting the scope down, she stood and stretched out, getting the kinks out of her back.

“Sweetheart, I’m glad I don’t have to wear that blasted respirator all the time.” she stated, rubbing her muzzle. She stretched again, then rubbed her enormous belly. “I’ll be glad to give birth and go back to action shooting. My balance is off and being this big is just annoying. That and wearing the respirator.” she related to her hubby.

“Yeah, I guess it would be annoying at that,” her husband Brett replied, smiling at her. “You know the respirator is for our little one’s and your protection when you shoot. Keeps the lead particles out of your system.” He pointed at his respirator, hanging around his neck. “I wear mine every time I shoot.”

“Well, you know there’s only five of us that use one on the championship circuit. I’ve even been laughed at for wearing this darned thing!” the blond femme feline mix pointed out as she tugged at the device hanging around her neck.

“Let them laugh at your trophy and that huge check you won at the Phoenix Invitational last year!” the male tiger retorted. “How many national championships have your detractors won?”

“Um, none in the last three years, since I’ve won all the big ones,” she said with a smile. “At least some of them will get a chance while I play mother to our little one.” She rubbed her belly again, purring ever so slightly.

“You’re going to quit?”

“Just for a few years, Hon. I’ll need time to bond with our little one.” she explained. “Maybe Willi Marie could win a championship if I weren’t competing.” she suggested.

“Yeah, maybe so. I just hope she’s happy with this rifle I paw-built for her,” Brett replied, looking down at the custom stainless Ruger 10-22 in his paws. “I made sure everything on this costly beast was perfect, just like your Ruger rimfire rifles.”

“If it can shoot like my number one rifle, she’s got the tools to win with.”

“Let’s find out if it has what it takes, then,” her hubby stated, sitting down at the bench to give this new

rifle a full testing before giving it to the palomino mare.

The two furs that had arrived with the van had taken great care in loading Joyce Black onto the stretcher, making very sure not to disturb her injuries lest they begin to bleed again. Torvald was making sure his revolver was ready while his mate was checking her pistols one more time.

“Mom, Dad?” a voice called out, a very familiar voice. They were confused, however by the appearance of an equine male that was approaching with a black feline femme, toting a large amount of firepower.

“Hold it right there and show your paws!” Torvald said loudly, bringing his weapon to bear.

“Dad! It’s me, Conrad!” the smaller blond stallion replied, putting his paws up where they could be clearly seen by all.

“Do not fire your weapon, Torvald Svensen, he speaks the truth,” Maria spoke up. “I have brought him here to help you, just as I have brought Wilhelmine to you in the past.”

“You don’t look like my son, but you sound like him,” Victoria stated as she walked up to him and looked him over. “You look more like my son Axel.”

“Well, would you believe me if I told you I was immortal, just like you and Dad?” the smaller stallion asked. “You and Dad live in Mission Viejo on a parallel world and you have a dark blue Dodge mini-van with magnetic Century Realty signs on it. Is that proof enough?”

“You would have to be from our world to know about my van because there are no Dodge vans here. That make didn’t survive the depression on this world.” the tigress pointed out.

“There are Dodge mini-vans on your world?” Clyde asked with a confused look on his muzzle.

“Yeah, there are. There are no Desoto vehicles anymore, though. Chrysler quit building them in the early sixties. My Grandpa Connell gave my Uncle Wally his 1959 Desoto convertible.” Conrad proffered up.

“You would have to be my son to know that much!” Victoria said just as she hugged him fiercely. “I still don’t like the idea you’re here in harm’s way, though.”

“I’m sorry, Mom but I kept having this nagging feeling you and Dad needed me.” he suggested. About that time, Maria got his attention.

“Conrad Svensen, I have delivered you to your parents so I must go now. When their mission is over, you will return with them, I promise. I will come to retrieve you personally.” She then smiled and shimmered out.

“Son, get your gear in the van. You can tell us about your dark femme friend on the way.” Torvald stated, helping Conrad to load his equipment into their transportation.