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*(Gah, this is tedious!)*Note* More rambling credits/warnings below! Please read and heed!*

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Tell them Kellan sent ya. :-) Note This is a shameless plug for Aslaug and The Silver Coyote! What are friends for, anyway?*

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“A Loss Of Rights”

By Kellan Meig'h

Chapter 34

Torvald sat there in his wingback chair, staring at the phone number on the card in his paws. It was his grandson, he was sure but he really didn't know how to approach this problem. He really didn't expect any of his family to actually attempt to find him, given the circumstances of his leaving Schuyler, Virginia. He looked up to see Victoria setting some more snacks on the breakfast bar.

“Are you going to call him once we get home?” she asked as she limped her way into the living room to get her hubby for lunch. She could see the concern in his eyes as she held out a paw for him to get up.

“I .. I'm not sure. He was about seven years old when I left there. Gah, this is so tedious, being immortal,” he replied. “I never meant to leave them back there but I was sure the local sheriff was on to me. He noticed the fact that I didn't age at all.” Torvald added.

“Why don't you call Bradley and invite him over. Talk with him and maybe you will figure out how to deal with it. He is your family, your own flesh and blood after all.” she pointed out.

Torvald knew she was right about this. Bradley was family, his grandson and he needed to know about his grandfather's immortality. He thought maybe being truthful would be the best thing to do.

“Alright, I'll call Bradley once we get home.” he stated as he stood and hugged his mate.

“Mom, Dad, Willi and I are leaving,” Conrad told them as Hrist prepared to take them home. Maria had come earlier to change Conrad back to his correct form and unbind Willi's need to be on the planet.

“Good luck with your game, Sweetheart,” Victoria said as she hugged him and kissed him on the cheek.

“Um, thanks, Mom. We're playing the Falcons at home for the season opener. The coach seems to think we'll steamroll them.” the young tiger told them.

“Tell the family we’ll be home in a day or so. We just need to make sure *The Legion* is toppled. We have all of the top members in custody and a few governors have been arrested along with the President of West America.” Torvald shared.

“I’m glad this sort of thing doesn’t exist on our planet.” Willi mused. Tor put his paw on her shoulder and posed a very profound question.

“Who says it doesn’t? Maybe we will have to fight this corruption on our planet at some point.”

“Don’t say that!” Conrad said loudly. “I couldn’t imagine living like these furs have had to live. This is so wrong on so many different levels.”

“I know it is. Just go home and get some rest. We might be home in time to see you play.” his mother suggested.

“All right. I’ll keep an eye out for you at the game. If you go, your tickets will be at the will call window,” the young tiger stated as he formed up with Willi and Hrist as they shimmered out of sight.

“I’ll be glad to be home again,” Victoria said as she herded her hubby towards the kitchen and a snack.

“You and me both,” Torvald replied as they sat down at the breakfast bar to enjoy some fresh fruit and lemonade.

Deke and Alan were checking their Army dress uniforms in the mirror once more, just to be sure they were dressed properly for the occasion. It had been too many years since they had went undercover to infiltrate the inner workings of *The Legion*. The ursine tried to straighten his tie once more before giving up.

“Alan, could you give me a paw, here? I can’t seem to get this tie done up properly.” he asked.

“yeah, I can help you. Are you trying to do a Windsor knot? These ties are generally too narrow for that.” the stallion pointed out. Once Alan had the tie readied again, he had Major Cahill’s tie done up in just a few moments. “There you go, Major. Just like downtown.”

“Thanks, Colonel Samick. Never could tie these darned things.” Deke mused. “I guess you’ve seen my retirement papers on your desk?”

“Yes I did. Can’t say I blame you, either. I’ve done my undercover job far longer than I did my Army job. Seems odd that it’s over.”

“Sure does.” Deke remembered what they had been told so many years ago. It would be just a year at the most. *That* was a serious miscalculation by some fur. He smiled at the thought it took Celestial Agents and a sorceress to finish it off, though. “Will the Svensens be present for Vincent’s statement to the press?”

“I think they said they would attend. I would think they would want to see him admit his guilt and his

part in this.”

“Alan, I heard that Kerry Ross’ legal council was seeking a regular trial for them in a civilian court. Any truth to that rumor?”

“It’s true, Deke. He knows it won’t happen but this is a stall tactic by their lawyers to keep us from trying them for their crimes. At least the U.S. President and the West America vice-President have both given us their backing.” Alan brushed the lint off of his jacket and slipped it on. “No, as far as any fur is concerned, this will be tried by the military. Too many military lives were lost in this struggle.”

Torvald was watching the noon news just to get the drift of what was happening in the aftermath of the toppling of *The Legion*. Washington, Oregon and Idaho had declared their succession from West America and the Governors of those states were stating the fact that the borders were open again. The West American Vice President, standing in for the now-jailed former President, was urging all of the states to rejoin the USA. It seemed like their job was done but they had not yet been recalled to their homeworld.

“What do we have left to do?” Victoria asked as she joined her hubby on the couch.

“I’m not sure what’s left to do. We have seemed to have put a stop to this insanity so I’m not clear what still needs to be done.” he replied. He offered her a cold Samuel Smith’s Oatmeal Stout which she didn’t pass up.

“You always seem to find the best beers,” she commented as she changed the channel to see if any new information was available. “Um, was Clyde going to pick us up for Vinnie’s press conference?” she asked.

“He said he would, seeings we both needed some rest in his estimations.” Tor replied. “I’ll call and find out when he’s going to be here.”

“Well, I’m going to get dressed,” the tigress stated as she got up off the couch. “You need to finish dressing yourself,” she reminded him as she turned to head into the bedroom.

She went into the bedroom and sat her beer on her dresser while she got undressed. She pulled off her sweatshirt, then her lounge pants. The tigress shook her head when she observed the white line of fur around her left leg. That reminded her that Aslaug had the same mark around one arm, most likely from the same type of injury.

Looking through her closet, she kept looking at the shiny black stretch leggings she had brought from home. Smiling, she slipped them on then got out her black leather bustier. Digging out her spike heel pumps, she put them on then added a slender silver choker and matching bracelets. The choker had a little silver heart hanging from it.

“You look nice,” Torvald commented as he joined her in the bedroom. “I suppose you’ll want me to dress up a bit?” he asked.

“I would appreciate it if you wore a tie and slacks,” she replied while she brushed her hair out so she

could tie it back into a ponytail. She looked up at her mate and told him, "I think when we get home, I'm going to get my hair cut to shoulder length. I think I'm finally tired of this long hair."

"You mean short, like Valerie's hair?" Tor asked, thinking about his sister-in-law's hair style. She wore her hair in shoulder-length curls.

"Well, maybe not that short. She's lucky because her hair is curly like Mom's." She put a bit of eye shadow on, mostly to cover a black eye from being hit in the face by that white lapin. "I just don't understand how a complete severing of my leg healed back together in seconds, but a black eye takes a few days to heal up properly," she commented as she made sure the ocular bruise wasn't noticeable.

"I don't know either. It's been the same for me from the start." her husband replied. "I had a black eye last a week when I was serving in Vietnam. We overran a machine gun emplacement and I got hit by a rifle butt in the face by accident. At least that's what I was told afterwards by the Marine that did it."

Torvald got dressed in a nice pair of black slacks, a pale blue dress shirt and one of his dark red Tabasco[®] ties. He threaded a black belt through his pants and added a black shoulder holster for his revolver. Tor finished the outfit by getting his gray sport coat from the closet, just so he wouldn't have that 'FBI' look.

"You read my mind!" his wife said with a smile while she slipped on her matching gray blazer. She did tug at it a bit to get it to lay right over her shoulder holsters.

"You need at least a size larger blazer if you're going to pack heat like that." Tor pointed out.

"I know but it seems a waste to buy one, since this is our last mission. At least I hope it's our last."

"You're right, we need to call it quits and do something safe, like run a half-way house. Maybe we could buy a ranch up in the hills and run a program for a few, maybe no more than ten kits at a time." he suggested.

"That would be a nice change of pace. I'll find us a place to do something like that when we get back home." the tigress replied to his suggestion. She stopped, then smiled at her hubby. "Clyde's pulling up out front right now." Moments later, a knocking was heard at the front door followed by the doorbell ringing a few times politely.

The femme zebra was working in her kitchen, attempting to make Victoria's special spicy meatloaf when her cellphone rang, breaking her concentration. Opening the cover, she observed it was her hubby calling.

"All right, Axel, what is it this time?" she asked, since he had called her twice already this morning. "What did you leave at home this time?" Axel chuckled a bit before he answered his wife.

"I left that Fender Strat[®] that came by UPS yesterday in our music room. You know that distributor still ships things to our house because that used to be our billing address." he replied.

"I guess you want me to bring it to you?" she suggested.

“That would be nice. I have a customer that’s coming by this afternoon to buy it.” She looked at her ingredients for the meatloaf sitting on the counter, begging for her attention.

“Um, Sweetheart, I’m in the middle of making your mother’s meatloaf right now. Could your customer wait until this evening?”

“It’s Terry, Hon. I guess I could call and ask.” the male suggested.

“We’ve known Terry Alford since high school. I think he would understand if you asked. Besides, you could have him and his wife come over for dinner.” she retorted.

“You know he’ll want to buy some of my personal collection if he comes over.”

“If his wife Elaine comes with him, she’ll put the brakes on that. You remember what she said about that the last time. No more collections for him.”

“I remember, Hon.” Alex replied. “I think the only reason he’s getting this Strat[®] is the one he’s playing is pretty clapped out from being played five nights a week for what, three years?”

“You know, I think it’s been four years.” Madelyn pointed out. “That was the first Strat[®] you ever sold from the shop, right after we opened it.”

“You’re right. I remember when it was stolen over in San Diego and the crook tried to sell it to me. Was he ever surprised when Dad showed up with three of his uniformed buddies.” Axel mused. “Let me call Terry and see what he thinks. I’m not sure if he’s working tonight so maybe we could eat dinner, then deliver it to him later on this evening if he is.”

“Well, call Terry and see what’s up. I need to finish making the meatloaf and get it in the oven.”

OK Hon, I’ll call back in a little bit.”

“Bye, Sweetie!”

“Bye!”

Madelyn shook her head as she ended the call. Sometimes her hubby could be a pest with the phone. At least she knew he loved her enough to bug her when she was not at the shop, just to let her know he thought about her.

Dana sat at her kitchen table, looking at the phone in her paw. She was still deciding whether or not to call her sister and bother her. She finally decided after much deliberation that it was proper to do so in this situation. Dialing Gytha’s home number, she smiled when her older sister answered.

“Hello,” Gytha bid, then scolded Roger Jr. for running through the house.

“Um, hi, Sis. I um, wanted to ask you a question.” Dana replied.

“Sure, go ahead and ask,” the ruddy colored mare replied. “Uh, hold on a sec,” she asked as she pulled the phone away from her mouth and admonished little Heather for coloring on the wall. “OK, go ahead and ask.” she directed.

“Um, Sis, what does it feel like when the baby drops? I’ve felt ... weird ... ever since I got up this morning.”

“Does it feel like you have even more pressure on your bladder?”

“Yeah, it does.”

“Are you bulging below your waist more than usual?”

“Well, yeah, I guess.” The femme feline mix rubbed her enormous midsection, thinking about how miserable she was currently.

“Sounds like the baby dropped, Dana. Damn, Mom’s not home yet,” the elder sibling stated.

“How long do you think I have before the baby is born?”

“Not long, if I have my guess right. Roger Junior was born two days after he dropped and Heather was born that evening.”

“Well, except for Mom not being here, the baby couldn’t be born quick enough for me. I’ve been so uncomfortable for the last three months.”

“Yeah, I was too. Maybe Mom will be home soon. I’ll see if Willi can get Hrist to go see what the holdup is.”

“Call me if you hear something,” Dana asked before ending the call. Setting the phone back on the charging cradle, she felt a slight pain in her belly, a distinct uneasiness in the way the little life inside her was sitting. “Oh, not now, little one! Your Grandma’s not home yet!” she begged as she went to lie down on the couch and take it easy.

Bradley was sitting with his wife and daughter, enjoying a paw-cooked brunch courtesy of his offspring. She was a good cook, just like her mother. His daughter Nancy broke the silence with a question.

“Um, Dad, did you find out anything about Grandpa Torvald?” the blond mare asked, giving him a nervous smile.

“He was out of town when I went there but his sister-in-law said he would be home soon. I’m really hoping I can meet with him and ask a few very pointed questions.” the tall male replied.

“I know what you mean. I think I would like to meet him, too.” she retorted.

“You know that picture over my fireplace of Grandpa Torvald? There’s one over this Torvald’s fireplace that looks just like him. I’m sure this is him.”

“That would make him about ...” Nancy’s sentence was finished by her father.

“At least a hundred and twenty years old, if not older. I suspect he’s a lot older than that.” he retorted.

“Brad, that’s not possible, is it?” his dapple gray pony wife asked.

“Jan, it might sound impossible but I’m telling you, he looked just like Grandpa Torvald.” Brad replied. He nodded his head, knowing first-paw that immortality was possible. It was something he hadn’t shared with his second wife but he was sure their daughter knew the truth of the matter.

“Dad, when you go to see him, I want to go with you.” his little one stated.

“Yeah, I suppose you would. That’s fine with me.” her father replied, seeming lost in thought.

The press conference at the Modesto Metro police station started with the Modesto Police Commissioner making his canned statements to set up the remainder of the conference.

“I am announcing the disbanding of *The Legion* and the arrest of all of the leaders,” the tall onager stated for the press. “The former leader of *The Legion* will be making a statement to the press, admitting his guilt in this matter.”

Vincent James was led to the podium in pawcuffs, seeming a little worse for wear. His clothes were rumpled and he seemed to be moving slowly for some reason. Just as they reached the steps to the stage, Vincent made a break for it, running through a phalanx of press furs towards the front parking lot.

“Torvald!” Victoria shouted as she kicked off her heels and bounded off after the fleeing lapin, not waiting to see if he was following or not. The tall blond fur got up and ran after her, mostly to protect his wife, the love of his life.

A short foot chase ensued, ending in a small shopping mall several blocks away. Vincent was joined by two of his furs, one supplying him with a key to the pawcuffs and a Beretta 10mm pistol in a holster. They ran into the back room of a convenient sporting goods store that seemed like a good place to hide and regroup. They were proven wrong when the Immortal Couple, Deke and several police furs ran into the store behind them.

“You two take that side, I’ll go this way,” Deke suggested, pointing towards the left side of the store. He made his way to the right side with two police furs, near the weights and workout equipment.

“Victoria, stay behind me, please?” Torvald begged, not wishing to have to make a trip to Valhalla today.

“OK, I’ll hang back but I’ll stay close to you,” she replied, checking her Kimber pistols to ensure they were loaded. “If I see him first, his ass is mine,” she said in a very dark tone.

“Hey! Three furs that don’t work here just ran into the back room!” a store employee shouted, pointing towards the doors at the back of the shop.

“You! Get down!!” Deke ordered the employee, motioning for him to get away from the door. “Vincent! Give up now and you won’t face any further charges!” he shouted through the doors. A hail of bullets replied to his statement.

“The hell I’m giving up to you!” the lapin shouted through the open doors. He was stalling until one of his furs could find a way out the back of this shop. Out front, Torvald was making a call to get reinforcements headed their way.

“Alan, Vincent is in the back of the Richard’s Sporting Goods in the mall,” he relayed, keeping an eye on the back of the store.

“Roger, Tor. I’ll get a squad into the back parking lot and set up a perimeter.” the roan stallion replied. Torvald could hear him giving orders to his military furs. “You be careful in there.”

“I’ll try,” Torvald replied, then ended the call. “Victoria, I’m going to inch my way over that way to see if I can see him through the open doors.” he related to his wife.

“Be careful, Please?” she asked, getting her second Kimber readied. “I have you covered and I think Deke does too,” she offered up as she peeked around the corner of the clothing rack they were hiding behind. She could see the ursine aiming his pistol in the general direction of the back room.

The huge immortal stallion was crawling on his elbows and knees, carefully making his way to the back of the shop without giving his position away. He was thinking that this was not what he imagined he would ever be doing for the Gods, playing tag with an armed lapin in a sporting goods store. Up ahead of him, he could see the doorway in a mirror sitting on the floor meant for looking at your new shoes.

“Vinnie! Give up before you kill some fur and get charged with a murder!” he shouted, hoping for a response that was favorable. What he received was a few rounds being fired that killed a few defenseless basketballs on the shelf.

“I’m not going to give up! You’ll have to kill me first!” the lapin shouted, still trying to stall them while one of his furs attempted to override the security lock on the back door that needed a fob to open it.

“Vinnie! I can’t get this door to open!” the field mouse shouted, still struggling with the door.

“Shoot it open!” the lapin demanded as he watched for any sign of the authorities rushing them. His hench-fur did as he was directed, firing at the door to disable the lock. That did the trick, making an exit for them. Or so he thought.

“Boss! Hey, there’s soldiers outside!” he informed Vinnie as he ducked a hail of small arms fire being sent in his direction. “Vinnie! We can’t go out this way!” the mouse shouted out just as a round tagged him in the chest, dropping him instantly.

“Listen Tom, we’re going out the front,” the lapin replied to his last remaining fur, a hedgehog. “Just go

for broke with your guns blazing, bud. We'll get out of this mess."

"This is suicide, Vinnie," Tom put forth.

"Doesn't matter, Tom. We're dead already. Come on, let's go." Vinnie took up his deceased partner's shotgun and urged the hedgehog towards the door.

They entered the sales floor with their firearms blazing, taking the protagonists by surprise. One of the rounds from Vinnie's shotgun hit a wakeboard on display, making it fall and strike Torvald on the head, knocking him out cold. Tom hit Deke in the shoulder, dropping him and then killed one police fur and shot it out with another, the two killing one another. Vincent was sure he was scot free now if it weren't for one fur left standing; Victoria.

"Hold it right there!" she hissed, standing up from behind the clothing display with both of her Kimbers trained on him. He looked at her and after a few tense moments, actually smiled.

"You really think I'm afraid of you?" he said in a mocking tone as he racked his shotgun again to charge it. "You wouldn't shoot me. I don't think you have it in you to kill me."

"You have no idea who you're screwing with, you lop-eared asshole. I've faced down the likes of Surt so what makes you think you're badder than him? You aren't squat." Victoria spat out. She was paying attention to his trigger finger, anticipating him attempting to dispatch her. "Vincent, drop your weapons and give up. You had better take this chance to save your sorry hide."

"I will not give up, bitch! You won't shoot me so I'll just kill you and walk out of here." he said nonchalantly as he prepared to fire, leveling his shotgun at her chest. There was a very distinct look of death on her muzzle that made Vinnie nervous. She should have went running but she didn't. If anything, she actually smiled back at him momentarily before she snarled and showed off her long, sharp teeth.

"You twitch that trigger finger and I'll kill you in a heartbeat. I'm not afraid of your sorry flesh and blood ass because I'm immortal. I can't die from a blast out of that shotgun, you idiot. You can't hurt me." she proffered up. She holstered one pistol and took up a combat stance, aiming right between his eyes. "Go ahead you bastard, either drop that shotgun or try to kill me. Go ahead, Vincent, try it. I have nothing to lose." she told him in a dark tone.

Vincent pulled the shotgun to his shoulder quickly and prepared to fire, which he did. It was his misfortune that he fired his firearm at the ceiling in reaction to having a .45ACP jacketed hollow point go through his brain. Before he hit the ground, That round was joined by six more to his body as he fell. Victoria had already swapped out clips before his dead body hit the ground, still holding a bead on him as she kicked his foot to determine if he was truly dead or not.

"Argh!" Deke moaned as he rolled over to see the dead lapin just scant feet from him. He was more concerned however with the tigress' condition, having heard the whole verbal exchange then the gunfire. "Victoria? Are you all right?" he shouted.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Where's Torvald? She asked, looking around for him. A quick search found him unconscious but still breathing. He opened an eye after she knelt next to him and shook his shoulder to rouse him, looking somewhat disoriented.

“Uh, where am I?” he asked, not recognizing their surroundings at the moment.

“We’re done, Sweetheart. Vincent’s dead.” she replied, helping him to sit up and hugging him tightly.

“Aw, I missed the party,” he said jokingly as he returned the hug. That’s when the store was swarmed by numerous armed furs that were just a bit late to the party themselves.

Torvald was finishing up packing, getting all of his things corralled in one spot for transportation back to their home world. Folding his ties neatly, he was giving a lot of thought to giving up this insane career. They had been thrust into some very bad situations by the Counsel of Elders that felt it was just fine to omit important information about their missions.

What they really needed was a safe, non-threatening job to do for the Gods that didn’t involve demons, deities and death. They needed to set up a half-way house for troubled teens, a job that would ensure they weren’t gallivanting across the multitude of parallel worlds. A safe and sane job that would ensure they weren’t in harm’s way again ever again.

“Tor? I’m home!” Victoria shouted from the front door, having returned from her last errand of the mission. She had went to see Victoria Khanna and visit with her doppelgänger.

“How was your visit?” he asked, giving her a loving hug. She looked up at him, not releasing her hold on him.

“It was interesting, to say the least. With the exception of not marrying an iteration of you, her life was very similar to mine. Her Robert is somewhat different in that he has a ring fetish whereas Elizabeth’s Robert has a belt buckle obsession.” she related. “Her Conrad seems so much like ours, too.”

“Well, are you ready to go home?” he asked, hugging her close again.

“Yeah, let’s go home.” Torvald summoned Denise and withing a few moments, they were back in their own family room. He took a card from his pocket and went to the phone on his desk, picking it up to start dialing. “Tor, who are you calling?” she asked, somewhat confused.

“Well, I’m calling Bradley and setting up a meeting tomorrow. I really should talk with him. After that, I’m calling Dana to see how she is.” he replied.

“OK, I’ll go start putting away our things then you can join me in a bit. I’m going to take a long, hot bath to relax.” she offered up.

“In the big whirlpool tub?” he queried.

“Absolutely!” she replied, giving him a devilish grin. “We might even have some strawberries, chocolate syrup and some sparkling cider, too.”

Torvald smiled at her just as the phone picked up on the other end and a male with a deep tenor voice answered.