

Chapter 7

“What's wrong, my stallion?” Victoria asked, looking at the form slumped over the kitchen table. “Didn't you sleep well?” The tigress went over to see about her husband, who had not responded to her inquiry.

“I'm tired, that's all.” Tor finally responded, reaching up and rubbing his mane. “I had a rough night last night. I had this weird dream that I was talking to my father in Denmark, of all places.” He sat back up and crossed his legs as he leaned back to stretch his arms.

“Uh ... you had better look at your hoof before you call it a dream.” the tigress said, squatting down on her haunches as she looked at her husband's hoof. “What do you call this?” she said, picking out a piece of plant material from the frog of his hoof.

Torvald looked that material over to see that it wasn't indigenous to this region. It could have only come from one place on earth; Denmark. He shook his head at the thought of this. “This insanity has to stop. I can't take it much longer.” the huge stallion said, rubbing his muzzle. “I know the gods have a plan for me but my spirit can't take this jumping around through time and space much longer.” The stallion looked up at his mate with bloodshot eyes. “It has to stop.”

###

A few days later, the stallion was in his back yard, practicing with his Franciscas. His frustration level from the past events was getting pretty high by this time and he was using this activity to blow off some steam.

The more he thought about the last few incidents, the madder he was getting. “The gods have forgotten that I need to keep my sanity.” he muttered, pulling his axes out of the target. He was throwing them so hard that he was having to lay the target down and stand on it to pull the axes free.

“Torvald, are you OK? Is something bothering you?” his mate called out from the patio door. She had observed how he was throwing the axes with total brute force. Victoria could see that he looked quite stressed, too.

The stallion turned to look at his wife as he replied. “I am fine, nothing's wrong.” he said curtly, turning to pull out an axe.

“All right then. I'll fix you a sandwich for lunch.” she said, closing the patio door. Victoria felt that something was wrong but decided to let him work it off by himself.

“I am as ready as I will ever be to face Destruction.” the stallion said, throwing his Franciscas again with deadly precision. Out of sheer frustration, he picked up his Dane axe and threw it, knocking the target over from the force of the throw. The battle axe was embedded deeply in the target, handle pointing straight up.

The now-mad Berserker grabbed his broad sword and threw it like a spear, embedding it deeply in the tree behind the target. The stallion then ran over to the target and pulled his Dane axe out of it. He looked to the sky and shouted, “You know what I have to do! Why won't you help me finish my task?” Turning his attention to the target, he yanked his Franciscas from it, stood it up and began to chop at it with his battle axe.

###

Sitting on the deck were two felines who had watched all of this. The taller of the two turned to face the shorter one.

“Gabriel, I really like this one even if he is heathen. He has a heart that is as pure as any.” The angel looked back at the crazed berserker. “We should help him with his quest.”

The shorter one looked shocked. “Well, I don't know, Michael. The last time that I tried to help, I really got yelled at. Remember, it ended up in the Bible for crying out loud!” The feline looked at the berserker before he continued. “How about the Boss's new 'No Interference' policy? No, count me out.”

“Come on Gabriel, we have to help him. It looks like he's gonna do it this time. I'll take the heat for this one.”

“Come on, Michael, you like getting chewed out by your boss.” the one-eyed wolf said as he joined the two felines. He stood behind the two angels, taking in the view. “Well, are you gonna do it or will I?” he asked.

“No, Odin, I'll do it. It was my idea, after all.” Michael said, watching the berserker.

“OK, then. You have my blessings.” Odin stated, crossing his arms. A slight smile began to cross his muzzle.

“Well, what are you going to do for him?” the shorter feline asked.

“I'm going to give him a little extra strength and courage, that's all.” Michael replied. Gabriel rolled his eyes at the thought of it. The wolf's smile got a little wider by now.

The smaller feline pointed to the now-raging stallion in the yard. “He looks close now. If you're gonna do it, you better do it now. I can feel the pull on him. By the way Michael, I didn't see a thing.”

Michael gestured to the berserker, making him stand bolt-upright as if he had been hit by lightning.

“Uh ... another thing. You better send him his tools of the trade.” Gabriel suggested, looking at the other feline. Michael nodded at that idea.

“Listen, Gabriel. Maybe you could do something else. See if you can keep the Shieldmaiden from being pulled into this.” Michael said, still looking at the berserker.

“OK, I'll see what I can do.”

###

Victoria was in the kitchen, making lunch for her family. It was bothering her that her mate was so horribly upset. She was silently praying for her lord to bring her husband some comfort in his time of need when she observed him chopping on the target, screaming something in his native tongue.

As she watched through the kitchen window, He stood bolt upright and dropped his axe, then dropped down to his knees. He then slumped over forward, knocking the target over. The huge fur convulsed several times before lying still in the grass.

“NO!” she screamed as the dropped jar of mayonnaise hit the floor and shattered. Victoria never heard it as she was in a dead run out of the house towards her fallen husband.

###

Aslaug was watching a video of the last training session, trying to look for mistakes that needed correction. As she picked up her bottle of ale, it felt like some static electricity was in the air. The filly tried to set the bottle down only to find that it couldn't touch the table. Furthermore,

she couldn't let go of it. Or the remote in her other paw for that matter. It was obvious that she was stuck to the chair, too.

“Loke! Show yourself!” she hissed, looking around for the weasel. The filly observed a feline standing over to one side. She thought that she recognized who this was.

“It is not Loke's *sejd* that's responsible. I have put a shield of protection around you.” the feline said, smiling at her.

“Gabriel! Let me out of this!” she spat out, struggling against the invisible bonds. The Shieldmaiden was getting really *pissed* by now.

“I am protecting you from being pulled in with Torvald. He is going to face his fears.” the angel replied, leaning against the wall. “Just sit still and it won't annoy you much.”

“You angels are so stupid, you know that?” the filly hissed. “If Surt can't pull me in, he will pull in someone close to Torvald, like his *wife or son*, you idiot!”

“Oh My!” was all the angel could say.

###

Victoria was clutching the limp form of her husband to her chest, screaming to the gods at the top of her lungs.

“You can't take him away from me! *Not Now!* I love him too much to lose him! Give me back my stallion!! Give him back to me!! ...”

The scenery around the tigress began to fade to white ...

###

Torvald found himself back in that torture chamber, chained to the wall as usual. The bands that were holding him were superheated, singeing his fur around his wrists and waist. The cloaked furless canid was picking out a brand to use while he was talking to the berserker.

“Why do you return time after time, stallion. You are not the one we want ...” The canid's voice tapered off as he turned and saw what was in front of him. He was looking at the maddest fur that he had ever had the opportunity to face. The berserker's eyes shone white with power as he pulled against the chains that were binding him.

“You know exactly why I am here!” the berserker bellowed, ripping the anchorage for his left wrist from the wall. He used the chain to swing out with it, wrapping it around that accursed fur's neck. As he dragged the canid to him he ripped the other wrist anchorage away from the wall.

“Where is he!?!” Torvald screamed, shaking the fur by the chain around his neck, the canid's feet were no longer on the floor by now. “Tell me where he is and I will end your life quickly!!” he yelled again, punching the fur in the muzzle. Blood was running out of the unfortunate canid's mouth and he was spitting out some teeth that the stallion had knocked out.

The canid was now gasping for breath, being slowly choked by the chain around his neck. All he could do was point towards the door, unable to speak. Torvald grabbed the brand from the fur and began to slowly push it through him, causing the canid to somehow scream out in pain. “You will never torture me again, you Demon's minion!” the stallion screamed, shaking him by the chain again.

The berserker finally threw the canid against the wall, breaking his neck in the process. Torvald quickly put on his armor, grabbed his armament and headed out on his quest to find Destruction.

###

The stallion had gone into a Berserker killing rage, murdering countless furs on his way to find his prey. Finally facing the brass doors, he kicked the doors dead center, causing one to fly open and knocking the other off of its hinges. The heat and stench from the room was almost unbearable.

The Berserker stepped into the room, mane flying from sparks coming off of it. “I have come to destroy you!” he announced, taking up a fighting stance.

The entity moved in a little closer, causing the heat to become greater.

“YOU DIDN'T BRING THE SHIELDMAIDEN.” the entity said in a flat tone, sounding more annoyed than anything else.

The heat was making Torvald sweat heavily by now as he took another step into the room.

“This is not Aslaug's fight! This is MY fight, Demon!” He screamed, checking his grip on his Dane axe.

"THAT IS A SHAME, REALLY. SHE WAS AFRAID OF ME. I SENSE, HOWEVER THAT YOU ARE NOT."

The entity moved in a little closer, making it almost necessary to leave the room.

Torvald stood his ground as he bellowed out, "I am a Berserker! I am *not* afraid!! I am ready to die for what I honor and cherish!"

"FACE ME AND DIE, SURT!!!"

The entity drew nearer, then backed off just a bit. Torvald checked his grip once more as he prepared to charge him. He was stopped by a voice ringing out from behind him.

"You cannot kill my stallion without going through *ME* first!" Victoria screamed, stepping up beside her mate. Torvald looked over to see his wife standing there, wearing only a pair of armbands and a murderous look on her face. Victoria's ears were laid flat against her skull and all of her long, sharp incisors were showing from her sneer. She was gripping a spear like a longstaff, her claws digging into the wood of the shaft. Her eyes shone with a white power like his own.

"You have tried to destroy my family, you Bastard! You have brought me here against my will! I will destroy you or die trying, Demon!! You will not take what is most cherished away from me!!" the feline screamed, taking another step closer to the entity. Checking her grip, she screamed out a primordial sound before finally saying ...

"FACE US AND DIE, SURT!!!"

The room suddenly got cooler, almost bearable as the entity spoke out again.

"NOT TODAY, TIGRESS. I WILL NOT DISRUPT MY PLANS. MAYBE SOME OTHER DAY."

The room around the stallion and the feline suddenly went white ...

###

The tigress started to rouse from her resting place on the grass. Her head hurt and she was sure that her legs had gone to sleep by the tingling she felt.

As she tried to sit up, she found the cause of her discomfort. Her husband was still lying across her lap, not moving at all. Victoria clutched the berserker's still form to her chest and screamed out a primordial sound of pure anguish. She then began to cry, holding his head close underneath her chin. As she cried, she felt her husband twitch, then move a little.

“Aaargh!” Torvald moaned, reaching up to hold his head. The berserker tried to sit up only to find that his mate was still holding him tightly. When he looked up at the tigress, his eyes were still shining white. He blinked a few times to clear them as they returned back to normal.

“Where are we?” he asked, laying his head back against his wife's bosom and closing his eyes. The world was still spinning for him and he was waiting for it to subside.

“We're home, my love.” she replied, holding her husband tightly. “I'm glad that's over ...”

The world around them went white again ...