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“Redemption”

By Kellan Meigh

Chapter 03 – “Recovery”

It had been over an hour since Jenna had left her, according to the clock on the wall and Victoria was getting anxious to see her hubby, anxious enough that she was trying her best to sit up in her bed. She knew if she could swing her legs off of the bed, the momentum would help her to get up into a sitting position. The problem seemed to be her arms; they just didn't cooperate like the tigress wanted them to.

She had discovered that she could reach across her body with her right arm and that would allow her to work the buttons to control the position of the bed. That was good, since it let her tip the bed up to an almost-sitting position. The bad part was the need to lower that side panel that the switches were on, giving her access to get her legs off of the bed.

Try as she might, the casts themselves were the issue. The doctor had placed a rigid plastic plate under her fingers, preventing her from closing her paws. Her thumbs were fixed at an almost ninety degree angle from her fingers with a smaller plate under them, stopping them from being used, too. All of this left her claws partially unsheathed but unusable in this situation. The plates all extended past her claws, rendering them totally useless. It was only the fact that the controls for the bed's adjustments stuck out just a bit from the top of the side panel, making them operable to her. The release button that would allow the side panel to swing down was recessed into the panel and totally out of reach at the moment.

The tigress had all but given up on getting out of bed when Jenna returned, pushing a wheelchair and accompanied by what must have been the largest femme equine that the tigress had ever met in furson. Obviously a Clydesdale, the huge femme had to stoop down to get under the door header and her ears might have been brushing the ceiling when she stood back up.

“Victoria, this is Lorna McNichol, my farm fore-furson. Lorna, this is Victoria Svensen.” the ottruss introduced the two. “Lorna, as you can see, Mrs. Svensen needs some help with getting around.”

“I kin see thot,” the bay and white femme admitted, her deep alto voice having a slight Scottish accent to it. “I can't see th' need to get ma husband in here tae help me with this, you ken? Maybe we could put a hospital gown on you before we move you, though.” Lorna commented.

Jenna and Lorna slipped a standard issue hospital gown over the tigress' arms and tied the neck string behind her. After tucking the gown around the femme feline, Lorna effortlessly scooped up the injured former warrior and put her into the wheelchair.

Kneeling down, the femme equine adjusted the foot rests to accommodate Victoria. "We'll make ya comfy an' take you tae see yer husband." she offered up, getting the rests to the correct angle to accommodate the casts on the tigress' legs. "I heard you were badly injured, Mrs. Svensen. You actually look pretty good tae me." she commented.

"I have felt better," Victoria replied. "I guess my husband didn't fare so well."

"You kin see for yourself in just a moment," Lorna stated, turning the wheelchair towards the door. "He's right next door from yer room. We were going tae put yens in the same room except the room next door was just not big enough fer two beds."

The huge one wheeled Victoria out of her room and down the hall to the next door. Once inside, she got her first glimpse of her injured mate.

An IV was still delivering blood to him, a nasal cannula was giving him oxygen and a heart monitor was beeping softly. The scary part was the almost unbelievable amount of injury to his body. His arms and legs were a patchwork of sutures and his face was covered in bandaged injuries. His left eye had that appearance to it of a nasty injury along with a pending black eye and there was a huge split in his lower lip that was stitched closed.

"Torvald?" Victoria blurted out, lifting a paw towards him. She then rolled her eyes when she realized she couldn't touch him properly.

"I'm awake," he offered up in reply, turning his head towards his mate. "I'm kind of scuffed up at the moment." he added.

"You look like you've had a run-in with a meat grinder!" she commented as the huge femme parked the tigress just as close to her hubby's bed as possible.

"Nice to see you, too," Torvald quipped, grimacing when the split lip hurt from his smiling at her.

"No, I'm serious, Hon. I'm surprised you're still with us."

"Sweetheart, it will take more than a little explosion to get rid of me," he said off-paw, thankful that he had indeed survived up to this point. They were joined shortly by the doctor, who brought up a stool to sit on where he could face them.

"I'm Doctor Bruce Peyton, an associate of Jenna's. I have to say, you two must have one huge target on your backs, if you know that I mean."

"Yes we do know what you mean. What kind of shape is Torvald in?" the tigress asked.

The doctor smiled at her, then continued. "To tell you the truth, when I first saw him, I wouldn't have given you a one in one-hundred odds of him surviving. He had almost twenty pounds of nails, ball bearings and pieces of rebar steel imbedded into him and he was bleeding like a pasta sieve. I only tried to

save him because I owed Jenna a very big favor.”

“What's your prognosis?” the tigress asked.

“I actually think he will recover, given enough time.” Dr. Peyton checked the heart monitor, then turned back to Victoria. “Both of you were very lucky as was your benefactor, Jenna. I guess I should tell the both of you that you will need to stay here for a few days, at the very least, while we orchestrate your return to your home world.” The moose stopped for a minute to think, then continued. “I also have a dentist on the way to put temporary retainers on your husband's front teeth. They were all loosened from being hit in the face by all of that metal.”

“Can't you just send us back right now?” Torvald asked. He did notice his gums were very sore at the moment and a few of his front teeth were wobbly.

“I'm sorry but it's just not that easy to send you back,” Jenna brought up. She walked around to where the couple could see her, then continued. “You're currently considered to be missing on your planet, which is a problem. If I just put you back home, there would be questions you couldn't answer without possibly ending up in jail. Especially after having been assisted here with your medical needs.

“I'll have to put together a crack team that I can explicitly trust to get you re-integrated into the flow of things on your homeworld. I'll need fire-furs, paramedics, doctors and nurses that I can trust, so I can get both of you back home and through the system, so to speak, and ultimately into the care of your family.”

Victoria wondered if Torvald knew the truth about Mrs. Longbow. “Jenna, have you told my mate what you told me earlier?”

“I suppose I should tell him now,” she replied. “Torvald, you should know that myself and Dr. Peyton are both Dark Agents.”

“Oh really?” the equine retorted off-paw, lifting an eyebrow in surprise.

“We both want out. That's why I did such a stupid move and scooped the two of you out of there. It's gotten around through the grapevine that you and your wife, along with your friends Joe and Aslaug are all working together, planning on helping Agents out of the business.”

“There exists a small network of Dark Agents that have been looking for a way out for a long time so when I heard about your 'offer', I began stalking you in a way so I could approach the two of you, asking for a way out for our network of furs. I just happened to overhear what Kenji was up to so I knew I had to rescue the two of you.”

“Thank you, I guess,” Torvald stated, smiling ever so slightly at the otteress. “I do feel odd about having been rescued by a Dark Agent, though.”

“I can see your point,” Jenna replied. “I've had dealings with Agents Of Light before and I know they were all leery of my intentions. Well, our intentions are genuine this time. Dr. Peyton, my brother and I all want out. I guess to be honest, we want out even if it means our deaths at the paws of the Angelbreaker.”

“Aslaug is our friend, Jenna.” Victoria pointed out. “I'm sure if we talked with her, she could help us to work something out for all of you.”

“That would be very generous of you.” Jenna put forth.

“Dr. Peyton, how about my prognosis?” the tigress asked.

“Your wrists and feet were damaged quite seriously from being fastened down by those huge screws.” he began. “I repaired all of the damage I could, and in fact your body would sort of guide me as to what attached to what. I think you will recover fully and with a very good possibility of no disabilities. For now, the casts are to keep the tendons and muscles motionless while they mend.”

Tina stuck her head into the room, getting the attention of the doctor. “Dr. Peyton, the dentist is here.” she announced.

“Ah, this is perfect timing, now that you're awake,” the moose told the stallion. “I'll get out of Dr. Lesko's way so he can do what he needs to do. Lorna, please return Mrs. Svensen to her room so she can get some rest.”

The huge femme returned Victoria to her bed after taking care of the tigress' personal needs. Once she was settled back in her bunk, she asked a question while Lorna put a few pillows under the tigress' knees to support her legs better.

“Lorna, how long have we been here?” she wanted to know.

“You arrived about three a.m. yesterday.” was the reply. “If that's all, I have a few things I need tae do.”

“No, I think I'm fine for now,” the tigress admitted. “Um, will some fur check in on me from time to time?”

“That we have been doing, Mrs. Svensen. I guess I'll be a goin' now. I'll check in on you later on.”

Victoria watched the huge equine femme stoop down to exit the room, wondering just how in the world she found clothes that would fit her. She had on a shirt that would have swallowed her hubby Torvald and the bib-alls that she wore had enough material in them to make maybe three of them in the tigress's size.

Wondering how this would all pan out, she closed her eyes and tried to get some rest.

###

Axel and Brett stood by while a crew of furs put up a temporary fence around the damaged Svensen home, something to keep the looters out. It had become fashionable amongst the criminals to pillage houses that had been damaged by fire, earthquake or other disasters, whether natural or fur-made. It was getting late and the equine knew his brother-in-law had been more than ready to go home hours ago. He did appreciate the gesture made by the feline, to stand by and lend moral support in the matter.

Brett nudged Axel and spoke up. “I called my folks earlier and they said we can borrow my Grandpa and Grandma Hebert's huge old fifth wheel. They can't use it anymore since Grandpa gave up his license last year. Dana and I used it last summer and I can tell you, it's bigger than our first apartment.”

“That's kind of them to loan it out to us,” Axel put forth. “The driveway in front of the garage was meant for RV parking so there's hookups for water, sewer and electricity.”

“I remember your Mom saying something about that,” the tiger offered up. “Um, Axel, do you think your parents are still alive somewhere?”

“I hope in my heart that they are still alive, after what Willi Marie told us.” the tall one retorted. “I just can't believe that a Dark Agent would go after them, except to take a psychological shot at Aslaug.”

Axel knew deep down, the Malefic Council would stop at nothing, just to obtain new soldiers in their war against Good and Righteous. The League of Evil had no morals so trickery, deceit and lies were their best tools. He had read that note from Kenji and to him, it smelled like a trap to him. A vehicle coming up the drive snapped him out of his musings concerning the incidents of this morning. Looking to see who it was, it was Dana, returning with some food for them.

“Hi, Hon, Axel,” the femme feline mix said as she got out of their little pickup truck. “I brought some burgers for you two.” she added. She put the bags on the tonneau cover over the bed and went back inside the cab for the sodas.

“Brett, where do we have to go to pick up your Grandparent's fifth wheel?” Axel asked while he searched the bags to see what was brought to them.

“Um, not far from our home,” the tiger replied, giving the tall equine some french fries from the other bag to go with his burger. “If you come by at seven tomorrow morning, it won't take long. I'll go get Grandpa Hebert's truck tonight so we won't have to do that in the morning.”

Dana smiled to her self, then asked her brother a question. “Axel, do you know how to back up a trailer?”

“I think so,” he replied, looking somewhat confused. “Why do you ask?”

“Don't let Brett back up the fifth wheel.” That statement by the femme feline mix made her hubby speak up in his defense.

“I only took out twenty-five feet of fencing at the storage yard! You were supposed to direct me!”

“When I pointed left, you were supposed to go left!” she retorted. “You went right!”

“Axel, it really was my faux pas, to be honest. She pointed left and I turned the top of the steering wheel left.” Brett admitted. “The back of the trailer went right and I panicked, turning the wheel to the left even further. That took out the fence.” That made the tall equine smile.

Okay, Dana, I won't let him back it up.” Axel said, nudging Brett in the ribs.

“I'm outnumbered here,” Brett mused, shaking his head in mock dismay.

Dana took a sip of her soda, she looked at her brother. “Axel, I know our Mom and Dad are still alive.” she stated, waiting to see what he would say in reply.

“How do you know that?” Axel inquired.

“I have Mom's sixth sense and for some reason it's kicked into overdrive since this morning, when you called.” she admitted. “I feel that they're still alive, but injured. I'm sure I saw Mom in a fleeting vision with casts on her arms and legs. Blue ones.” She smiled an apprehensive smile, then continued. “Dad was in a

hospital bed. He seemed to have dark marks all over his arms, like stitches, maybe? I just can't seem to see it clearly, though.”

“Dad always told Mom to sit down and quiet her mind,” the tall equine suggested. Dana did as her brother suggested, sitting down in the front seat of her vehicle and closing her eyes. Momentarily, she smiled briefly.

“What so you see?” her hubby asked.

“A dentist is putting braces on Dad's teeth, I think.” she replied. “His face looks like he was hit over and over with something because he has bandages all over his face.” After a few more moments, she frowned. “I lost the image.” she stated.

Axel looked up at the stars, took his hammer pendant from his shirt and held it firmly in his paws. He closed his eyes and said a silent prayer for their parent's quick return if indeed they were still alive. He was worried, though. He knew how mad his mother had been when the living room and kitchen were trashed by a large animal eating a Dark Agent in their home. What would she do when she saw this destruction? He did not wish to be anywhere nearby when that happened.

###

Conrad opened his eyes, then blinked them a few times to clear them. Looking around the room at the situation, there was a femme tiger of some sort holding his left paw and a turquoise and white vulpine of some kind holding the other. They were both looking at him intently, as if waiting for him to say something.

“Um, where am I?” he questioned, finally observing his mate sitting nearby. Cathy jumped up and quickly made her way to his side.

“You're in Citrus Heights General hospital, hon.” she replied.

“Where?” he asked, not sure of what he had heard.

“Citrus Heights General hospital, Conrad. You know, the place where you had your fingers splinted last spring from that training camp injury.” the femme cougar related to her hubby.

“Cathy, that's not right,” he stated cautiously. “I was attended to in Sacramento General, Hon.” That information worried the femme feline. She knew that there was no such hospital by that name.

“Conrad, there is no . . .” Her hubby interrupted her train of thought.

“Here's proof,” he stated, pulling out his wallet and digging around in it for a bit. Finding the card from the team that would tell emergency personnel what to do with him, he gave it to his wife. “Okay, what does it say on the card?”

“This isn't right, Conrad. There is no such town called 'Sacramento!'” she offered up.

“You know, that statement scares me,” the tiger offered up. “You mean to tell me, Sacramento doesn't exist?”

“No, it doesn't, Hon.”

“Gah! I'll bet some Dark Agent was at the heart of this . . . this . . . Gah!!” Conrad shook his head, wondering where this would end. They were joined by Gytha, who seemed to be elated by something. She finished her call, then spoke to the assembled furs.

“Okay, I just got off the phone with Axel. He was told by Dana that Mom and Dad might still be alive!”

“Are they sure?” Conrad asked.

“Well, Willi seemed to think there was some fur with them at the moment of the explosion and Dana had one of her fleeting visions, so maybe they are still alive, but just on another planet at the moment.” the tall femme equine suggested.

“Maybe they are,” Conrad said softly, right before he started crying tears of joy.

###

Judge Talmadge looked up at the ferret standing on the other side of his desk, shaking his head in disgust. The whole proceedings against the Svensens had been nothing but a farce at best and this was just the frosting on the cake.

“Counselor Murcheson, I will not issue a warrant for the arrest of Torvald and Victoria Svensen!” the canid blurted out. “If anything, I will send a search party out to attempt to find them!”

“They have left their planet without the permission of the courts!” John Murcheson pointed out.

“You are testing my patience!” the judge warned. “I suggest you leave right now, before I find you in contempt!”

“I'll take this to the Sector Seventeen District Attorney. He will force you to issue a warrant!”

“Go ahead, knock yourself out,” Judge Talmadge said with a flippant tone. “I play cards with him every weekend.”

“You haven't heard the last of me!” the ferret said as he stalked out of the room, slamming the door behind himself.

The judge shook his head, still disgusted by all of this. Making a short phone call, he hoped to nip this in the bud.

###

Cami Carter made her way to Judge Talmadge's chambers, wondering what had gone wrong. When she last saw Torvald and Victoria, they had been dealing with their grand-daughter's eminent demise. She wondered if the Malefic Council was still using Agents to get to them.

“Come in,” the canid offered up once Cami had knocked on his door. Entering the room, she noted that Harold was dressed just a bit casual for a regular court day. The loud camp shirt he had on was something that was not a proper court shirt.

“Cami, have you had time to look over that job offer that I faxed over to you?” he asked.

“Yeah, I have. I'll take it but I'll need some muscle to back me up,” she replied, sitting down opposite the canid.

“How about Morgan Sleight? Is he enough muscle for you?”

“Can he legally pack firearms?”

“Yeah, he still has a carry permit, issued by me.” the judge offered up.

“I guess Morgan will do just fine,” Cami stated, giving the judge a serious look. “This will be expensive, Harold. I'll have to double my rates because of the risks involved.”

“I understand, Camille. I don't have a problem with that. When can you start?”

“As soon as you round up Morgan, we can get going.”

“I'm right here,” a male voice proffered up from the doorway behind the femme wolverine. Once Cami turned to observe the badger, he introduced himself. “Morgan Sleight, at your service.”

“Nice to meet you,” the former soldier said as she stood and shook Morgan's paw, sizing him up.

“Nice to meet you, too. You seem to have a reputation that precedes you.” he pointed out. “I've heard how you've taken on Dark Agents before.”

“I'm familiar with dealing with those bastards.” she stated. “hard to kill. You have to decapitate them and destroy the head to make it permanent.” That bluntness by Cami made Morgan shudder.

“Okay, I guess you are as determined as I've heard.” the badger mused. “We can get going as soon as we get our gear together. I'll meet you at sixteen-hundred Zulu in the transportation department.”

“Sixteen hundred, then.” she retorted. “Conventional firearms only that match up to the Svensen's home planet's conventions. Once we figure out where they went, we can come back for different arms.”

“Sounds like a plan. See you later, Cami.” Morgan turned to look at his friend. “See you next time I'm here, Harold.” The badger then turned and quietly left judge Talmadge's chambers.

“Cami, there's been a new complication.” Harold put forth. “Counselor John Murcheson is trying to get a warrant for Torvald and Victoria's arrest, citing a failure to follow their court-ordered probation orders to the letter. I can't stall that warrant for long so I'm hoping you find them in less than seventy-two hours.”

“I'll do my best, Judge.” she offered up. “Now, unless you have something more for me, I'll be on my way.”

“No, I won't hold you up any longer.”

Cami left the chambers, headed back to her flat on the north end of the city. She knew this was not going to be a cake-walk for them. If anything, it was a very dangerous mission. So much for painting her

living room this week.

###

the brindle-colored Mastiff looked up from his paperwork just as a femme otter in a skirt-suit walked past the floor to ceiling windows of his office space. She stopped outside his door, knocked once, then entered his office.

“Do we have an appointment?” the law-fur asked.

“I hate to intrude on you but no, we do not have an appointment,” the femme replied. “I’m Jennifer Longbow and I wish to speak to you regarding Torvald and Victoria Svensen.”

“I see,” the canid stated, pulling out his notepad dedicated to the incident. “What do you want to talk about?”

“They will be coming home tomorrow. What time, I’m not sure. I just wanted you to know that Victoria will be calling you, warning you to head towards their home. I was given your name by the tigress and she assured me that you would understand.” Jenna took a piece of paper from her purse and read it silently, then looked back up at the police-fur. “I was told to say, “Either it works out, or it was a hell of a ride.””

“Only Torvald, his wife and I knew what that meant.” the canid offered up. “You’re telling me that they aren’t dead?”

“No, they aren’t dead. Very banged up and injured, yes but not dead.”

“And I can expect a call tomorrow?”

“Lieutenant, you can count on it. An associate of mine and I are making sure that they are safely returned and cared for. I’m sure Torvald will fill you in once they’re back on this planet.”

“I’m glad this whole conversation is off the record,” Kenneth brought up, shaking his head. “I would be drummed out of the force if this got out.”

“No you wouldn’t,” Jenna proffered up. “You are a good friend to Torvald, from what I’ve heard. I would see to it that you didn’t lose your job.”

“So, you say they’re coming home tomorrow?” he queried, just to make sure of what he had heard.

“I can’t say just what time we will be bringing them home but I would think it would be early morning here, before ten in the a.m.”

“I’ll find an excuse to be in that area, then.” the police-fur offered up.

“Just keep your cell-phone on,” she stated, standing to leave. “It was nice meeting you.” she said as she turned to leave.

“Nice meeting you. Jennifer Longbow.” the cop replied.

Kenneth LaCourt watched the femme leave his office and walk back the way she came from, wondering

if what he had just been told by her was the truth or not. This whole situation with the Svensens had gone from strange to bizarre. Here was a femme, telling him that Torvald and his wife would be returning tomorrow, 'sometime', and using a statement that was an inside joke between himself and Torvald. Looking at his notepad with the information taken from the crime scene, he decided to go back down there tomorrow morning, just to snoop around.

###

“Victoria? Are you awake?” a deep alto femme voice asked, gently shaking her to rouse the tigress from her sleep.

“Uunnggh, yeah, I'm awake now,” she offered up, yawning widely. “Wha . . . what time is it?”

“It's after nine in th' mornin'!” Lorna pointed out while she carefully changed the tigress' hospital gown for a clean one that wrapped further around the femme feline for modesty. “It's time tae have breakfast wi' yer husband.” she added.

“He's up?” the tigress blurted out.

“It's nae a good idea thot he be up but he insisted.”

“That stallion of mine has a very thick skull,” Victoria commented while Lorna put her in her wheelchair.

“Aye, my stallion Duncan is just like thot,” the huge femme retorted. “He would nae stay in th' bed, too.”

The tigress was wheeled out to a table in the huge kitchen where her hubby was waiting in his own wheelchair. He was sipping his coffee carefully, the manner in which he was doing so seemed odd.

“Torvald, are you sure you should be up?” she asked.

“I couldn't sleep,” he replied. When he smiled at her, the reason he couldn't sleep was apparent; he now had braces on his teeth, top and bottom. “These darn braces are making my mouth hurt, keeping me awake.”

“And how are you feeling?” Jennifer asked the stallion as she came into the kitchen with a younger femme otter right behind her. “Oh, I should introduce you to my daughter, Amanda. Amanda, this is Torvald and Victoria Svensen.”

“Nice to meet you,” the tigress put forth.

“Are you Dark Agents?” the young otteress asked bluntly.

“No, we're actually inactive Agents Of Light, I think that what your mother referred to us as.” that made the young femme scowl.

“Mom, what's going on here? Won't this cause trouble?” she questioned.

“Amanda, calm down,” Jenna requested. “You know that the Malefic Council cannot step foot on this land. The only reason I can is the fact that I'm one with the land, a full blood Choctaw.”

“Mom, I don't know about that.” Amanda brought up.

“Amanda, Sweetheart, the ancients put a blessing on this land that prevents any and all evil from trespassing here.”

“MOM! That's just old tribal tales, told to pass the time!” the younger otteress blurted out.

“Don't talk to your mother like that,” a male voice stated. Victoria turned to see a male otter about Jenna's age, dressed in a black suit, black shirt and tie, holding a Bible. “Oh, excuse me. I didn't realize our company were up this morning.” he added, looking somewhat embarrassed.

“Torvald, Victoria, this is my husband, Robert Longbow. Robert, this is Torvald and Victoria Svensen. They are the ones that I told you about a few days ago.” Jenna offered up.

“You will have to excuse Amanda. She doesn't agree with old tribal customs and traditions.” the male otter stated.

“Now you see my reasons for wanting out of my 'deal' with the Malefic Council.” Jennifer brought up.

“Yes, your reasons are very obvious.” Torvald agreed. “We will do what we can for you but I have to tell you right up front, Victoria and I have no clue as to how this will turn out.”

“I only have one favor to ask,” Robert interjected. “If she has to die, please have her body returned here so we can send her off to the afterlife properly?”

“I can't make any promises, Mr. Longbow but I will do what I can for you.”

Torvald started in on the bowl of Cream of Wheat that was set before him, trying to eat without biting his cheeks by accident due to the braces. This whole thing had been one big mess from the get-go. In one way though, he was glad to still be alive. From what he observed this morning when Lorna's husband Duncan had helped him out of bed, the damage to his body was almost enough to have killed him. If they hadn't been rescued, he was very sure that they both would have died.