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“Redemption”

By Kellan Meig'h

Chapter 29 – “Renewals And Setting Up Shop”

Monty and Maryanne just stood there, looking at one another, until the stallion spoke up again.

“You **are** Maryanne Jensen, the waitress from Newberry's Diner, right?” he asked.

“That's me.”

“Are you a sorceress?” he wanted to know.

“No.”

“Are you immortal?” he queried.

“Not by a longshot.” she replied. “Could I ask those same questions of you?”

“I'll answer them, but not out here.” They went into the bunkhouse coach where the femme offered Monty a seat. He sat down and put the book in his lap before he continued. “Okay, if you are the Maryanne Jensen that I knew before the Great Depression began, you're over a hundred years old. Would you care to explain why you look not much older than I remember you?”

“You're not mistaken, I am that Maryanne.” she put forth as she sat down across from Monty. “You remember the huge stallion that was our assistant cook and busfur, right?”

“Yeah, he was tall, blond . . .” The gray one facepawed himself when the realization set in. “Torvald! That's why he looked so familiar to me!”

Maryanne cleared her throat. "Torvald and I were married not long after he began working for Mister Newberry as a line cook and busfur. That wasn't but a year after you and I kind of went our separate ways. Well, I think you might remember that times were getting tough after World War One and since we had two kits to feed at the time, we moved back to Schuyler, Virginia where I had some family. We worked for this fur Earl Hamner that ran a sawmill during the depression, most of the time taking food or services as our wages. We had been back there about ten years when Influenza swept through the area."

"I remember reading in the newspaper about how the East was plagued by Influenza epidemics." Monty commented.

"Anyway, I came down sick with the flu and the last thing I remembered before I turned up here not long ago was having an out-of-body experience. I remember watching the doctors trying to save me. Then I was here, most likely by some demon's doings, trying to drive a wedge between Torvald and Victoria, so they suspect."

"Now that is strange story." the gray one put forth.

"Now, I want to know how you look so good for being at least one hundred years old." Maryanne asked.

"You have to believe what I'm going to tell you." he stated. "I'm a sorcerer. I'm not immortal but we are very long lived."

"So, how old are you?" she wanted to know.

"Just turned one hundred and thirty-seven." he admitted.

"And how long will you live?"

"Maybe two hundred or a bit more." Monty stated. "Femmes, sorceresses, live much longer than males, though." He thought for a moment, then continued. "Tell me; why did your nametag always say 'Maryanne Jensen' on it and not 'Maryanne Svensen' once you married?"

"The owner of the diner was too cheap to have a new one made for me."

"Well, that describes Paul Newberry to a T."

"It does, doesn't it?" Maryanne agreed. "So, if you truly are a sorcerer, show me a bit of your skills if you would, please."

Monty smiled and gestured at her with his right paw. "Look in the mirror." he asked.

"What am I supposed to see?" He was still smiling as she got up from her seat to look at her reflection. What she observed was a femme zebra in the mirror. "Um, this is me, right?" she asked as she ran her paws down her muzzle.

"That is your true reflection." he agreed. "Simple appearance change spell. It works best when you're being tailed by mortals and you want to give them the slip."

“You can put my coloration back to the way it was, right?”

“Just like this,” the stallion stated, making her return to her correct coloration right before her eyes.

“Now that was something!” she blurted out.

“You said the Svensens are in the other coach?”

“Yes.”

“Here, let's have a bit of fun with Tor, then.” He stood, took Maryanne's paw in his and headed for the front door. “I want you to introduce me to Torvald properly.”

“I would be delighted to!” the femme equine replied with glee in her voice, allowing Monty to open the door for her. She smiled, glad that chivalry wasn't dead, not yet, anyway.

###

Torvald was fixing a late lunch for the twins, John, Cami and Renee. They had been up at the house, then the barn followed by the bunkhouse earlier, doing a walk-through inspection before they moved back in. Having numerous eyes had been helpful, since the contractor now had a punch list several pages long to take care of. He did promise to have the place ready by tomorrow, at the very latest. It didn't hurt that Ken Nishiguchi had called in a few favors, finding a few Dark Agents that wanted to trade their woodworking talents for a way out of the business.

A knock came at the door, Maryanne's knock, followed by the door opening. She walked in followed by Monty, book in paw.

“Hi, Maryanne, Monty.” the stallion bid as he looked up from the burritos he was making. “You're just in time for a late lunch.” he offered.

“Hi, Torvald.” she replied. “Listen, do you remember back when we worked at Newberry's Diner, on Saturdays a fur came in every week and sat at the North end of the counter? Steak sandwich with double onions, fries with catsup on them and coffee, black?”

“Yeah, this huge gray stallion, twice my size . . .” Tor then facepawed himself before he looked at the gray one. “Monty. That was you that came in to the diner. I remember Maryanne was smitten by you, until I came along.”

Montgomery smiled. “Small world, isn't it?” he quipped.

“You know, I'll agree with that.” Tor replied. “What are the chances that we would all be together one hundred years later?”

“Impossible odds.” the gray one replied. “Sometimes, I think things like this have all been carefully choreographed by higher powers.”

“You might be right.” Maryanne agreed. “You know, according to Tor, we might never be able to find out because the Gods won't tell their 'Big Plan' for all of us.”

“I've had some dealings with Angels before.” Monty put forth. “Gah, Seraphs are so evasive and they will only tell you what they think you need to hear.”

“I agree.” Tor stated. “So, burritos or tacos?”

“Burritos.” Maryanne replied.

“Burritos would be fine.” Monty told the blond stallion.

“We have a few spare folding chairs in the hall closet. I'll grab them.”

“I'll get them.” Cami interjected.

While the femme chimera wolverine broke out some extra chairs, Torvald gave thought to the situation. Monty had to be right, he mused. How else would the Amendment Foundation come together like is has and on top of that, coming muzzle to muzzle with furs from a distant past. Well, it was true that asking would be useless. He shrugged his shoulders and put some tortillas on the griddle to heat them up. Good thing he had made some extra meat filling this time.

###

John and Virginia pulled into the driveway in front of his home, a nice little two bedroom, two bath with a den, single story ranch-style home in a quiet neighborhood. Getting out of his vehicle, she waited for her former and most likely future husband to get her bags out of the back of his truck. She took the time to look the front of the house over and it showed that the tiger cared for his home quite carefully. All the shrubs were carefully trimmed, the lawn mowed and edged neatly and the paint and roof looked outstanding. It was the kind of house that she could sell in a heartbeat. Well, maybe not this one, since it might turn out to be her permanent residence.

“I sodded the front yard last year.” he offered up. “Kentucky bluegrass with just a bit of rye and red fescue.”

“It looks nice.” she replied. Kicking off her shoes, she stepped onto the lawn. It felt very lush under her feet.

She followed John up to the front door, where he opened it and held the screen door for her to enter. Virginia stepped into the house and slowly looked around, shocked by what she observed. She felt like she had just stepped back into 1955.

“John!” she exclaimed. “This is just like some sitcom home from the fifties!” she blurted out.

“You haven't seen nothing yet.” the tiger replied. He sat her bags by the door and led her into the kitchen. It was a sea of chrome, turquoise and white, accented by the turquoise boomerang pattern Formica® countertops that were set off by the white genuine linoleum flooring.

The femme feline stood there, slowly turning to take in a kitchen that seemed straight from her past, having that feel something like her Grandfather Joseph's home. "Oh My Gawd! Look at this!" she said loudly. "A Kelvinator™ refrigerator!" she commented, somewhat in disbelief. She turned to the male and just looked at him for a few moments. "You are a decorating genius!" She opened the cooler only to find a modern interior. "John?"

"It's a retrofit kit." he offered up. "Just don't ask how much it cost."

"I know how much it costs!" she retorted.

The male tiger led the femme down the hall to the master bedroom. Allowing her in, he walked in after her. The entire bedroom suite was done in blond maple, very early '50's.

"Are you doing this just to see if I'll stay with you?" she asked.

"No, not really. If you will remember, we talked about doing our home in Saugus just like this. Well, I had the time on my paws, so I kind of started with the coffee table in the den and it went out of control from there." He opened the closet to the left side of the bed, what used to be her side of the bed, just to show her the closet was empty. He then let her see that the dresser and nightstand were also empty.

Virginia, confused by this, walked up to John and took his paws in hers. "Why is the closet along with the dresser empty?" she asked.

"Listen, Virginia, I have always kept a place for you in my heart and in my home," the male began, "I've been praying for this day to happen, that I would have you back in my life. When I left you, it was because I didn't want to hurt you or cause you to lose Conrad. There's been a lot of water under the bridge since then and a lot of time for me to reflect on what happened.

"What really hurt me was the fact that I have been unable to love any other femme, because my heart still belongs to you." He began to cry as he wrapped his arms around the white tigress and continued. "I have always loved you and I will never stop loving you, ever." John wanted to continue with his thoughts but it was clear that he couldn't speak any longer, being completely torn up inside by his emotions. The tigress desperately wanted to reply to his outpouring of love but she was crying too hard to reply. They were both crying tears of joy in one another's arms.

###

Later that evening, Virginia looked over at her former mate, wondering if this really was the right thing to do. She smiled as his nose twitched, then he sleepily rubbed at it. A few moments later, he rolled over in the bed to face her. He settled himself, then he apparently went back to napping. She had certainly worn him out by getting reacquainted with him.

Taking a sip of her sparkling cider, then putting the glass back on the night stand, the femme feline felt excited about moving on with her life and becoming bonded to John Parks again. Well, even if she were just an iteration of her 'little' sister, all of the memories of her past marriage to the tiger were there. Or were they?

That thought flashed through her mind again, the fact that Hess had not finished her work of repairing

her memories, as far as she could remember. Are there things that she should know before she made any long-term commitments? Feeling troubled by this, she knew a phone call in the morning would be in order.

“Is something bothering you?” John asked sleepily, startling her momentarily. He then yawned widely, curling his tongue when he did so. “Your tail is twitching against my leg so I kind of guessed that something must be on your mind. At least that was what it used to mean, a long time ago.”

“Um, yeah, there is something on my mind.” she replied. Virginia went on to explain in detail what had happened at one time to her, back before the latest kit-napping and the subsequent return to this world to place herself into the same reality with her other self.

“That is a mess,” the male tiger agreed. “You know, what I think you need is some sleep so you can rest your mind. Come here,” he told her, taking her in his arms and holding her tightly. “Like I said before, we will deal with this.”

The white tigress cuddled into the chest of the tiger holding her, feeling safe in his arms again. Any doubts that this was a mistake were erased in that moment, the moment that she realized that everything would be all right.

###

Monty turned into the driveway of his home, stopping just outside the gates that required a code to open them. He rolled the window down on his Ford Excursion and pressed in the code that would allow them entry, smiling when the gates opened up for them. Just inside the gates, the driveway made a turn to the right, then the view opened onto a short drive with a parking circle at the end, in front of an Italianate-style Villa. He parked in front of the front door, under the Porte-cochère where he quickly got out and went around to open the passenger door for Maryanne.

The bay-colored femme looked around in total awe. “Montgomery, this is beautiful!” she exclaimed.

“Victoria wanted me to let her sell it when I explained to her where I lived,” he commented while he removed her things from the back of his gargantuan SUV.

“I can see why!” she said excitedly.

Monty unlocked the tall double doors and allowed the femme to enter ahead of him. She stopped once through the entry, totally stunned by the 'Old World' charm of the residence. The home looked like a set straight from some European movie.

“You really live here?” she questioned.

“Well, this area is mainly used for parties, so it's done up just a bit flashier than the rest of the house.” he admitted. “Before you say something about the place being dusty and needing to be cleaned, I have a cleaning service that will come in this Monday to attack the place with gusto.”

“You don't need to waste your money like that.” she observed. “Hopefully, you and I can pick up where we left off, so I need to know this place like the back of my paw, top to bottom.” Monty started to protest but she waved him off. “You and I can clean the place. That way, you can point out the features and

anything I might need to know about the home and in return, I can learn the lay of the land.”

###

Maryanne and Monty started out by working on the kitchen, which didn't need much at all to bring it up to scratch. The femme equine did marvel at the expansive granite counter tops and the massive stainless steel commercial range. They then turned their attention to what was the family room, taking the area to task. She did get a chance to look at the books in the corner that Monty had jokingly named “The Library”, noting that he had a wide selection of reading material. Some of them were new enough that she didn't recognize the titles, such as the “Earth's Kits” series by an author she had not heard of.

They ended up in “The Theatre”, a small, intimate screening room that would hold no more than a dozen furs. Monty had taken a moment to turn on the LCD screen and play a few minutes of a blooper reel from his days on the original “Hawaii Five-O” show, just to let her see how crisp the screen was.

Maryanne walked up to the gray one while he was shutting down the entertainment system with a concerned look on her muzzle. Something was bothering her so she needed to get it out in the open.

“Monty, you did understand me when I said earlier that I was possibly pregnant?” she asked.

He smiled widely. “Yes, I did. I look forward to being a father.”

“You do?”

“Yes, I do.” he stated, putting his arms around her and hugging her to himself tightly. “I was afraid that my lineage had come to an end. Our little ones will continue that Hill lineage.”

“But the one that I possibly carry right now won't be a sorcerer or sorceress.” she pointed out.

“Not this one,” he said, putting a massive paw on her belly, “If we decide to have more foals, they may have a decent chance of taking on my abilities. Maybe not a Level Five like myself, but some powers at any rate.”

“How many kits do you want?” she questioned.

“Well, not more than we can handle.” he replied.

“That's more like it.” she stated. “I've had two small ones in diapers at the same time and let me tell you, that is a paw-full.”

Monty looked around at their progress. “You know, we deserve a nice dinner to celebrate our reuniting.”

“That would be nice but I don't have anything fancy to wear.”

“No problem.” he offered up. “My third wife Mara was just about your size. I still have some of her clothes I just couldn't bear to throw out or give away because they were too nice.”

The huge stallion guided the bay-colored femme up to his bedroom and over to the walk-in closet that

would be for the femme of the house. He opened the doors, stood aside and smiled at the obvious shock on Maryanne's face.

“This, is a closet??” she questioned, walking inside and turning slowly to take in the entire room. “Montgomery, this is bigger than any living room in any house I have ever lived in!” She turned around again, then added, “This might be bigger than the first home Tor and I lived in!”

“It's fourteen feet wide by fifteen feet deep in size.” he offered up. Most of the closet was not in use, just part of one wall. “Well, Mara loved to buy clothes but she never got a chance to wear these.” he offered up.

Maryanne looked through the clothes, startled that they all still had the hang-tags on them. She looked them over and finally selected a black ankle-length dress. She took it off of the hanger and noticed something about it.

“Monty, this is a lovely dress but I'm afraid that my bra won't work with this.”

“It will be okay.” he replied. Once she had looked at him, he added, “That style is worn without a regular bra but I think I have you covered.”

“You're sure?”

“I'm sure.” he stated. He opened a drawer and pulled out a package that he gave to her. “Mara wore those stick-on bra cup things with her dresses like that.” She was still looking at the package when the stallion got her attention. “I'll be next door, getting cleaned up and dressed. That door over there,” pointing out a portal that they didn't enter through, “Leads into your bathroom.”

###

Maryanne stood in the shower, wondering just how big it must be. With her arms spread wide, she couldn't touch any of the walls. She fiddled with the knobs again, finding one that made the huge overhead nozzle literally rain water down on her. Another lever switched the flow from that one to a number of nozzles that sprayed sideways at her from all directions. Shaking her head, she continued to search for a setting that made the one normally-located showerhead work. She was amazed that a shower could be so complicated that it almost needed an owner's manual to operate.

There was another knob she hadn't touched yet, and it was that one that activated the normal-appearing head. The nozzle, however, was a pulsing massage unit. Giving up for a moment, she lathered up her hair and quickly rinsed it out. She turned the overhead 'rain' nozzle back on, since she could stand to the side to lather her body. Once she was covered in suds, she stepped back under the flow of water and allowed it to rinse her off. Actually, after Maryanne was free of the soap, an extended soak under the flow felt kind of nice to her.

The bay-colored femme begrudgingly shut off the water and began to dry herself. She remembered the drying booth she had walked past, so she went to the device and stepped in. There was a small set of directions on the door that she used to set the temperature and air flow rate for her coat so after adjusting the unit to meet her particular needs, she pressed 'Start'.

The small cyclone of warm air began to dry her off, so she used a brush to slick her coat, mane and tail

while she waited for the timer to stop the dryer. She was thinking that she could get spoiled by this very quickly if she wasn't careful.

Once she was dry, she went back to the dressing area in the closet. Looking through what looked to be a built-in dresser, she found some silk panties that were still in the package. The only issue was the fact that they were thong panties. She slipped them on, fastened the top of the 'triangle' shaped portion of the waistband/crotch band junction above her tail dock and then spent the next few minutes attempting to get them into a comfortable position. Once again, it was necessary to give up and move on, since that narrow portion was going to bug her butt-crack, no matter what. Who would ever think of such a thing?

Maryanne opened the package that the stick-on bra cups were in and looked over the instructions carefully. She took the first one and didn't do too bad in her estimation of placing the cup. It was making the second one match that was proving difficult. Even what looked to be only a minor difference in location made her assets set crooked. She would be horribly embarrassed just by asking but she knew she needed Monty's help with this.

"Montgomery!" she said loudly in a very exasperated tone. "Montgomery, I need your assistance!" she finally admitted.

In walked the stallion, wearing only a bath towel around his waist. "Yes?"

Maryanne took a deep breath, then she opened her robe. "I, Um . . . I can't get the two halves straight."

"Mara couldn't, either." he admitted. The male equine took the cup that she held in her paw and carefully positioned it for her, making her assets sit correctly. He then stood and took her in his arms, holding her gently against his body. "I missed you, Maryanne. I was heartbroken when you left me for Torvald."

"Well, I'm not going anywhere now." she replied, snuggling into his chest. "Now, as much as I think I could stand here all evening, cuddling with you, I think we need to get dressed and go find something to eat."

###

On the way to a small little Italian restaurant just off of Hollywood Boulevard, they had stopped by Troy and Amber's home for her benefit. Maryanne was surprised to realize that they were very close neighbors, within walking distance of one another. Amber had assisted her with applying some makeup and styling her mane and tail, since she didn't have a curling iron with her at her new home.

The honey-chestnut femme then went to her dresser and searched through what must have been a jewelry box, finding a few things that she was hunting for. Returning to Maryanne, she put a very flashy necklace around the bay femme's neck and then she put some matching earrings in her ears for her.

"Are these real diamonds?" She asked, looking at Amber in the mirror. Her question was answered by a wide smile and nod of the muzzle.

"There are forty-three carats worth of diamonds and over twenty carats of sapphires in that jewelry." she replied. "Hold out your right paw," Amber requested. Once Maryanne had done so, she slipped a matching ring onto her ring finger. "There, you look stunning."

The bay-colored mare looked at herself in the mirror; she was no longer Maryanne but what was looking back at her instead was a very beautiful, sophisticated femme. Her musing was interrupted by Monty making an important statement;

“I don't want to spoil the party, but our dinner reservations are in forty-five minutes. Gotta roll!”

###

That evening, the newly-reunited couple returned to the Hill estate, tired and full from an evening of wining, dining and dancing the evening away. Maryanne was worn out but she had enjoyed every minute of their time out on the town.

Once inside the door, Monty picked the bay-colored femme and ascended the stairs with her in his arms, careful not to drop her. He managed to open the bedroom door, then he entered, femme in arms.

He sat her back on her hooves but motioned for her to stand still. While she waited he quickly undressed down to his briefs. He then carefully undressed Maryanne, leaving her in her panties. A trip to the closet produced a sheer black nightgown which he slipped over her head and helped her to put on. The huge stallion pulled back the covers, picked her back up and gently put her in his bed. Once he had the covers over her, he joined the equine femme. When he had rolled over to face her, Monty noticed her concerned look on her muzzle.

“Is there a problem?” he asked.

“I'm pretty sure that I'm pregnant.” she reminded him. “You may kiss and cuddle with me, but that is it. Any funny business will have to wait until after I've given birth to my kit or it's determined that I'm not pregnant.”

“I'm good with that.” the male put forth.

“I'm glad you are.” Maryanne replied. “I look forward to having you make mad, passionate love to me.”

Montgomery smiled as he took the femme in bed with him into his arms and held her to his body, savoring the feeling of her warm, lithe body against his. They held one another for a while, then they made themselves comfortable in the bed.

“Montgomery?”

“Yes, Maryanne?”

“This will work out, won't it?” she put forth. “I mean, I could go live with some of my family but that would leave a huge hole in my heart. An empty space that you seem to fill perfectly.”

“This will work out.” he replied. “I will do whatever it takes to make this work out for the two of us.” He thought about it, then he spoke up. “You know, I can have a doctor on the Consortium's home planet check you out. Tomorrow, if you would like.”

“Um, yeah, I guess so.” she replied. “Tell me, are you working on a movie right now?”

“Yeah.” he replied. “Bruce Willis is doing a futuristic war veteran who returns to duty and gets shafted by the situation-type of movie. He asked me personally to head up the stunt department, after I helped him with the stunts on the “Die Hard” movies. He wants to do this one very 'Old School', with very minimal CGI special effects.”

“CGI?” she questioned.

“Oh, yeah, I'm sorry.” he replied, leaning over to give Maryanne a kiss. “That's when they use a computer to make something happen that couldn't be done in real life.”

“That computer stuff . . .” she mused. “Listen, could you help me to learn to use a computer?”

“I could, but Amber is better at the computer and she's currently between jobs. I guess in some ways, I'm still 'Old School', too. I'm always calling her or Rafe and asking how to do things.”

####

Torvald and Axel once again carried that heavy couch up the front steps, across the entry, through the country kitchen and into the family room. To them, this couch seemed like it had gained some fifty pounds from the last time they had moved it. Thankfully, this was the last piece of the existing furniture. Anything else would be delivered, Tor hoped. It had taken an extra day to complete the punch list but it was worth it to see Victoria, almost in tears, walking through their now-repaired home during the final inspection.

“That's it,” the tigress commented while she was making a minor correction in how the couch sat in the family room. She then turned to her hubby, walked up to him and took his paws in hers. “This is it. We are officially no longer Agents. I don't care what Christopher or Odin says, we are out of the business.”

“And it will be good to be out.” Tor agreed. “Just you, me and a few others, helping other Agents to leave the business.”

The Immortal Couple went out the back sliding door, across the deck and then up the path to the bunkhouse, just to see how things were going. As they neared, Rumjal could be heard arguing with Cami. Victoria looked at her stallion, trying to suppress a smile, noting his amusement with the situation.

“I need the office!” the pachyderm shouted, gesturing wildly with his arms. “I am a deity, for fracks sake!!”

“And I am the fur in charge of the half-way house.” the wolverine chimera femme replied calmly. “I will have a ton of paperwork to keep track of so I need the room for filing cabinets. You are just general security on the grounds so I don't see where you really need an office.” she pointed out.

“I have to look important!” he put forth, his tirade winding down now that he could see she was not going to acquiesce.

Once at the doorway, Tor spoke up. “I hope we have everything settled?”

“Well, not to my satisfaction.” Rumjal offered up.

Victoria chimed in. “So, what's not to your liking?”

“I do not have an office, which I think will be required since I will be here most of the time, if not on a twenty-four hour a day basis.” he admitted.

“Okay.” Tor put forth. “There's an office in the barn with an exterior door that's every bit as big as this one. You're welcome to use it, if you would like.”

The foursome walked across the paddock to the barn, where they went inside to inspect this alleged office. Just as the stallion had stated, it was as big as Cami's office, it was air-conditioned and the exterior door opened onto a small covered concrete patio.

“This will work for me.” the former fallen deity agreed.

“We will get you a desk, a nice desk chair and a few side chairs.” Victoria offered.

“Curtains?” Rumjal queried.

“Curtains, too.” the tigress replied. “Our staff uniform is kind of loosely interpreted, too. Black polo shirts and black slacks or black jeans. Our daughter Dana is designing the logo for our at-risk program so when we can, we will have some shirts made for you with the logo and 'Security' embroidered on them.”

Cami added her thoughts. “We will be getting two-way radios for communication and I'll have you a phone put in as soon as I can.” They were interrupted by a familiar male voice calling out to them.

“Hey, Mom, Dad! The sign is here!” Brett shouted from the upper parking area that had been made for the occasional fur that might have a reason to visit the half-way house. They went over to the bunk house where the tiger and his brother-in-law Axel were unloading the sign that Dana had just completed.

“Well, let us see it!” the tigress requested.

Brett removed the tarp to reveal the sign in all of its glory. It was a large rectangular sign, white in color with carved Old Norse runes circling its border. In the middle, in an Anglicized runic font lettering were just two words;

REDEMPTION RANCH

“That name is fitting.” Tor put forth. “The runes around the border say roughly that this is a place for those with troubled souls to seek redemption and find a new path.”

“Very Fitting.” a femme voice behind them interjected. It was Aslaug, with a frightened Agent in tow. The otter seemed to be in shock, too. “This is Gregory Ten Bears, one of Jenna's brothers. I broke him out of a cell in some scum's realm but he's been like this ever since. Won't say a word or even make a sound.”

“How did you break him out?” Victoria asked.

“It wasn't elegant.” a disembodied beak replied, right before Constantine finally materialized completely. “He was under a heavy guard when we arrived and before I could reason with them, she went on a killing spree. It was so bloody, we had to stop on the way and clean up before we arrived here.” The tigress just shook her head.

“You know, you could use a little tact.” Tor offered up to the blond femme. “But, well, I've done too many missions with you to know better than to ask.”

Before Aslaug could reply, her cell phone began to ring. Frowning, she removed the *sejð* device from her belt, opened it and answered the call.

“Aslaug.” she bid. She nodded, then replied to the fur on the other end curtly. “We will be there right away.” She then looked at her phone, closed it and frowned again before she looked up at the assembled group. “That was Joe. He said he's got a line on an Agent that wants her kits out of harm's way before they get killed. We need to go.” Before any fur could say something, the two warriors were gone.

Gregory looked around himself, then tentatively spoke up. “Wh . . . where did they go?” he asked.

Tor put his arm around the shaken fur's shoulder. “They went to take care of business.” he related. “As for you, we'll put you up here where you'll be safe and contact your sister for you.”

“Jenna? She still lives?” the otter asked.

“She does.” Victoria replied. “And I'll get in touch with Doctor Bruce Peyton. I want you looked over to make sure you're in good health.”

While Cami went to settle Gregory into a room and get him fed a hot meal cooked by the blond femme Wilhelmine Andersdatter, Tor took his tigress in his arms and embraced her tightly. He kissed her, then he spoke quietly.

“Well, we're in business for ourselves, now. Let's call this an end to the last chapter in our lives and the start of the next, what should be the best times of our lives.”

The tigress nodded in agreement. “Yeah, the best times of our lives, helping others to get their lives on a better path and more importantly, to help other Agents to get the hell out of the business.”

Victoria led her stallion over to a bench outside the bunkhouse and sat down, patting the bench beside her to indicate for her hubby to sit down. Torvald took a seat beside his wife and they looked out over their property spread out in front of them.

There was their home, repaired now, the expansive back yard, sodded to fix the damage from the furs rebuilding their home, and off to the left, Axel and Brett were hooking up the fifth wheel trailer to the truck that belonged to Brett's grandfather. The bunkhouse trailer had been removed earlier so that was just about it. The storage pod company would be back in the morning to remove the last of the storage units from the circle in front of the house.

Torvald took his wife's paw in his, then he leaned over to kiss her on the cheek.

“We are so lucky.” he stated. “Just look at our riches; we have a wonderful, huge, extended family, some really great friends that have stood by us all these years and a business that is ours. What more could a fur ask for?”

“Yes, we are very lucky and we are wanting for nothing.” she agreed. The tigress sighed, then continued. “All I know is, the next fur that even remotely suggests we take a mission, any mission, I will shred them with my bare claws.”

“Just leave some for me, please.” Tor retorted.

“I will.” Victoria replied.

“Want to go test out our tub?” the blond one suggested.

“That's a wonderful idea.” the tigress replied. “And after that, let's try out our bed, now that it's back where it belongs.”

Tor got up from the bench, stretched, then motioned to the house. “Come on, let's go.”

Victoria stood, hugged her hubby and walked paw-in-paw with him down the hill, their destination laying just ahead.