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“A Loss Of Rights”

By Kellan Meigh

Chapter 36

“ ... Anyway, our kind, the Danish Heavy Equines, were wiped out by the Black Plague in the fourteenth century. I would guess with the exception of a certain filly Victoria and I know, we're the only remaining ones on the planet.” Torvald offered up.

“I found that out when I gave some genetic material for the World Genetic Mapping Program.” Nancy offered up. “They contacted me about six months later, telling me I was one-eighth ‘*Equus Gravis Jutlandis*’, which is completely impossible according to the researcher I talked to. They even figured out that we're from the general area of Gerding, Denmark.”

“Well, now you know it's not impossible. I was born very near the modern-day town of Gerding.” the elder equine offered up. “So, how did you figure out you were immortal?” he asked his great-granddaughter.

“I was putting a glass pie pan in the sink to wash it and it slipped from my paw. It shattered for some reason just as I reached for it and a long shard went clear through my paw.” she related. “I panicked and pulled the shard out, suddenly realizing afterward that I might bleed to death. I went to wrap my paw up in a dishtowel so I could call 911 only to discover it wasn't bleeding that badly.” She looked at her father, then her great-grandfather. “I went ahead and washed my paw off under the tap to look at it only to see it was almost healed. That's when I passed out from shock.” she added.

“Nancy was still living with us at that time so I found her that evening, still out on the kitchen floor. I can't tell you just how badly that shook me up, even after she came to. I really thought she might have had an epileptic seizure or something. I still made her go to the hospital to be checked out anyway, since she wasn't telling me about the shard through her paw. Nancy just confessed the immortal part to me on the way over here.” Bradley pointed out. “I found out I was immortal the hard way when I served in the Korean Conflict.” he told them. That's when Janet spoke up.

“I saw Brad almost cut his index finger off trying to trim our lilac bush with a reciprocating saw. He washed it off, wiped his paws on a rag and went back to work, not knowing I was watching him

through the living room window. I also found that shard in the sink covered in blood then it clicked when I later observed the scars on Nancy's paw where it went through. I've never asked them outright in the hopes they might tell me and get it out in the open." she stated.

"I never said a thing since you would have thought I had lost it," Bradley told his wife.

"Well, now that our 'gift' is out in the open, I want to say I'm sorry for passing this gift or curse along to the two of you." Torvald put forth. "Furthermore, if you're ever approached by any fur, wanting you to do work for the good of all furkind, run screaming the other way." he pointed out.

"Um, why is that?" Nancy asked.

"Okay, this is kind of gruesome but here goes," Torvald replied as he stood and pulled his polo shirt off. "These two are my original scars from the first time I was taken to Valhalla," he said, pointing out the scars from a German broadsword. "This one here is from Thammuz, almost taking me out," he added, indicating the long horizontal scar across his abdomen, right above his navel. "I have numerous scars here and there from arrows, bullets and daggers. Not fun. Victoria and I are 'retiring' from this insanity so we can run a half way house in the foothills."

"Those are some nasty scars," Brad put forth, shaking his head in disbelief while Torvald put his shirt back on.

"It hasn't been fun with the exception of the furs we've met on our missions. We have met some really nice individuals on our forays." the tigress offered up.

"What is it like, traveling to different planets?" Janet asked.

"Well, I was on a planet where there were humans. They're descended from the primates." Victoria offered up. "They're almost hairless with little noses and ears. I'm surprised they can smell and hear at all." she told them.

"Um, Grandpa, not to change the subject but is that your armor?" Nancy inquired, pointing out their display in the family room.

"The larger armor is mine, the mid-sized pieces belong to Conrad, our son and the smaller set is Victoria's. It's okay if you want to handle them. Just be careful of the edged weapons, they're razor sharp." Tor stated, then gave Bradley his Dane axe to inspect. The younger Svensen looked it over very carefully, noting the way it was forged, finished and the wood that made up the handle.

"Um, this is a very convincing replica," Bradley put forth. "The forging looks very ..." He looked up at his grandfather and asked very carefully, "This isn't a replica, is it?"

"It is the genuine article, I can assure you." Tor replied. Brad gave the axe to his daughter who examined it very carefully.

"You know, there was this femme that I studied with in Columbus that would have killed to have this in her paws for just a few moments. Gah, I can't remember her name but I heard she had something to do with that movie 'Amat ...' oh, I can't remember the rest of the title, either." she offered up.

“Amat Victoria Curam,” Torvald offered up, smiling when his grandson tried on his war helmet. Brad looked like a younger version of himself with the exception of the white blaze that came by the way of Maryanne, Brad’s grandmother.

“Yeah, that was the name of the movie but I still can’t remember that femme’s full name. It was Jean LeBrun, maybe? I’m not sure. She was a shy vixen at times but I heard through the grapevine she finally received her Master’s,” Nancy mused while she examined the axe at length.

“Torvald, you’re liable not to get your axe back,” Janet stated, smiling at her stepdaughter’s fascination of the antiquities.

“I noticed,” he retorted, enjoying the look of rapt attention on his great-granddaughter's muzzle.

“Grandpa, this belongs in a museum! You have a very rare piece of Danish history here! It deserves to be in a museum for all to see!” Nancy blurted out.

“Well, I won’t argue that but it’s a part of me. I guess being a warrior, I feel naked without weapons.” the elder Svensen offered up.

“Uh, Tor? Why don’t we all go out on the patio? Maybe you could give your family a demonstration on the use of your weapons.” Victoria suggested.

“Only if we entertain our family by doing a bit of sparring with our longstuffs.” he replied, smiling at his mate. She just rolled her eyes.

Willi Marie was sitting with her mother at the kitchen table, using a ‘Gauging Orb’ to determine the younger mare’s true abilities. Willi had her paws on either side of the orb, about a paw’s width away from it. Her eyes were closed while she concentrated on powering up the glass sphere, using nothing but her magical abilities. It turned from clear to an amber, on to a deep green, then a blue followed by a purple that had very vivid red overtones.

“I think that’s all,” Willi finally stated, dropping her paws to the table and taking a deep breath. She looked up to see the ball’s color, somewhat in awe. It should have stopped at blue for a master-level. “Mom, what does that color mean?”

“Wilhelmine, please try that again. Give it your best effort.” her mother requested. The elder equine femme waved her paw over the orb, clearing it. Willi did as she was asked, putting her every effort into powering the orb.

Willi urged the orb to power up, sending her powers through it using every last shred of her existence. She felt herself weakening so she stopped, opening her eyes to see an inky black orb.

“Oh My ...” Iva said reverently as she stood to examine the ball closer. “Wilhelmine, this is serious. We need some direction.” she said as she prepared to make a ‘very ‘ long distance phone call.

“Mom, what does this mean? Is it bad?” she asked, concerned this meant something very ominous.

“Wilhelmine, just sit still. I will have Mala come and check this out.” her mother replied. Within moments of that call being completed, the blue and white femme materialized in Willi’s kitchen.

“Iva! It’s so good to see you again!” the femme blurted out as she hugged the elder equine. Her smile quickly turned into a look of confusion on her muzzle. “Uh, Iva, weren’t you and your husband killed?” she asked carefully.

“Wilhelmine wished us here from that mission, before the moment we were killed in that timeline.” Iva offered up.

“Oh, that’s good. The timeline here on your real homeworld was somewhat preserved, then. If I remember right, your husband is an archaeologist. You could always say the two of you were on a dig somewhere remote.” Mala brought up.

“Well, we were on a dig in the Andes mountains when we were called for our last mission.” Iva gave Mala a cup of tea, the kind she had made to settle Willi’s stomach. “Um, I called you to see this for yourself. The last femme that did this was my grandmother Hilda Sorenson.” She gestured at the black orb in the middle of the table.

Mala looked it over very carefully, noting it was solid black with no other colors present. She tapped her nose with one claw, thinking this over. Mala then picked the orb up and held it up to the light, trying to see through it. The glass sphere was totally opaque.

“Well?” Iva asked.

“I’m not sure,” the huge two tone femme replied as she sat the orb back on the table. “Willi is part Valkyrie so that might account for this. Otherwise, she’s ... I can’t say it.”

“Say what?” Willi begged, feeling a little bit like they were talking about something very bad.

“Hon, you might be a Grand Master.” her mother informed her. “We’re really hoping it’s just your other powers causing this or it could be your little ones, boosting your powers. We won’t know until you’re examined by a specialist in these matters.”

Dana was standing at the kitchen sink, holding onto the edge of it tightly. She felt strange inside, not like yesterday morning. Taking a deep breath, she looked out to her front yard and her hubby busily mowing the lawn. Knowing this was it, she slid the window open and got his attention.

“What is it, hon?” Brett asked after he shut off the electric mower and walked up onto the front porch to see what she wanted.

“I think it’s time. I’ve had three contractions in the last twenty minutes.” she replied with a weak smile.

“Okay, no panicking, just take it easy.” the tiger began to chant like a mantra.

He put away the mower then went into the house and hurriedly put on some clean clothes. He then got the bag by the front door and almost left without the expectant mother-to-be. Once he got her into the

car, she made her phone call. The line rang for a few rings before her mom answered the phone.

“Hello? Dana, are you on your way?” the tigress asked. Victoria had looked at the caller ID before accepting the call.

“Yeah, we're headed to the hospital,” she replied, stopping momentarily to ride out another contraction. “We just left the house so we won't be there for at least another ten minutes or so.”

“Your father and I will be there shortly,” Victoria told her, waiting to see what else she might have to say.

“I'll be waiting for you to get there,” Dana told her mother, then ended the call right as another contraction hit her.

“That was our youngest daughter on the phone. She's finally going to the hospital to have her first kit.” Victoria told Torvald's kin. “You know, if you came to the hospital with us, you could meet some more of the family.”

“If we wouldn't be intruding, we might go with you and stay for a bit.” Bradley put forth.

“No, you wouldn't be intruding. You're our family so you have every right to be there.” the tigress offered up. “We could take my minivan over there so you wouldn't have to follow us.” she suggested.

Bradley and Janet looked at one another just briefly before the femme pony nodded.

“That would be just fine by me. I hate it when Brad follows some other fur in a car. He ends up getting frustrated by the traffic lights cutting him off.” she pointed out, patting her hubby on the arm.

“I know where he got that trait,” Victoria retorted with a smile. “Torvald is just like that.” she motioned for them to head for the door and grabbed her purse from the closet on the way.

“Brett! You're panicking!” Dana pointed out to her hubby, who was looking at his cell phone trying to remember who he was going to call. He looked down at his wife who was sitting a wheelchair, grimacing ever so slightly at her.

“Yeah, I was panicking.” he admitted. He looked at the display on his phone again, still lost as to who he was trying to reach. Dana tugged at his elbow, getting his attention.

“Hon, you were going to call your mother,” she offered up, giving him a concerned look. He nodded, remembering that now.

“Um, Thanks. I was having a severe brain fart right then.” He sat down next to her wheelchair and waited for the admitting nurse to arrive. Brett heard Dana groan, then observed her clutch at her belly.

“Where is that nurse?” Dana said rather loudly as the contraction passed.

“She said she would be right back,” Brett replied. “Uh, I think that's her right there, talking with that doctor.” The femme skunk was talking with a rather rotund gray lapin, discussing something.

“Brett, why don't you go outside and call your mom? I'll be here a few minutes at the very least, waiting to be admitted.” She had a feeling this was going to take a while, since she didn't come in the waiting room in distress.

“Yeah, I'll go outside and call my mom and maybe I'll give Conrad a jingle too.” he finally stated. Dana watched him get up and walk out the doors, being sure to stand where he could see her clearly before placing his call.

She thought back to Gytha's first little one and the long bout of labor she suffered through. It took almost eleven hours for Roger Jr. to make his appearance and she was fairly sure this little one might have to be assisted by the doctors. She had been warned that she might need a Caesarean section due to the size of her little one.

“Mrs. Kashnikov, how are you feeling?” the mustilid asked as she sat down with the expectant mother. “How close are your contractions, Hon?” she added as she started to fill out the admitting form.

“Um, I'm miserable and the contractions are about ten minutes apart, I think,” she replied, still feeling very uncomfortable at the moment.

“Just try to relax, Hon. We'll have you upstairs in a few minutes. You do know your doctor wants to do a C-section on you?” the nurse pointed out. “Well, let's see here, um, is your husband here with you?”

“He's right outside, making a few phone calls,” Dana replied, pointing in the general direction of her hubby. She could see he was having a very animated conversation with some fur, most likely his mother.

“Okay, I think we have enough information from you for now. Let me get your husband's attention and let him know we're moving you upstairs.” the nurse told her before heading toward the door to get her hubby. She held her belly as another contraction hit her, just a little bit stronger this time. Maybe it wouldn't be too long after all.

Lisa sat by her husband's bed, looking at the result of almost twenty hours in a physical remodeling tank. She held his ruddy orange and white hand in hers, observing the fact that even though he no longer looked human, he was still undeniably her hubby. He was still Mitchell Gallegos even if he was a tiger morph now.

“Uuunnnnhhhh ...” he groaned, putting his other hand to his head. “Lisa, is that you?” he asked, not wishing to open his eyes just yet to see who was holding his hand. The light in the room was intense even with his eyelids closed.

“I'm right here with you, Hon. Take it easy, please? You were in that tank for twenty hours,” she informed him while she moved his hand away from his head and put it back under the covers.

“So ... uh, how do I look?” he asked, feeling his new feline dentition with his tongue.

“You could pass for a Golemtech Mk. 12 General Battle Chimera with no problems,” she informed him, running her hand over his cheek. “You look positively handsome, too.” That comment made him smile.

“Imagine if we went back to our homeworld. I would have to have ownership papers or be arrested and who knows what would happen to me. I would probably end up being someone's slave.” he brought forth. That prompted Lisa to throw in her two cents worth.

“I know. It's really stupid how the government treated chimerae as non-citizens for so long, then still wouldn't acknowledge us as full citizens in a lot of states after Blue Diamond burned down and all the laws were enacted.” she retorted. “I'm glad you came into my life and brought me here. I feel like a real person on this planet.”

“I'm glad you feel that way.” he said quietly, then yawned widely, curling his feline tongue. “I think I need some more rest.” he stated, snuggling into his pillow.

“Go ahead and sleep, my husband. I'll be right here when you wake.” Lisa sat there, watching her love go back to sleep, getting the rest he needed.

She thought back to the day she first met Mitch during one of his investigations. He had come into the diner where she worked to get a bite to eat. It was late, the diner was more or less empty and she had almost all of her duties for the evening taken care of.

They chatted while she did some cleaning and she finally agreed to show him the local color on her day off. He came back just to see her a few times and eventually asked her to come with him to his home and live with him. He had forgotten to mention to her it wasn't on their planet. Her musings were interrupted by his partner Reme Ronsoco coming in the room to check on Mitch.

“How's Mitch doing?” the capybara asked, looking to see how his partner appeared in his new form.

“He's sleeping again,” she replied, giving him a smile. “You know he's not going to be changed back this time. He's staying a tiger morph.”

“So, um, they did the whole conversion on him?” Reme asked, pulling up the covers to see Mitchell's feet. They had rudimentary paw pads and claws on them, signs of a full conversion.

“Yeah, twenty hours worth of conversion,” she replied, giving her husband a loving glance.

“Gah, that's a long time in the tank,” Reme suggested. “Well, I hope he's happy with this. I suppose he'll want me to put him on the morph world investigator's list now?”

“Wait until he's had a chance to think about it. He might want to quit and go into private investigation on some planet where we would fit in.” she replied, hoping he would stay with his present job. He was very good at crime scene investigation.

Cathy was cleaning up in the living room, doing a little dusting before making her calls to the stores to check in with them. She looked up to see her hubby coming up the walk, smiling to himself.

“What's up?” she asked, dropping her duster to give him a hug and a kiss.

“Brett called, letting me know Dana's at the hospital.” he replied, giving her a kiss in return.

“So, your little sister is having her first kit,” the lioness mused, nuzzling against her hubby's chin.

“It's about time. She's been married to Brett for what, three years?” the tiger brought up.

“You know, it will be three years next month.” she agreed. “I guess this means your parents won't be at the game?” she queried.

“Probably not,” he responded, giving her a wistful smile. “They need to be with Dana right now. Maybe next year they will see the season opener.” he conceded. “I'm just a little bit sad that I can't be there for Dana. She is my little sister and I was there when Gytha's little ones were born.”

“Maybe next time, huh?” she suggested.

“Yeah, maybe next time.”

Torvald had made his phone calls, letting Gytha know the situation, calling Victoria's parents then calling Axel. The younger Svensen male had informed them he would close up his shop early, pick up his wife on the way and to tell his little sister to wait until he got there. Valerie and Barbara were already on their way so Torvald called Elizabeth to let her know. Obviously since they lived in Bakersfield, there was no way they would get there in time but they would come anyway. After calling Willi Marie and her brother James, he called Conrad to apologize for missing the opening game again. He then filled in his family that were with them on how they came to have four children instead of one.

“You have got to be kidding me!” Brad spat out. “One misguided femme mongoose decided you needed extra children and caused that much trouble? Tell me she's no longer doing anything that might cause another faux pas like this one!”

“I'm not sure if I would call it trouble, son. We have four very wonderful children, two grandkits and another on the way. You do see, however the truth to my words? If some fur wants you to do something for the good of all furkind, run screaming the other way.” Torvald put forth.

“I would be so afraid to come home to no family or maybe twenty kits.” Janet offered up. Torvald thought carefully before he spoke again.

“Now don't get me wrong here. It's good what we do for the good of all furkind. The part that scares us to no end is being thrust into situations that put us at extreme risk. This last mission saw my dear sweet wife almost bite the dust several times. She was shot at by a sniper, she was fur-napped to another planet and her memories were messed with, we were almost bombed, we had an armed home invasion happen on us, a fur tried a drive-by and to top it off, she was almost cut up on a huge bandsaw and then shot it out muzzle to muzzle with an armed wanted criminal.” That made Janet look pale, if that was

possible for a solid black equine pony to lose color.

“I suppose that is a good reason to turn a fur down flat.” Nancy offered up. Her great-grandfather was right; this was very dangerous work that they wanted out of.

Brett looked up to see if any of the family had made it yet, then back at his expectant wife. She had that look on her face that said she was in severe discomfort.

“Is there anything I can do for you?” he asked, taking her paw in his. That was a big mistake.

“*I Need Something For The Pain!*” she replied through gritted teeth, gripping his paw in a crushing embrace as she rode out another contraction.

“I’ll see if the doctor ...” Brett quit talking when their doctor, a lanky greyhound walked in.

“Dana, we need to prep you for a C-section. That little one is just too big for you to deliver naturally.” the doctor said very casually.

“*Doc, The Contractions Are Hurting!*” she pointed out, the wave finally passing after a few more moments. Brett sighed as she released his paw that was still throbbing. Two nurses went around the doctor to start an IV and prepare her by shaving her belly below her navel.

“Nurse, give Mrs. Kashnikov a mild sedative while we wait for her to be set up with an epidural.” the doctor said as he looked at Dana’s chart. He looked up at the femme feline mix and said, “I’ll have you in surgery in less than ten minutes.”

“Honey! My Parents!” she said excitedly, getting Brett’s attention.

“They’re not here yet, sweetheart. They might have gotten caught in traffic.” he suggested. That was about the time Victoria came into the room, finishing tying her scrubs pants drawstring around her waist.

“Dana, Honey, are you all right?” she asked, looking to see just how her little baby femme looked. The poor dear looked pretty rough from her viewpoint. “Brett, go get a set of scrubs on. You’re going to be in there with her during her surgery.” the tigress directed.

“Um, are you sure I should ...” The doctor cut Brett off.

“Why of course, son. You need to be with her. There’s a cart with some scrubs right outside the door.” he instructed.

“I don’t know ...” Dana cut him off this time with a voice that was almost demonic in nature.

“***Brett, You WILL Be There with ME!!!***” she said in a dark, menacing tone. That made every fur turn and look at her. “What?” she said innocently, realizing what she just did.

“Brett, just go get dressed before I dress you myself,” Victoria said evenly, her ears laid back ever so

slightly.

“Momma, I'm scared,” Dana put forth after Brett left the room, holding onto her mother's paw tightly. The tigress had the forethought to hold her daughter's paw in a certain way to prevent injury to her own paw during a contraction. She looked down at Dana, smiling at her.

“Sweetie, don't be scared. We're all here and you're in the good paws of Dr. Sebastian.” she told her daughter. The nurse gave her a sedative and that seemed to calm her down quite a bit. Another doctor came into the room shortly to administer the epidural to her.

“Okay, Dana. Let's get you sitting up here to do your epidural and drink an antacid. After that, you'll be on your way to bringing your little one into the world,” the small dapple gray pony said as he prepped a spot on her back with a shaver. “I'll be about five minutes here,” he stated, taking care of business in a quick, practiced manner.

“Um, Dana, I'm ready, well, maybe,” Brett said hesitantly as he came back into the room, trying to find the drawstring on his pants. Victoria turned him around just to confirm he had them on backwards. She tied the string for him, knowing it was too late to do anything else about it.

“Alright, Dana. You should feel a lot better now,” the doctor, an anesthesiologist said as he checked her pupils. He seemed happy with her condition so he made her drink the strong antacid and then left the room.

“I feel a lot better now,” Dana said as she sighed and laid back in the bed. “Mom, did I tell you what we're naming her?” That made the tigress look at her and smile. Dana made a motion to come close so she could whisper in her ear.

“Why that's a beautiful name,” Victoria replied, smiling as she stood back up. The nurses had come at that point to collect her and her hubby to go to surgery so Victoria kissed her daughter and smiled as she was wheeled away.

The waiting room was filling up with the huge Svensen family and a number of the Kashnikov clan had shown up too. Axle was standing with Bradley chatting while Madelyn and Nancy Corbin pondered just how alike they looked. The femme zebra had to make an astute observation.

“You know, Bradley looks not much older than Axel. Um, is there something to that?” she queried. Before the blond femme equine could reply, Madelyn brought forth the obvious; “We all know about Torvald and Victoria's 'condition', per se.”

“Yeah, he's the same as his grandfather and so am I.” she said with a small wistful smile.

“Did ... um, did Torvald say how Axel, Gytha and Dana arrived?”

Nancy nodded, looking over at her father. “He told us about that Pamela Benelli femme.”

“You almost need a scorecard to keep track of this family,” Madelyn offered up. “I had better go and get Torvald to sit down. He's pacing again.” she politely excused herself and went over to make the

huge stallion park his butt before he wore a rut in the carpet.

Bradley had to stifle a snicker when the gravity of the situation sunk in; he was talking with his uncle that was over fifty years younger than him.

“You *do* realize that you're my uncle?” he put forth to Axel, having to stifle another laughing fit.

“Well, um, let's see ...” Axle got a surprised look on his muzzle when it finally sunk in. “You are right ...”

“How ironic,” Bradley brought up, still having to stifle a giggle. “I'm your nephew and I've already retired from one job with a full retirement package!”

“You know, if I had a white blaze or you didn't, we would look like brothers at the very least.” Axel offered up. It was about that time that Gytha made her appearance and hugged Bradley around the shoulders as she walked by, giving him a quick kiss on the cheek.

“Good to see you could make it, brother,” she said, then stopped in her tracks. She turned to look at the two males in astonishment, her jaw sliding open momentarily. “Um, Brad, is it? Excuse me for mistaking you for my brother.” she said in a very embarrassed tone of voice.

“There's no mistaking who's daughter you are,” Bradley brought up, noting Gytha was at least as tall as he was if not taller. “Nice to meet you, Gytha.” he said, extending his paw to her. She took it out of courtesy, actually wanting to go hide somewhere in embarrassment.

Things in the C-Section delivery room had gone very smoothly and they were making the last preparations to bring the little one into the world. Doctor Sebastian had already suctioned the kit's airways and it would be just a moment more.

“Hurry up, Doc. I want to see my kit!” the exhausted mother told him. She was ready any time now, even if she didn't feel the pain anymore.

“Give me a moment here,” he said to them, motioning for Brett to cut the umbilical cord. The new father did so with a nurse standing behind him in case he fainted. The nurses cleaned the kit up a bit once the doctor lifted her out of her mother's womb, then presented her to her mother.

There she was, all 31 inches and 16 pounds, 2 ounces. She looked like a full feline, a pale blond and white tiger pattern with brown tiger striping. She looked up at them with her ice blue, almost white eyes and smiled just a bit right before Dana put her to her breast to suckle.

The nurse that was filling out the forms for the doctor looked over at the new parents, smiling at their tears of joy. There was some information she needed that only they could give her.

“What's her name going to be?” she asked.

Dana looked up and said, “Her name is Sabrina Angela Kashnikov.”