

The Characters Torvald 'Tor' Svensen Conrad Svensen Victoria Connell-Svensen Valerie Connell, Barbara Caine, Ivar Johnsen Bob Bruj, Don Watkins, Sandra Watkins, Kellan Meig'h and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Ray Stankewitz

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'Lost'

By R C Stankewitz

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Chapter 2

“Discoveries and Memories”

The pair had been moving for some time over what was proving to be rough terrain. Several times they had to backtrack because the slope was too rugged for the equine to traverse. As they came into a clearing, the tigress stopped for a moment.

“Torvald, what is that over there?” she asked, starting to walk in that direction. As she drew nearer, it was obvious that somebody had hung three pouches on a low tree branch. Leaning against the trunk of the tree was her longstaff and spear along with Torvald's Dane axe, a dagger and his Franciscas in their holster.

“what's going on here?” she queried as she approached the tree. Her fur was starting to crawl as she got close enough to positively identify their belongings by the markings on them. This whole thing was beginning to creep her out to no end. She reached out and touched her longstaff to make sure it was real and not just some mirage. She was rewarded by the smooth, familiar feel of the tempered ash shaft under her fingers. “This is really strange” she said as she then felt the surface of her spear.

“I don't care right now” the berserker stated as he picked up his axe. “We can hunt!” he said excitedly. “I don't know about you but I need food inside me, even if it is meat.” Normally, the equine preferred fruits, vegetables and grains but some meat from time to time was actually good for him. There were certain essential compounds in meat that he could not get otherwise. He picked up his holster for his throwing axes and made another discovery. “Look! My Buck knife!” he said, taking his knife out of the small holster it resided in and opening it up.

“No, look here!” Victoria said, holding the pouches out. “It looks like some clothes for us.” She pulled out some neutral colored heavy cloth tunics of undetermined origin to see that one would fit her mate and the other would fit her. There were some tan colored hide leggings and some belts in the other pouches. They both dressed and put

the pouches over their shoulders before they continued carefully down the mountain side.

As they continued along their way, the equine spotted something out of the corner of his eye. He detoured out of his way to stop and pick up what Victoria thought was just a rock. The equine rubbed the dirt off of it and struck it with a Francisca. To his satisfaction, a spark flew off of it. "Just what I thought it was, a piece of flint" he commented as he put it in the pouch he carried.

After a while, the pair came across a strange animal they had never seen before. It was about the size of a very big khat but it was striped like a skunk. Because it walked on all fours, they suspected that it wasn't sentient. Before Torvald could prepare himself, a spear went flying over his shoulder and pinned the creature to the ground.

"Dinner is caught!" Victoria exclaimed as she ran over to dispatch the animal. She looked up at her husband, who had joined her at the kill site. "I caught it, you clean it?" she suggested, pulling her spear from the game.

Torvald nodded as he got down to the job at paw. He looked it over and made an observation. "This is a mustelid because it has scent glands." He carefully cut the hide from the body, being careful not to cut into it too deeply. He then removed the guts, being careful not to cut open the glands.

"I'll start a fire" he said as he rounded up the needed items. He took some dry grass and scraped it with his dagger to make some tinder. Using the flint and his dagger to make sparks, the tinder lit right off. By using twigs and then small branches, he finally had a fire big enough to cook over. Victoria had put the carcass on a stick and began roasting it.

"The smells remind me of my first home" he commented as he watched her roast the animal over an open fire. The aroma was getting richer as the fat was being rendered out and dripped into the fire.

"I'm sorry I don't have some seasonings" she said as the meat cooked. After turning it several times to ensure it was roasted evenly, she made her announcement. "I think it's ready" she stated as she tried a small piece. The look on her face said it all; this was delicious. The two of them ate the entire thing, even breaking the bigger bones for the marrow.

"Let's sit here while our food settles" the equine suggested, leaning back against a small log. He didn't have to ask twice as his mate joined him, leaning over against his chest.

###

"Someone has interfered with my plans!" the larger entity stated, looking at the pair resting against a log. "They would not have done well without weapons and clothes."

"You will not turn them. I know this" the smaller, older entity replied. **"Do not waste your time. Let them return to their realm"** the entity suggested, moving closer to see the younger entity's reaction.

"I can turn them" the younger one stated as he plotted his next move. "I have the knowledge and desire to do it."

"I was ancient long before you were conceived by hate" the older one said. **"I have knowledge beyond your imagination. You will only fail."**

"We will see" the younger entity said as he went back to his planning.

###

Judging by the angle of the sun, it was apparent to the couple that they would not make it off the mountainside by the time darkness fell. As they walked, the two of them kept an eye out for a possible place to hole up in for the night. They had checked out a few overhangs and caves only to find them not suitable for their needs. They had observed other 'skunks' in the area and spotted a few birds flying in the air. There seemed to be a lack of big game to hunt, however.

"There must be somebody living down there" the berserker commented. "There is a great lack of game up here. That only would be the result of somebody hunting on the mountain."

His mate was listening to the winds as they walked across another clearing. "I hear something" she whispered, turning towards her mate. "Do you hear that?" she said softly, pointing in one direction. Her hearing was much sharper than his so he just shook his head 'no'. "One fur, I think" she whispered, indicating towards an outcropping of bushes. Torvald readied himself with his Dane axe as the source for the noise stepped into the clearing. It was a scruffy-looking weasel.

"Torvald and Victoria! My two favorite immortals!" Loke stated as he brushed some of the dirt off of his clothing. "I don't want to seem dense but where exactly *are* we?" He looked up to see that the pair was stunned by his statement.

"You mean to tell me that you don't know where we are?" the tigress asked as she kneeled down on one knee.

“I was hoping you could tell me” the weasel replied. He was starting to look just a little worried to the couple. “I thought you had brought me here as a joke” he stated as he sat down beside the tigress. He was looking down at the ground and shaking his head as he said “I fear then we are lost in an unknown realm, my dear friends.”

“I have heard that there were realms that existed outside the normal ones” the stallion said as he sat down on the ground. “If that is so, why were we brought here?” He was thinking about all of the possibilities that could exist while he rested. As they sat there, Loke began to shimmer just a bit.

“Somebody is trying to pull me back from another realm” he stated, getting up and taking a few steps away from them. “I will tell Odin where you are, if I can” the Trickster shouted just as he slowly vanished from sight. The couple sat there for a moment more before they quietly got up and continued their quest for a place to hole up.

###

The fur was sitting on the porch of his crude cabin, looking out over the mountainside to his left. Earlier in the day, he thought that a fire had gotten started on the mountain but it went out about an hour later. The fur was always afraid of fire near him, having lost his first cabin to a flash fire. “I wonder” he thought, “Could there be life on the mountain?”

He had been here for too long in his estimation. He had managed to survive 22 seasons in the valley, starting with not much more than his bare hands. This was the second cabin that he had built and he thought it was amazing, considering what tools he had to work with. His military survival training had paid off for him, giving him some essential skill sets to use in such times.

He thought that if there was life on the mountain, he hoped that they were friendly. More importantly, maybe, just maybe, they knew the way home. That was all he had wanted to do for some years now. Just go home. He had a wife and a family waiting for him, he hoped. Maybe he could go home now.

The fur got up and went inside to stoke the fire again. It was that time of year and he knew that it would be a cold one tonight.

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The immortal couple had descended down the mountain some more when they happened across a lean-to that some sentient being had built. The huge equine had stopped on his tracks when he saw this, hoping it wasn't just an illusion.

“Shelter” was all he could say as he checked out the condition of the lean-to. It had been made with small logs, hand chopped by the marks on them. A small fire pit had been made of stone in front of it so the heat would be trapped by the shelter.

He quickly gathered up some firewood before the light was gone. He knew that as soon as it was dark, hunting for firewood would be next to impossible. He used a Francisca to cut a few pieces down to size and then split a larger log to use as a back log for his fire. Within a few minutes, he had a warm fire burning.

The tigress had made good use of her time by clearing out the debris from the area near the fire pit. Victoria spread out the sheet and then shook out the covers before she spread them out too. The equine let his mate lie in front of him, nearer the fire as they prepared to get some much needed sleep for the night. He knew that tomorrow could bring good or bad so he just needed to settle his mind for now. The two of them finally drifted off to sleep.

###

“You are already losing the game” the older entity stated as he watched the fire burning. Its hypnotic affect was even getting to him, causing him to feel 'sleepy'.

“I will turn them” the younger entity replied. *“I will take away their...”* He was cut off by a third entity speaking out.

“You know the rules” the new entity stated. **“Once the game has started, you cannot take anything from the playing field. You may only add things.”**

“Yes, I remember the rules” the younger entity stated irritably. *“I have been playing this game since before furkind.”*

“I wager you will not turn them” the older entity proposed. **“I give you a few days at the most to succeed or fail.”**

“I can turn them!” he retorted, sounding a little upset by that last statement. *“I will do it, you just watch me.”*

“Very well, waste you time” the older entity said. **“I won't say I told you so.”**

###

The fur was sitting in front of the fireplace, warming his body by the fire he had built. It was cold outside but his fire was giving the cabin warmth to keep him comfortable.

He thought about the possibility of sentient beings up on the mountain. He hoped that they could speak his language. If not, how would he communicate with them? He was an old ex-military fur so maybe he could figure out some way of talking to them. He needed to find out if they knew the way home.

He was missing his family very badly this evening because of the circumstances. The prospects of possibly going home were almost too much for him. As he sat there in front of his fire, he hoped they would come to his cabin by tomorrow because he really wanted just to be around other furs right now. 22 years was a long time not to see another sentient soul. He closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep.

###

Torvald had gotten up to add some wood to the fire when he noticed a glow off in the valley below. It had to mean that somebody lived here. He hoped that they were friendly because he hated the thought that they would have to kill the first sentient fur that they would see. He said a prayer to his gods for a good day tomorrow and laid back down by his tigrress to drift back to sleep.