

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, Jim Federline and Steven Nanomantube are the property of Ray Stankewitz

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'Lost'

By R C Stankewitz

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Chapter 4

“The Meeting of Furs”

The fur had woke up early this morning in anticipation of having visitors. He cleaned up again and dug out his best tunic and leggings. These had been made of deer hide that he had tanned and processed himself. The fur had cut and sewn himself some clothing to replace what he had worn when he had been brought here. He still had his coat, a tough canvas work coat but the rest had long since given up the ghost. He had buried his friend's clothes with him out of respect but he knew that his friend would have wanted him to keep them for himself.

He looked up at the mountain from his window to see the fire had been quenched with water. They were coming down this way he hoped. It had been 22 years so he thought he could wait just a few more hours. The fur put some water on to make tea with. He would be patient and wait.

As his water was heating, he took a moment to straighten up his home. He had made a bed, a table with several chairs and a couch in the time he had been here. He remembered the way his wife would clean the house, making it look as if nobody lived there. This thought brought a smile to his muzzle. If only he could see her now, just for a moment. Something that would give him strength to continue to wait. How he longed to be home with her right now.

###

“I still see the smoke coming up” Victoria commented as they made their way down a section of slope that was not as steep as it had been. She was being careful not to stumble and fall on the equine in front of her.

“As long as this doesn't get steeper again, we will be OK” her husband noted as he stepped over a fallen tree. The berserker had been thinking about the possibility that the being that they were en route to meet would be hostile. It was bothering him that

this may be the case so he silently prayed that the being would at least not try to kill them.

The pair finally made it to the valley floor and began to walk in the general direction of the smoke that was still coming up. Victoria had a thought go through her mind that the smoke would be from some destroyed village that had been sacked by evil forces. She remembered the last one that she had been through with her husband and the memories of that made her shudder. It had been terrible, the dead and dying scattered about and some burnt so badly that you couldn't tell what species they had been. She tried to push those thoughts out of her mind as they walked towards their destination.

Torvald noticed something ahead that made him stop in his tracks. He could see an obvious path that was heading in the direction he was going. "Oh well, I guess we use the trail" he commented as they continued their journey. It was apparent that some sentient being used this trail by the way the small branches were trimmed away from the path. After several hours, they came upon a clearing with a crude cabin standing in the middle of it.

The immortal pair stopped within shouting distance so Torvald could announce them. "I am Torvald Svensen. I mean no fur harm" he shouted, patiently waiting for a reply from the cabin. After a few moments, a paw beckoned from the open window. He thought he had heard something but he couldn't make it out. He shrugged as he motioned for his mate to follow him to the cabin.

Once they went around to the front of the cabin, they were shocked to see another equine standing in the doorway, crying. He was about 6' tall with a chestnut bay coat and a white blaze up his muzzle. He beckoned them closer, saying something quietly that might have been a prayer of thanks. They could see that he was trying to pull himself together and as they got within comfortable talking distance, he wiped his eyes and said "My name's Kellan. Please come inside."

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Torvald and Victoria followed him inside his cabin and took a seat when he offered it. It was apparent that the equine was emotionally upset by their presence so the tigress decided to break the ice. "I'm Victoria and well, you heard that my mate's name is Torvald. We mean you no harm, Kellan."

He looked up the pair with eyes that were red from crying. "I have been here for 22 seasons. I was camping in the Sierras when I was brought here. I...uh...don't know where to start" he said as he began to cry again. He looked up and said "I've been so lonely."

The tigress sat next to the smaller equine and hugged him. "You don't need to start anywhere if you don't want to" she said to Kellan. "We too were brought here against our will. We just don't know where 'here' is."

He shook his head as he looked up again. "I'm sorry. I haven't heard someone's voice in such a long time. I'll be OK, just give me a minute to pull myself together, please?" He was still trying to regain his composure as he sat there sobbing.

###

"You have lost them" the older entity stated in a smug tone of voice. He was observing the meeting of the furs.

"You are underestimating my abilities" the younger entity said as he planned his next move.

"You cannot turn them. Give up the game now and save face" the older entity suggested to the younger one.

"I will use the other one to my advantage. Kellan will help turn them" he stated as he prepared his next moves.

"I have told you that I have knowledge beyond your imagination. You cannot turn what Surt could not turn" the older entity shared with the younger one.

"I will show you that I have more power than Surt" the younger entity said in an irritated tone. *"You will see."*

The older entity just shook his 'head' at the younger entity.

###

"OK, I think I'm over crying for now" Kellan stated as he sat up and gave his guests a closer look. "Anyway, as I said, I've been here for 22 years. I was camping with my neighbor from next door when we ended up in this place. We had just figured out we weren't in California any longer when a pack of gray kalis attacked us. I fended them off with my camping hatchet only my friend Jim Federline didn't do so well." the immortal pair could see the hurt in his eyes as he continued with his story.

"Jim was bitten by several of the kalis only to discover their bite was poisonous. I held him as he slowly died in my arms. That was right after we got here." As they sat there waiting for the smaller equine to speak again, Kellan noticed the fresh scars on Torvald's arm.

“You were bit and didn't die?” the smaller equine blurted out in surprise. “That's a first for me. I've seen them kill a deer with just a scrape!” He got up to examine the wound site closer, noticing that it had healed and the coat had begun to grow back in.

“How long ago did you get this bite?” Kellan asked the berserker. He knew how long he took to heal up so this would give him an idea of how long the Svensens had been on this planet.

“I was bit yesterday morning” the huge stallion replied, then suddenly realized what he had said. “I mean, I was bit 2 weeks ago.” He looked to see that Kellan had not bought his story at all.

“Is there something you would like to share with me?” the smaller equine asked as he crossed his arms and looked the berserker straight in the eyes. The huge fur thought that maybe the truth was the best thing to share with their host at this moment.

“It would have come out anyway” Torvald stated. “We are immortal. That poison was bad but it couldn't kill me. I was unconscious for more than a half-day over it, though.” He felt much better about leveling with their new friend about this glaring fact. The big stallion looked to see a look of shock on the smaller stallion's muzzle.

“I...uh...you...” The chestnut bay equine was at a loss for words, just stumbling over himself vocally. He had a look of utter confusion on his muzzle.

“I will show you” the berserker said, taking out his Buck knife. He casually opened it and laid the palm of his paw open. Victoria took the knife from her husband and did the same.

“What the...” the small stallion said, as he watched them wipe the blood off on a piece of hide. He could then see the new scars start healing before his eyes. This really threw Kellan for a loop so he quickly sat down as his head spun. “You'll forgive me...that was something else!” he stated as he closed his eyes to wait for the world to stop spinning.

“You would have figured it out sooner or later” the tigress interjected. “I have only been immortal less than a year. Torvald, however is over 130 years old.” She could see that Kellan was still trying to take this in. “Don't think about it right now. Let's get some rest from all of this excitement. We are tired from our trek down the mountainside.”

Kellan nodded and got up from the couch and crossed the room. He pulled a mat out of a storage box and laid it out for them. He had made it in hopes that somebody would eventually come and share his cabin with him. The huge stallion got out their blankets and quilt and shook them out before putting them on the sleeping mat.

Torvald helped Kellan get some more wood for the fire and assisted in closing up the window shutters.

“We're thankful for your hospitality” the tigress stated to their host. “It'll be much warmer in here than outside” she commented as the trio laid down in their respective beds and tried to get some rest. It may have been just a mat that Kellan had offered them but it beat the hard ground. As she lay there, she was positive that she heard the smaller stallion crying again. Once her husband fell asleep, she followed right behind.

###

“**You have lost the game**” The older entity stated. He was sure about it this time as he watched the other entity's reaction.

“Do not count me out. All three will become my warriors” the younger one replied as he planned his next move.

“**So you say**” the older muttered as he watched on.

###

Morning came to the valley and Victoria was the first one up. She had quietly dressed and slipped out of the cabin to hunt some breakfast. The berserker had been vaguely aware of her leaving but he knew that she could defend herself if need be. He was thinking that they needed to find a way back to their home world but he wasn't sure how to do that. He knew the gods could transport them but that was the extent of that. There were no gods here to help out so he had to think of a different approach.

The thought had crossed his mind that he might be able to 'see' his home so he concentrated on his family room. He could see his home begin to appear around him and he was eventually standing in the family room where Conrad was playing a video game. The time and date on the VCR/DVD combo said it was still Friday night there, the day that the pair had left for Half Moon Bay.

He went and kneeled by his stepson and laid his hand on Conrad's shoulder. It surprised him that he could do that and that Conrad could possibly feel his touch. The berserker decided to try something else. He went over to his desk and picked up a pen. Satisfied that he could hold it, he wrote a note that said to get in touch with the Shieldmaiden and tell her that they were lost in an unknown realm. He knew that Aslaug would get help for them so he laid the note in front of Conrad just before he ran out of strength to stay there.

As the cabin reappeared around the huge stallion, he looked up to see that Kellan was standing there with eyes as big as saucers. “What in hell was that?” the smaller equine

blurted out. "We were in somebody's home where a young tiger was playing a video game!" He had to sit down because the excitement was too much for him.

"Kellan, that was my home and the tiger is my stepson" Torvald stated. "I was trying to get a message to the other side for help." He could see that the smaller equine was having trouble with all of this. "I guess that we have more to tell you, then." He looked to see that Kellan was nodding his head.

"I could touch things" Kellan said, still in shock over the incident. "I felt your couch that was covered in leather and I picked up some popcorn that was by the tiger and tasted it." He thought for a minute before he said "I think you have much to tell me."

Torvald was preparing to tell Kellan about them when Victoria came in with three rabbits that she had caught. "Breakfast is here!" she said cheerily as she looked at her husband and smiled. "I brought you two equines some more of those apples and carrot things, too."

Kellan stood in amazement over her catch. "I didn't think that there were any game left in the valley" he said as he took the critters and began to prepare them for cooking. He was trying to keep from crying as he hadn't had meat in some time. He looked up at the tigress and said "Thanks for hunting these. You don't know just how grateful I am."

###

Conrad was playing his favorite Z-Box game when he felt somebody put their hand on his shoulder. He looked back to see that nobody was in the room with him so he went back to his game. As he finally finished the game, he noticed a piece of paper in front of him. As he looked closer, it was in his stepfather's handwriting. It was a short message but right to the point.

Conrad,

Your mother and I have been transported to a realm that Loke said he had no idea where it is. Please tell Aslang that we need help from the gods.

Torvald

The young tiger immediately jumped up and ran through the house to the living room where Valerie and Barbara were watching a DVD. "Aunt Valerie! Look at this

message!” he yelled as he came into the room. Both of the femmes jumped when he did this as they weren't expecting a commotion. Conrad gave his aunt the letter and just stood there, shaking.

“What's so imp...” Valerie said as she read the short message, suddenly realizing what it meant. The two femmes had been made privy to the immortal pair's secret because it would have eventually come out.

“Conrad, get me the filly's phone number” she said calmly as she reached for the phone. The tigress dialed the number and waited for Aslaug to answer. After a few moments, she got the answering service supplied by the phone company. Valerie left a short message for the filly and hung up the pawset.

“This is a mess” she stated as she looked over at her love interest. Barbara was still in shock over what she had just read. “Barbara, you have to remain calm if we're to get through this OK. I just don't have any idea where to start.” Barbara just nodded as she read the message again.

“Maybe I can call Loke” Conrad suggested. “Dad does it sometimes so what's to lose if I can't?” He was looking at the two felines with a hopeful look that they might agree with him.

“Well, give it a try” Valerie suggested as she looked at the note again.

“Loke? Hey Loke! We need help!” Conrad said in his best big voice. After a few moments, the weasel shimmered into view. He smiled as he sat down on the couch with the femmes.

“You didn't need to shout” Loke stated, looking at Conrad with a crooked smile. “I heard you mention my name earlier before you started shouting about. We are trying to find your parents as we speak.”

He took a finger and cleared his ear with it as he said “You don't have to shout next time. Keep your hopes up and I will be near if you need me.” With that said, he shimmered out of view.

“I thought your mom told him he had to use the door” Valerie stated as she sat there, still a little bewildered by the goings on.