

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 6

“Time For All To Go Hunt”

The immortal pair and their host had watched the snow fall for several days. It wasn't too bad as far as Kellan could estimate. He had placed marks on the side of his cabin that marked off seventeen years of snowfall, month by month. This storm hadn't been nearly as bad as other fall flurries, only dropping several hand widths of snow on the ground.

“We should probably hunt for game now” the smaller equine stated. “They will come down to the valley floor because of the snow.”

“You have the advantage there” the tigress commented. “We don't know the weather around here. We can hunt if you think we should.” The prospects of hunting made her even more cheery than before. Victoria was getting antsy to go do some stalking of prey.

“We should leave right after breakfast” Kellan suggested as he dished up some hot cereal for them. “I know where they'll most likely be.”

“I'm up for some hunting. Fresh venison sounds real good to me” the berserker commented as he tasted the cereal. “This is not bad. Reminds me of something my first mate would have made.”

“It's a grain that's like oats. I roll it with a heavy stone to crush it open” he told them as he began to eat it himself. “It's better with milk on it but I lost my goat-thing a few winters ago. Wild kalis got it.”

“those things are nasty” the tigress commented. “I hope we don't see more of those things.”

"They don't like the cold" Kellan pointed out to them. "That's why the deer come down here when it snows."

"Then it's decided. We will hunt" Torvald stated as everyone nodded their heads.

###

"You did not turn them" the older entity stated in a confident tone. **"I told you..."** the younger entity cut him off.

"I will send more kalis after them" the younger, larger entity retorted. "The one named Kellan will die and this will turn the tigress and the large stallion."

"Kalis don't like cold weather" the older entity pointed out to the younger one. **"You must come up with something else."**

"I have just the thing" the younger one stated, putting three new objects in the game. "I will turn them now."

"That is a twist, I must admit" the older entity said. **"You might have a chance yet."**

###

The hunting party was preparing to go out stalking for deer or any other large game they could find. As the immortal pair got their weapons ready, Kellan pulled out his two main weapons. One was a standard Estwing camping hatchet that he had kept sharp with whetstones he had brought with him to this realm. The other weapon was his Browning Rage compound bow.

"A bow?" Torvald queried as he stared at the other stallion. "How...?" The huge stallion was left without words over this sight.

"Everything that was in our tent came here with us" Kellan explained to his guests. "That's how I have pots and pans to cook in. My rifle was still in my truck" he added with a dejected look on his muzzle. "It doesn't matter anyway. I would have been out of bullets by now."

They were finally prepared to start out so Kellan lead the way to the hunting grounds. The trip to the location was not too far away so they reached it by mid-day. Kellan pointed out the paths that the game were taking so Torvald determined which was freshest. As they got into a shielded location to watch for game, Victoria heard something that she had never heard before.

It sounded like a male feline that was angry but there was a feral component to it that gave her a chill up her spine.

“I hear something” she said in a whisper as she listened for a direction for the noise. “Over there” she nodded, indicating a cluster of bushes. Kellan nocked one of his hand made arrows with a deadly sharp flint point on it and stood ready. The tigress suddenly heard something behind them.

“Look out!” was all she had time to shout as she spun with her spear and struck at a large wild feline beast that was not of a kind she had ever seen. She managed to keep them from being taken from behind but the other one had charged their location.

“I have it!” Kellan shouted as he pulled and released his arrow at the charging animal. The projectile found its target, embedding deeply into the chest of the beast. The smaller equine watched as he quickly nocked another arrow to see the stricken beast stagger and fall down with blood running out of its mouth.

The one that the tigress had fended off had joined up with the third one and began stalking the hunting party. The eyes of the beasts seemed like there were no life in them at all, they were just dark dead pools of death. Torvald pulled his Franciscas from their holster and readied himself as he kept his eyes on the animals. He saw his opening and threw both of them at one of the beasts that had become distracted. He was pleased when the beast staggered and fell with one small axe embedded in its skull.

“One left” Kellan stated as the beast ducked behind some bushes. The tigress listened carefully as it tried to circle them, first one way then the other. The beast finally charged at them from the bushes and leaped at the huge stallion. Torvald ducked and used his Dane axe to disembowel the creature as it flew over his head. He ran over to it and used his dagger to dispatch the fallen beast.

“What are these things?” Victoria blurted out as she went to examine one. It looked like a very large khat but it had the coloration, mane and tail tuft of a sentient lion. She was guessing it weighed over 200 pounds or more. “Look at his claws” she said as she poked at the dead animal's limb with her staff. The claws on this beast could have disemboweled any one of them with no trouble at all.

“Now what?” Torvald said to the others. “Should we keep hunting or turn back?”

“Let's bury these creatures and stay” Kellan suggested. “We need the meat but I don't think I would eat these beasts.”

The immortal pair agreed with Kellan so they spent the time necessary to bury the dead beasts before the smell of death would drive off the game they sorely needed.

###

"Somebody has interfered again!" the younger entity 'shouted' out. "Those beasts should have killed at least one of them!"

"There was no interference" the older entity replied in a calm tone. **"You are underestimating the resolve of these sentients to stay alive."**

"I have not! I still say somebody has interfered!" the younger entity said as he planned his next moves. "I will have them yet!"

"I cannot watch your mistakes any longer" the older entity muttered as he tried not to watch the game continue.

###

Freya and Loke were sitting at a table, eating a light snack. The vixen seemed to be lost in thought as she nibbled at a piece of meat in her paw.

"What are you thinking?" the weasel asked of the vixen.

"I was trying to think if this has ever happened before to one of our warriors" she replied in a level tone. It was obvious that she was not happy with the situation. "This waiting is really bothering me. I hope the stallion summons you soon so we can be sure you'll take me with you."

"What if Odin cannot sense where we go?" Loke asked. This thought had crossed his mind that they might get stuck there too.

"Odin has pulled you from that realm before" Freya replied. "It will be no different when we go together. I will use my strength to pull them back with us from that realm."

"I hope you are right" the weasel said as he suddenly lost his appetite.

###

The hunting party's patience had rewarded them with a large buck that took all three of them to lug back to the cabin. They had spent the rest of the day and part way into darkness to gut, skin and cut the deer up into manageable pieces.

Kellan had made a cellar behind his cabin that was cooled by ice taken from the nearby river in winter. The weather was cool enough in the summer that he never ran out of ice. They put the meat into storage except for a piece that they started roasting over the fire.

“It's been a long time since I've had venison” Kellan proffered up to his guests. “Last year it didn't snow so the deer stayed up on the mountain.” He turned the meat on the hand made spit before he continued. “I went up there and spent a month in a lean-to trying to get a buck or doe. The cold, rainy weather finally forced me back down here.”

“That must've been the lean-to we stayed in” the tigress stated. “It probably saved us when Torvald was poisoned.”

“By the direction of the smoke I saw, yeah, that was it” Kellan replied. “I've used it in summer to hunt those badger-looking things that dig up the carrots.”

“Those are tasty critters” Victoria commented as she peeled some tubers to cook for a side dish. “You know, we should dig up as many tubers as we can for winter” she suggested as she put them in a pot.

“Yeah, that's a good idea. I think I have plenty but it wouldn't hurt to have a few more” Kellan replied to her suggestion. “There are some close to here that we can get in the morning.” He checked the meat to see that it was almost done. “We'll eat good tonight” he commented as he turned the meat some more.

After their meal was over, the trio sat around and let their food settle. Outside they heard sounds that were like a sentient wolf's call at the moon.

“Those are a type of kali that I call a wolf-kali” Kellan told them. “They seem to stay away from my cabin, like they don't care for my presence.” The wolf-kalis continued to howl into the night, making a lonely sound that seemed to serenade the trio.

“I want to say something” Kellan said as he slouched down in a chair. He waited until he was sure he had the immortal pair's attention. “Since you two have been here, I have been happy for a change. I feel like I can wait to go home now.”

As Torvald nodded his head, Victoria replied to Kellan. “We'll all go home as soon as the gods figure out where we are.”

Kellan smiled as he said the word “Home.”

###

Aslaug had left for home a few hours ago and the two femmes were staying in the Svensen's guest bedroom to be close to Conrad. "I hope that Victoria and Torvald get home OK" Valerie said softly as she wiped the tears from her eyes. Barbara had been holding her close to comfort her since they had went to bed. The tigress was trying not to cry but it was very hard for her not to. "I miss my sister already" she said, snuggling up against her lover even closer.

"The gods will get them home" Barbara told the tigress to calm her down. She thought to herself "I hope they get back home for Valerie's sake." She knew the loss of her lover's sister would be very traumatic for the tigress so she just hoped for the best as they drifted off to sleep.

###

The Shieldmaiden had partially woken up from her sleep to realize that the room seemed inordinately cold to her. The heat for her home had been going on the fritz lately so she thought it had given out again. Stretching out a little, she opened her eyes to see that she was face to face with a small badger-looking animal. She sat up quickly to see that she was on the side of a mountain, lying on her bed covers but the bed was gone. It wasn't quite sunup yet and she could see her breath in the air.

"Loke!" she shouted as she stood up. "I'll tie you in a pretzel when I catch you!" she yelled as she looked around for that sorry weasel. After a few moments she realized that she wasn't on her home world or the present world she had been living on. "Oh Damn!" she said as the realization sank in concerning her plight.

The filly looked around to see there was some smoke coming up from the valley below so she decided to head that way. She picked up her covers and pillow, putting the quilt over her shoulders for warmth in this snow. Taking a deep breath, she headed down the mountain. "I hope Torvald and Victoria are there" she said as she walked along.

###

"That move puts me closer to my objective" the younger entity said smugly, watching the game at paw. "This will tax their food reserves."

"You risk Odín's wrath by doing that" the older entity stated. **"I believe he has the power to destroy you."**

"I cannot be destroyed" the younger entity pointed out. "I was born of hate and I have the power to rebuke Odin."

"Suit yourself but don't come crying to me when Odín sends the daugn for you" the older entity said in a smug tone. **"I will not help you."**