

The Characters Torvald 'Tor' Svensen Conrad Svensen Victoria Connell-Svensen Valerie Connell, Barbara Caine, Ivar Johnsen Bob Bruj, Don Watkins, Sandra Watkins, Kellan Meigh, 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 7

“Persistence”

The sun had finally come up and Aslaug was trying her best to make it off the mountain before darkness fell. She was substantially more agile than the berserker so she was making good time in her trip down the mountainside. The thought kept going through her mind that she was going to deal out a large helping of her favorite brand of hurt on whoever or whatever was responsible for this mess she was currently in.

As the filly came into a clearing, she noticed her spear, Dane axe, Franciscas and a dagger leaning against a tree trunk. There was also a hide pouch hanging on a low branch nearby. Aslaug carefully approached the spot to see that there had been nobody walking around the trunk by the lack of prints in the snow. What she did notice were hoof prints and paw prints in the dirt under the tree where the snow didn't fall. “Torvald and Victoria have been this way” she commented to herself as she checked the pouch. It contained a nondescript woven cloth tunic, hide leggings and a belt. “This has the feel of *sejd* to it” she muttered as she looked around herself carefully to make sure that weasel wasn't standing nearby. The filly picked up her spear and ran her paw over the shaft, feeling the familiarity of it's heft. She smiled as she held the spear for a few more moments before setting it down again.

She quickly put the tunic on over her t-shirt and traded her sweatpants for the leggings. Once she had them belted on, she picked up her weapons and continued her trip down the hill. As she descended the mountain, signs that the berserker and tigress had been this way kept showing up. “I am on the right path” she thought as she carefully picked her way down a particularly bad section of incline. She could see where the berserker had no doubt slipped several times on the shale-like ledges as he made his way down. She noted an area where the huge equine had slid for some distance before regaining his purchase on the hillside. Aslaug had caught on to their tracks where they had backtracked around the worst sections. “He has left a trail that a blind fur could follow” she muttered as she stepped over a fallen log. The snow on the ground was

making things harder than necessary at times, obliterating the immortal couple's trail in places.

“The Archangels had better not have something to do with this” she thought as she made her way towards her destination. “I am not sure what I would do to them” she thought as she descended the mountain. “I have had enough of WhiteChrist's angels to last me several lifetimes.”

###

Torvald roused from his sleep to the smells of breakfast being cooked. There was one smell that he wasn't sure of, however. He got up and went to the fireplace where his tigress was making something in a pan. Upon closer inspection, she was making a large pan full of scrambled eggs.

“Where did you get those?” he asked as he watched her intently. He could already taste the avian delicacies in his mouth, they smelled that good.

“I gathered them from a few nests that I know of” Kellan answered him. “The birds lay eggs all year round so I have plenty.” He thought for a minute before he added “I've even gotten burnt out on eggs a few times, there's that many available.”

“I'll eat them” the berserker commented as he washed up for breakfast. “That is my favorite for my morning meal.” While he waited, the huge fur folded up his bed covers before he picked up the sleeping mat and stowed it in its place. After a few more minutes, the tigress had their morning meal ready.

###

“You will be lucky if Odin doesn't send the Shieldmaiden herself after you” the older entity stated coolly. **“I would stand by and watch you suffer greatly at her paws.”**

“She will be my warrior” the younger entity retorted. *“I turned Hitler and I can turn her too.”*

“Hitler was just one fur” the older entity pointed out. **“I was the one that manifested the conflict between furs. Many good furs suffered for my amusement. Without me, the conflict would have never happened.”**

“I'm not so sure about that” the younger one said to the older one. *“You will see my best moves soon. You just wait around and see.”*

“As you wish” the older one stated in a bored tone.

###

Christopher was sitting in his celestial home, waiting for his Archangels to arrive. He had just spoken with the one-eyed wolf about his plans for retrieving Torvald and Victoria from the place they were marooned in. They had decided that the lion would mount a second search party from his end. While he was pondering all of his options, two figures shimmered into view.

“I have brought Michael” the smaller feline stated, helping the other one to stand. “I am not sure if he will be of any help” the angel added as the larger one mumbled something. Christopher was looking at Michael with surprise.

“Did Aslaug do this to you?” he asked, trying to keep from laughing at the sight in front of him. “I don't remember you looking that bad when you threw Lucifer out of here!” The larger Archangel was nursing two black eyes, numerous cuts and scrapes and it was quite possible that his nose was broken. Michael was still dabbing at his busted lips with a towel as another feather fell from his wings.

“Yeah, she beat us up again” the larger feline eventually admitted. “She said to stuff our apologies up our... well, maybe I won't say where she said to put them.” Christopher was straining to keep from laughing at them as Michael continued on with his story.

“She said it was all our fault that Victoria is immortal now. That's what she's mad at us about” Michael said sourly as he dabbed at his lips again. “And believe me, she is *mad...*”

“Well, let's just look at this situation for a moment or two” the lion pointed out as he struggled to contain his anger with the two in front of him. “What you two pulled off was just completely over the top! What about my father's new “No Interference” policy? I guess you two didn't read it or just plain didn't care!” The two angels were looking at the ground and nodding their heads as the lion spoke to them quite tersely. “You two interfered with something that was none of your business in the first place! Aslaug barely got to know the Svensens before your screwing around caused the curse of immortality to be dropped on a very nice femme 'just' so she wouldn't be destroyed in Surt's realm! Now do you understand Aslaug's anger with you two? I'm really surprised that Torvald and Victoria didn't kick your asses for that too!”

“Now that you put it that way, we understand it now” Gabriel said sheepishly. The smaller feline was still looking at the ground as he said “Do you want us to try to apologize to her again?”

“No, not right now. After we are done with this pressing matter” the lion told them as he stood up and took a few steps closer to them. “I need both of you to search for Torvald and Victoria. They're lost in some unknown realm.” As the two angels stood there looking at him he finally said “I want you to use whatever resources necessary to find them. I do not want to see them lost to some unknown force. Do you both understand me clearly or do I need to put it in writing this time?”

“No Sir, we understand you perfectly” they both said as they shimmered out of sight. The lion sat down and took a sip of his wine as he contemplated what else needed to be done.

###

The marooned trio had walked down towards the river to dig up some tubers to add to their larder for the winter. Torvald had mentioned that it might take a while for the gods to find them so a little extra food wouldn't hurt. As they walked along, Kellan was pointing out the various plants that he had found a use for.

“This plant is similar to Soap root” the smaller equine said as he touched the plant in question. “The bulbs will make a lather if you crush them for the sap. I found out the hard way by tasting them. They are just like eating a bar of soap!” He smiled as he added “The river is my bathtub, in case you wondered.” Victoria was blushing as she thought about bathing out in the open like that while the berserker was smiling at the thought of skinnydipping with his mate.

“Here's the tubers” Kellan pointed out as he turned the ground with a digging stick to expose the bounty below. “I think they look just like a potato.” The trio carefully dug up several pouches worth to take back with them, wiping the dirt off of them before putting the tubers in the pouches.

It was a nice sunny day and the river's sounds were soothing so they decided to stay for just a little while. The trio sat in the shade and rested for a bit by the river before heading back. “This river runs year-round but it does ice over in winter” Kellan mentioned as the tigress washed her paws in the water. “I have caught fish out of here too.” The tigress noted that the river water was extremely clear and cold, too.

“Maybe we should head back before it gets dark on us” the berserker said as he got up from his resting spot. It was now getting on towards late afternoon so the others agreed that would be the thing to do. As they finally headed back towards the cabin, Torvald saw a reflection off of something on the mountainside.

“There is someone on the mountain” he said as he stopped to look closer. While they stood there, another flash from a reflection was seen. “Yeah, there is someone on the mountain” he stated confidently as he looked at the other two.

“They'll be at the cabin by dark, judging by their location” Kellan commented as he watched some more. “Maybe sooner. Whoever that is, they're moving pretty fast.”

“Let's pick up the pace a little” the berserker suggested to the others. “Let's beat whoever that is back to the cabin.” Victoria and Kellan nodded in agreement as they began to jog towards their destination.

###

“What is this?” the younger entity blurted out. “How did the Shieldmaiden get clothes and weapons?” It was clear that the entity wasn't happy with this turn of events.

“**I did not interfere, if that's what you're getting at**” the older one replied. “**Some other entity may be at work here. You must be careful now.**”

“I will find out who is interfering with my plans!” the younger entity said angrily as he watched the filly make her way along the slope of the mountain.

“**You had better watch your back**” the older one suggested. “**The angels are no doubt looking for the large stallion and the tigress by now.**”

“I am not afraid!” the younger one spat out. “I have no reason to worry about a few angels!”

“**You should worry**” the older entity pointed out. “**Can you take on the angels and Odín's warriors at the same time?**”

“I...I have never tried before” the younger one said thoughtfully. “I...I will have to be careful as you suggest.”

“**As you should**” the older one said in a smug tone. “**As you should.**”

###

Conrad was lying in his bed, trying his best to be brave during this ordeal. He kept thinking over and over in his mind that he might lose his mother and stepfather. As he laid there in his bed, he thought it was sort of funny in a way that the huge equine had insisted that he be referred to as his stepfather. Torvald had said this as he didn't want to overstep his boundaries in his new family. Even though Conrad had met his biological father a few times, the berserker was the only one he felt had been a real father to him.

Conrad thought about the few times he had been with his biological father to do something together. He knew this fur just didn't know how to relate to children because he seemed so quiet and reserved around his son. He remembered the time that they went to the park and his biological father didn't say more than ten words to him. Maybe that's the reason he chose to be a truck driver. Maybe he just didn't want other furs around him.

Conrad knew that if his Mom and Torvald returned, he would have a talk with the two of them. The young tiger thought it was about time that he referred to the huge fur as his father. Not his stepfather, but just his father. The other fur had helped to conceive him but he wasn't there when he had broken his arm at school or when he played all those football games. The berserker had always been there for his stepson. Maybe they could just be father and son from now on. He tried to be brave as the tears streamed from his eyes.

###

The marooned trio made it back to the cabin in good time and had put their food stuffs away in storage. On the way back, they had picked more apples and carrots that they had spied on their way out. "I am glad we made it back in one piece" the huge fur stated as he squatted down by the fireplace to re-stoke the fire. "Kellan, do the gray kalis always stay away when it snows?" he asked of the smaller equine. The thought of being attacked again chilled him, even though he knew he could not die from their poison.

"As far as I know, they go to the low valley to the south and stay there when it's this cold out" the bay colored equine replied. "That valley is a week's walk from here." He knew that as long as it was cold, the kalis would leave them alone. Those feline beasts, however were another story. He had never seen them before so he couldn't be sure about them at all.

"Have you done any exploring?" the berserker asked as he tended to the fire. It was always good to know your surroundings if at all possible.

"The first few years I was here, I went out in early summer in search of civilization" Kellan replied. "I went a month's walk in all directions to see that there were no signs of other living furs about." The smaller equine sat down as he recalled what he had seen.

"West by my compass takes you to the ocean in about 2 weeks. I saw no signs of others that way. East goes over the mountain range to a desert beyond. It looked like it would be impossible to cross. North and south I followed the low valleys but I found no other living furs."

“You say that like you did find something” the tigress commented.

“I would always find signs that others had been there but the most I would ever find were dead bodies *except once*.” He had to swallow hard as a cold wave rushed over him. “I did find some dying warriors to the south but they weren't like us” he told them in a hushed tone. “They didn't have fur on their bodies, just on the tops of their heads and some had hair on their faces. They also didn't have tails.” The immortal pair were giving the smaller stallion their full attention. “They were wearing 17th or 18th century style armor. Not a heavy armor, but a gentleman's style of armor. They had been in a heavy battle with some unknown forces. I couldn't save even one of them.” After a few moments, Kellan added “If it were possible, I would have brought their armor back with me.”

“It must be some entities at work here” Torvald said in a reverent tone. “They are using this place to do something, but what is it they're doing?” It was apparent that the huge stallion was thinking about the things that they had been through. “I hope we get out of here soon. This is really beginning to get on my nerves.”

“I'll start our dinner” Kellan said as he went to get some meat out of the cellar. “Maybe we'll feel better on a full stomach.” The pair just nodded in agreement.

After Kellan had left the room, the tigress got her mate's attention. “Maybe you should summon Loke again” she suggested to the huge stallion. “Let's find out what's going on.” The stallion nodded and said the Trickster's name a few times. After a few moments, the weasel appeared, looking slightly irritated.

“Did you have to do that just now” Loke stated with a slight tone of irritation in his voice. “Freya had just went for more wine. I was supposed to bring her here with me and then she would pull you furs back with her.”

“Sorry. I didn't know” the berserker said in a sheepish tone. “I will refrain from doing that too often, then.”

“You didn't know so I can't be mad at you. Wait the same interval and then summon me again. I will...” Loke got cut off as he was summoned back by Odin.

Kellan had returned with a piece of venison to cook for their dinner. He carefully sliced it into steaks and put them in an iron skillet to cook. “This pan came from the remnants of a camp to the north that had been burned in a way I've never seen before. Just the camp was burned, not the surrounding forest. It was sort of like a fairy tale dragon had done it...” He looked to see that the pair wasn't shocked by that statement.

“I have seen dragons before, on a mission” the berserker said to the smaller stallion. “It really did breathe fire, just like the books say it could. It is a very impressive sight to see fly” he added, getting that far away look in his eyes again.

Kellan was shaking his head as he worked on their dinner. “Dragons...I must be losing my mind.” He was beginning to question his sanity for even entertaining the idea of dragons for just a moment.

“No Kellan, I'm dead serious” the berserker said as he sat up. “They really do exist, just not on our world.” Torvald was getting that far-away look again as he remembered riding on the back of a striped dragon on a mission with the squad. He thought for a few moments before he decided not to tell the smaller stallion about the mechanized beast the coyote was so fond of.

“If I were to tell anything we have talked about” Kellan commented; “I'm sure my Tasha would have me committed to a loony bin somewhere. You can be sure your secrets are safe with me.” The smaller equine was shaking his head as he worked on their meal. “Dragons....yeah, I'm losing it....”

While they waited for their dinner to cook, Victoria heard sounds outside. She got the two stallion's attention and pointed out the window opening. “Someone's out there” she said quietly as she picked up her spear. The other two got their weapons in paw as they started for the door. Just as Torvald touched the door to open it, a voice came from outside.

“Torvald? Victoria? Are you in there?” the femme's voice queried. The immortal pair knew that voice so they went outside to see Aslaug standing nearby. The filly smiled as they met and shook paws warrior style. “I am glad I found you two” she stated, obviously relieved by this fact. “I followed your trail that was so obvious a blind fur could have tracked you” she explained as they walked back towards the cabin.

As they grew nearer to the cabin, Torvald stopped the filly and his mate. “Victoria, I would like to talk with Aslaug alone, please?” he asked. His mate could see that there was something bothering her husband so she agreed and went into the cabin.

“What is wrong?” Aslaug asked as they stood there in the cold. “You look upset to me” she said as she waited for him to speak.

“I wanted to tell you that I am very sorry if it was my fault you were pulled into this mess” the berserker stated as he looked at the ground. “I know it's not really your thing anymore to gallivant around time and space.”

“Please...no, it's OK” she said to the huge fur as she gave him a crooked smile. “Joe, You and I are the only ones that know the whole story so just forget about it. We'll get out of this mess soon enough.”

“No, I'm serious about this” Torvald retorted. “You have other things you need to be doing. You don't need to be stuck here on this god forsaken planet.”

“Please, Torvald. I told you it's all right.” she replied again with a rather serious look on her muzzle. “Come on, let's get inside where it's no doubt warmer than out here.”

As they turned to walk towards the cabin, Torvald accidentally brushed against her newest weapons acquisition, her Valkyrie's spear.

“Yeouch! That darn thing shocked me again!” he stated as he rubbed his arm. “Can't you be more careful with that pointy thing?” he suggested to the filly, who was smiling back at him.

“Well, quit touching my spear” she hinted as they walked inside. The filly was still smiling just a little as she finally sat down in the room to rest.

###

“**You should give up your game**” the older entity said in an urgent tone of voice. “**The gods will destroy you when they see this.**”

“They cannot destroy me, they can only cause me to have to regroup” the younger entity replied to the other. “I will turn the equines and that tigress before I am found out.”

“**You are taking foolish chances**” the older one stated in a smug, knowing tone. “**The gods will punish you greatly for this. Let them all return to their realms.**”

“You are weak. I will have them as my warriors yet” the younger one replied as he plotted his game finishing moves.

“**I have warned you**” the older entity stated as he began to devise his own plans.