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'Lost'

By R C Stankewitz

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Chapter 8

"Fox And Hound"

The ever-growing group of furs had returned to the warmth of the cabin and huddled around the fire to warm up. Kellan continued to prepare their meal while the filly was briefed on what they knew so far.

"Gray kalis?" the Shieldmaiden commented. "I have never fought against something like that. *Sejd* must be involved with those." It was apparent that the filly was not happy with this situation by the way she sat there, continuing to stay alert.

"We have been here for five days now" the berserker told the filly. "Did Conrad get in touch with you?" Torvald was in hopes that his family was aware of the situation.

"I spoke with them not more than a few hours before I was brought here" she replied. "Time must run at a different speed here. We have experienced this before."

"That is good" the berserker said with a sound of relief in his voice. "Maybe when we are taken home, we will still be able to have our weekend to relax." He reached out and hugged the tigress while he kissed her on the cheek.

"I hope so too" Victoria chimed in. "We paid too much to let that weekend go." She was purring at the thought of finally having her husband all to herself.

As they sat there warming by the fire, a figure shimmered into view. It was very large solid black equine with copper colored eyes. He was wearing an ornate tunic and hide leggings and he was holding a incredibly large battle axe. There was a aura around him radiating energy that all of them could feel.

"I mean you no harm" he said as he stood there, the top of his head almost touching the ceiling. "I have come here to help you if I can." The foursome were giving the huge fur their full attention as he continued to talk to them.

“I have taken this form so you could hear what I have to say. I am the entity known as 'War'. I have been watching all of you since you were brought here against your wills.” The giant figure looked to see that they were paying attention to him before he continued. “Myself along with the entity known as 'Compassion' have been helping you when we could. Another entity, whose name I will not mention wants all of you as his soldiers.”

The berserker began to say something but the black equine cut him off. “I have little time left so listen carefully. Do not get angry with one another as this will help the other entity to reach his goal. Your gods have sent out many to search for you. It is only a matter of time before you are found and returned home. I only hope that I can delay this game of turning all of you until the gods find you. I must leave now.”

Just as he had come, the huge fur shimmered and left.

###

The Archangels commenced to gathering so they could begin their search for the immortal pair. Michael was still tending to his bottom lip that was busted open substantially worse than the upper one.

“Will you let me suture that up?” the angel Raphael asked as he looked at the damage that had been inflicted by the filly. He hadn't remembered ever seeing an angel that was that badly injured in battle before.

“No, It'll be OK” Michael replied as it began to bleed again. “Well, yeah...maybe you should suture it up.” He was looking at the towel that was being saturated by his own blood. “We need to make amends with the filly and soon.”

Gabriel was looking around to see that all seven of the major Archangels were present. By the doorway stood Uriel and Raguel. Sitting at a table nearby were Remiel and Zerachiel. As soon as Michael's lip was sewn up, they would be on their way. They took this time waiting to carefully go over their plans.

“I will try to get a sentience trail from Loke's travels” Uriel stated as he checked his broadsword for sharpness. “I have worked with him before so I shouldn't have any trouble.”

“I will search the underworlds with Remiel” Raphael said as he worked on his fellow angel's lip. “I have been there on occasion.” Michael winced as the other archangel started to stitch him up.

"I will go to the pair's last whereabouts and try to follow their trail to wherever they are" Zerachiel told the others. He was sure he could trace the pair if he had their starting point.

"I will search the parallel worlds for them" Raguel told them as he sipped some tea.

"OK, Michael and I will search the nether realms for them" Gabriel stated as he put his broadsword in its scabbard. "I ask you all to be careful out there. Remember what happened to Zacharial. Good luck and good hunting. May we be successful in our search." He then turned to Michael and said "Let's go. Time is wasting." Within a few moments, the angels had all shimmered and left on their missions.

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"I will have them as my warriors soon" the larger, younger entity said in a smug tone of voice. He was busy preparing his final moves.

"You are running out of time" the older entity stated as he watched the game. "You must return them to their realm before you are found out."

"I have told you, I am not afraid" the younger entity said in an angry tone.

"I have warned you" the older one stated as he scanned for signs of the searchers. "I will not be a part of this."

"You may leave if you wish. I am almost done" the younger one said in a dismissing tone.

"You are right. I am leaving" the older one said as he turned to look for a safer place to watch from.

###

The marooned foursome were eating their evening meal while they discussed what had just happened.

"If that was 'War', why didn't he try to recruit us?" the tigress pondered out loud. She thought that the entity would have relished the idea of immortal soldiers under his control.

"War needs many furs to battle against one another" the filly replied. "We are too few in number to keep him amused."

“You are right” the larger equine stated. “All wars involved many furs that gave their lives for their cause. This entity needs many furs to feed off of their fear and anger. We would be less than a snack for him.” All of the others agreed with him on this.

“Not to change the subject, but how will we sleep tonight?” Victoria asked. “We don't have enough bed space to go around.” Kellan had his bed and the Svensens were sleeping on the mat and the couch wasn't padded at all. This seemed like a dilemma to her.

“That is a problem, isn't it” Kellan said as he began to think about it. “I still have the air mattresses but I'm not sure if they will even hold air. We'll check them out after we eat.” With that said, the two stallions finished their meal quickly to start checking the mattress.

###

Loke was sitting across the table from Odin and Freya. The one-eyed wolf was giving him a hard stare as the trickster tried to his best to explain the situation.

“I was finishing my meal when the berserker pulled me away from here. I didn't have time to summon Freya before I was taken.” The weasel was looking at the ground as he told them this information.

“It is true, Odin” the vixen said to the one-eyed wolf. “I had gotten up to retrieve some wine only to come back and find Loke gone.”

“Very well. I will be patient with all of this” the wolf told them. “I beg of you please don't leave one another's sight from now on. It is imperative that we retrieve them as soon as possible.”

The vixen and the weasel just nodded in agreement.

###

Valerie had been woken up by some noises from the family room of the house so she got up and crept through the house armed with one of Conrad's aluminum softball bats. The noises that she heard were soft but nonetheless from inside the house. She could see that the desk top light in the family room was on and the shadows of some fur moving around were showing on the hallway floor. As she turned the corner to confront the intruder, she was stopped by the sight in front of her.

“Uh, I'm Zerachiel the Archangel” the feline with the wings stated. “I am tracing Torvald and Victoria's travels.” The angel was looking at a stunned tigress holding a

bat in her paws. "Please, I will not harm you" he offered as he stood there looking at the tigress.

Valerie finally got her composure back and lowered the bat but she didn't let go of it just yet. "So...if you're looking for my sister and her husband, why are you here?" she asked the winged feline. This was just creeping her out to no end that angels and weasels and other such things have free reign to pop in and out of their house at will.

"I am trying to get a 'fix', or a starting point to work from on the immortal pair's location so I can track them" the angel replied. "If you could tell me where they were the last time you spoke with them, it would help immensely."

"They were on a second honeymoon in Half Moon Bay when this all happened" she told the winged feline. "They were supposed to be staying here" she added, showing the angel the brochure from the bed and breakfast. "Will this help you out?" she asked as a tear ran down her cheek.

"You have helped greatly with our task" he replied to her as he wiped the tear away from her muzzle. "Please have faith in our ability to find them" he said to her as he smiled and shimmered out of sight.

The tigress sat down on the couch in the family room, trying her best to hold her emotions in check. I felt like a good thing that the angels were looking for her family but on the other hand, it wasn't like they were broken down on the side of the road somewhere. What made her upset the most was the fact that she couldn't do anything about the situation at all except wait.

"Valerie, are you OK?" Barbara asked as she sat down next to her lover and put her arm around the tigress. "I woke up to see you weren't in bed so I got up to look for you." The ocelot pulled the tigress over to her and held her tightly as she said "They will be found soon. We have to wait and be patient."

"I'm sorry, I'm just very upset over all of this" the tigress said as she wiped the tears from her eyes. "I hope we hear something soon."

"Why don't I summon Loke again?" the young tiger asked as he came into the family room. He was holding a longstaff in his paws as he sat down in Torvald's favorite chair. "He said he would be nearby if we needed him." Conrad was looking upset by this turn of events.

"Yeah, maybe you should summon him" the tigress said quietly as she tried to hold her emotions in check for the young tiger's sake. Momentarily the weasel shimmered into view along with a red fox vixen in a blue robe.

“I told you it was the young tiger summoning me” Loke said to the vixen. “Well, now you get to meet the berserker's family.” Everyone was looking at the pair that had just come into view.

“This is Conrad, the tigress' son” Loke said as he motioned towards the young tiger. “This is Valerie, the tigress' sister and her lover, Barbara” he continued, motioning towards the two felines on the couch. “Everyone, this is Freya, goddess of love and war.”

“It is nice to meet Torvald's family” she said as she bowed slightly to them. “We had hoped that it was the berserker summoning Loke this time. I was going to go with him and pull everyone back with my powers.”

“Do...do you think you can do that?” the young tiger asked. Conrad was trying to be brave for his aunt's sake but his stammering gave him away immediately. Whenever the young tiger would get upset, he would stammer quite badly at times.

“I am sure that I can at least trace him to his location” Freya replied. “Once we are sure of where they are at, we will be able to pull them back home.”

“That sounds complicated” Valerie commented as she pondered that thought.

“It is not complicated, just time consuming, that's all” Loke said as they began to shimmer out. “We will be nearby so please keep a positive a...” He was cut off as they shimmered out of the room.

###

“What have you heard?” the older entity asked of the younger femme entity. They had met on another planet to discuss this matter away from the others.

“The Norse gods are mad” she replied, looking to make sure they weren't followed.

“As are the Celestial gods” he commented. The older entity was getting bothered by all of this. The younger entity was causing trouble for all of the other entities.

“Try to find a safe haven when the warriors of the gods arrive here” the femme entity suggested to her older compadre.

“Yes, I will seek shelter. The ruckus that will ensue will be worse than playing a practical joke on Surt” the older one said as they 'stood' there. **“We must go before we are found out.”**

“Yes, we need to keep a low profile” the femme entity agreed.