

Chapter 52

Michael and Mr. Weaselton Talk

The next morning, Michael awoke to see a tigress lying on her side and smiling as she looked at him. “Good morning, sleepyhead,” she said. “Enjoy your nap?”

Michael stretched, looked at the clock next to Amanda’s bed and saw that the time was 2307. He winced as he tried to think. “Good morning, Princess. The last time I remember looking at the clock, it read 1628. What time did I fall asleep?”

“Shortly afterward. At around 1637, I could hear steady breathing and you had stopped talking. I looked at you and saw your eyes closed, mouth slightly open and your head relaxed on that pillow. I don’t blame you, though, you had a rough day yesterday. You got into a verbal altercation with one of the richest foxes in Catlanna showing him absolutely no fear. You were escorted out of this hospital by two western lowland gorillas. You kidnapped the grandson of the aforementioned fox and forced him to come here. You threatened to visit that grandson again if he didn’t send you a copy of an Arranged Marriage Contract so you can look for an escape clause in that contract. Like I said, an eventful day.”

“I didn’t kidnap him. I convinced him it was in his best interests to come with me.” Michael said as he sat up while smiling.

“Semantics.” Amanda replied somewhat sarcastically. “Anyway, you made threats to do it again if he failed to get you a copy of the contract which, by the way, you’re supposed to receive in about 3 hours. So, I’m surprised you stayed awake as late as you did.”

“It was being in the company of the most beautiful, most interesting, most intelligent woman in Catlanna that allowed me to stay awake that late.”

Amanda smiled appreciatively. “Thank you.” She said in an embarrassed voice. “You should be getting ready to leave, though. Mother arrived rather early yesterday. Fortunately, you and your escort had already left by the time she arrived. Now that she knows for certain you’re going to be here, she’s liable to arrive early today.”

Michael put the book he had been reading to Amanda last night into the chifforobe. After he did that, he walked over to Amanda, leaned down, and kissed her. As the kiss continued, Amanda slipped her arms around his neck and held him in place for several seconds. Of course, Michael hated continuing the kiss. He hated it as much as a fish hates being in water. When he finally extricated himself from Amanda’s embrace, Michael placed his forehead against hers, looked lovingly into her eyes, and said, “I’m going to work extra-hard to find that escape clause because I want to enjoy those kinds of kisses for the rest of my life.” Then, he kissed her once more and, reluctantly, turned around and left.

After feeding the kittens, taking a quick, but necessary, shower, and eating breakfast, Michael left his home and headed to work. When he arrived, he was greeted by Mrs. Lagomorph who told him he had a visitor waiting for him in the lounge. After thanking her, he went straight to the lounge and, after a couple of days of surprises, he received one more. Sitting on the sofa in the lounge with an envelope in his lap was none other than Thomas Weaselton. Rather than being upset, Michael laughed heartily.

Offering Mr. Weaselton his hand, Michael said, “Mr. Weaselton! What a pleasant surprise! I thought you were a lawyer not a courier.”

Mr. Weaselton smiled and, going with the flow, said, “Well, my primary profession is a lawyer but, when things are going a little slow, I take the odd job of delivering important documents for a client, as I’m doing right now.”

“Do you have a few minutes? We can go to my office and I’ll sign the document release form.”

As they started walking, Mr. Weaselton arched his eyebrows as he said, “You know about those forms? Good for you.”

“I wouldn’t expect anything less from Mr. Reynard. You can’t have his personality and become a rich man by being trusting.”

They reached Michael’s office. He unlocked the door, opened it, stepped aside, and ushered Mr. Weaselton inside. Mr. Weaselton walked into the office and looked around. He whistled appreciatively. “Wow!” He said. “This is an office worthy of your talents, Michael. Is this the office that was altered to give Mr. Tushkan his little love nest?”

“Yes, sir. It is.”

Mr. Weaselton walked toward where the old wall had been and looked at the outer wall. “How big was that room, if you don’t mind my asking?”

“It was about ten feet wide.”

Mr. Weaselton turned his head quickly and looked at Michael in shock. “Ten feet! Are you sure?”

“Yes, why?”

“If that room was ten feet wide and it was made from excess space from this office, your office was about fifteen feet wide when you took over.”

“About that wide. Why?”

“Michael, my office is only ten feet wide and I’m a very successful lawyer.”

Michael smiled and said, “I can’t prove it but I believe that Mr. Blaidd used to have his office here while the upper floors were being prepared for occupancy. It wouldn’t do for the president of the company to have a hole-in-the-wall office.”

Mr. Weaselton smiled and said, “No, it wouldn’t.”

“Come here. I want to show you something.” Michael led him to a point on the wall and said, “Do you see this?” Mr. Weaselton looked closely at the wall and shook his head. “Okay. Step over here and look at the wall from an angle.” Mr. Weaselton did as Michael asked. “Now, do you see it?”

Mr. Weaselton saw a slight but noticeable difference in color. “What the . . .” He said.

“Mr. Tushkan wasn’t just the CIT Manager. As I learned shortly after accepting the position, he was in charge of Purchasing and Procurement. All he had to do was put in a request for an alteration to this office and approve it himself. Since he was in a position of trust, Mr. Blaidd signed off on the procurement request and it was just a matter of moving the wall about two-and-a-half-feet, installing a door in that corner of the new wall, and installing sound-proofing tiles in the new room.”

“And you didn’t know this during the trial?”

“I know what I swore to. If I had known about what I just told you, I would have brought it up, I guarantee.”

Mr. Weaselton laughed. “You’re the first person I’ve heard use that phraseology since I left Moosiana.”

“What phraseology?”

“The phrase, ‘I guarantee’.”

Michael laughed and said, “Oh! Yeah, I’ve always loved the Cajun accent, although it, like all accents, were dying off while I was growing up. Wait a minute! Weaselton isn’t French!”

Mr. Weaselton laughed and said, “No, it isn’t but that doesn’t mean I’m not from Moosiana. About 250 years ago, an ancestor of mine moved from Moorfolk, Firginia to Appaloosa, Moosiana. About three years later, he married a local girl and she chose to take his name. Every one of my direct male ancestors that descended from that union married local girls and that’s how I’m almost Racoonian weasel even though my family name is Anglerfish.”

Michael smiled at this bit of family history then continued, “Anyway, I offered to return the love nest to its original size and design but Mr. Blaidd said nobody wanted the other office because of how it was used by Mr. Tushkan. It also had an obnoxious odor due to the fact that Mr. Tushkan never had it cleaned for fear of it being discovered. In fact, it took almost two months to air it out enough that no one’s sense of smell was offended by it. As bad as a human’s sense of smell is, even I could smell it and it was bad. As a result, I got an extra-big office after I’d had the wall removed.

“You know, as I think on it, I really want to know how Mr. Tushkan could afford a lawyer of your caliber, Mr. Weaselton. Lawyers like you don’t come cheap.”

“Tushkan didn’t hire me nor did he pay me. I am under retainer to Reginald Reynard, Senior. Senior told me that he wanted me to defend Tushkan.”

“Really? Why?”

“Senior has it bad to bring down SoGa Industries.”

“Are you serious?”

“Yes. Reynard Manufacturing is one of the very few companies to not only survive the depression 75 years ago but, it actually thrived. Senior’s grandfather, James Reynard, saw what was happening and took appropriate steps to allow him to stay in business and retain all of his employees. Their hours were cut to about 30 hours a week but they had a job and steady income, enough to ensure they had their bills paid, necessities such as food and clothes, an automobile and gasoline for it but virtually no luxuries such as vacations out of town. When the depression ended five years later, Reynard Manufacturing was poised to take a lion’s share of the market and Senior’s grandfather jumped. Over the next 15 years, Reynard Manufacturing more than tripled every year until it was worth over 200 trillion Yenars.”

“Wow! It’s got to be worth over a quadrillion if you take into account all the corrections that happen over 60 years.”

“You’d think that but when Senior took over running the company about 45 years ago, he changed many of the successful policies. He fired or forced to retire all of the officers that worked under Senior’s grandfather if they so much as reminded him of how old man Reynard had done things. He hired “Yes” men who agreed with every one of his decisions no matter how stupid or crazy the decision was. Because of this, the consumers reacted negatively and started buying their manufactured goods from some other company and Reynard Manufacturing’s net worth today is a little over eight billion Yenars.

“About 20 years ago, a young man and two of his college friends started a company here in Catlanna. These three young men had been big fans of Senior’s grandfather and his policies and employed almost every one of the principles that James Reynard had used to cause Reynard Manufacturing to grow so big so fast. This company, SoGa Industries, is now the largest and most successful company in the Southeast District of the UPA. Senior’s hatred of SoGa Industries is so profound that he’s attempted to sue them into bankruptcy on more than one occasion. He’s tried to get the Provincial, District, and Federal governments to investigate their business dealings only to have all three governments to find nothing wrong and Senior had to pay for the investigations out of his own pocket.

“When the scandal involving Mr. Tushkan came to light because SoGa Industries employed one of James Reynard’s policies of being open with the public, Senior jumped at the opportunity to, once again, bring down SoGa Industries. He hired me to defend Mr. Tushkan and try to lay the blame on SoGa Industries. Senior didn’t know the first thing about you but, since you were the current CIT Manager, he decided that we should try to throw the blame on you rather than the obviously guilty party. What Senior didn’t take into account was that you not only are an intelligent human but you have some training in law. After Mr. Tushkan was found guilty and you informed the court that SoGa Industries had already set aside the money to pay their portion of the fine, Senior went ballistic. He threatened to fire anyone who was even remotely connected to the case, including me.”

“Wow! He sounds like a wonderfully pleasant person to work for.”

Mr. Weaselton laughed and said, “You don’t know the half of it.”

“Senior decided to try to steal you from SoGa Industries but, when you refused because of your relationship with Amanda Fuchs, he started scheming to find a way to cause you to leave SoGa Industries. It wasn’t too long after this that Mrs. Fuchs called him and reminded him of the Arranged Marriage Contract and he had his way. When he found out that you wanted a copy of the contract, he wanted me to make a copy of another contract and replace the first page of that contract with a copy of the first page of the correct contract.”

“And you refused?”

“No, actually, I have the fake contract in this envelope.” Michael started to get angry when Mr. Weaselton held up a hand. “However, I do have a copy of the correct contract in here as well. I had to do it this way in case Senior sent one of his goons to my office to verify that I’d done as he demanded.”

“Weren’t you afraid that they’d see what you did?”

“Not really. Senior is so afraid of anyone smarter than he is that he won’t hire anyone with any real intelligence.” Mr. Weaselton smiled mischievously. “Which is why when he’s in my office, I act like I’m not absolutely certain what he wants. That makes him happy and I get the satisfaction of outfoxing a fox.”

Michael laughed heartily at the joke. “Well,” he said, “do you have the document release form for me to sign?”

“Yes, I do.” Mr. Weaselton produced a document and gave it to Michael. After Michael read and signed it, Mr. Weaselton put the document into his brief case, stood up and shook Michael’s hand. “Thank you, Michael. I look forward to meeting you again under happier circumstances.”

“Thank you, too, Mr. Weaselton.”

After Mr. Weaselton left, Michael looked at the clock on his wall and noted that he had fifteen minutes before he had to start work. So, he opened the envelope, took out the contract, and glanced through it quickly. He was amazed at how many pages the contract had. He counted seventeen pages. He smiled as he thought, “And Reg thinks there isn’t an escape clause in this. I bet there are at least five.”

As Michael was looking through the contract, he heard a gentle rapping on the pane of glass in his door. He looked up and saw a rather pregnant serval standing outside smiling at him. Returning the smile, he waved her inside as he stood up looking for a chair for Michelle to sit in. After setting up a place for her to sit, Michael took her arm and assisted her to the chair. When she was comfortably seated, well as comfortably as a seven month pregnant woman could be, he sat behind his desk and smiled at her.

“What can I do for you this morning, little mama?”

“Oh, Michael. Don’t call me that. Look at me. I look like a beach ball with arms and legs.”

Michael laughed at the analogy and said, “You don’t look that bad.”

“Okay, maybe not that bad but I’m not slim any more.”

Still smiling, Michael said, “You don’t normally visit me, Michelle. What’s up?”

“I heard you’re supposed to receive a copy of the Arranged Marriage contract.”

Holding the contract up, Michael said, “You heard right. I can’t believe how many pages are in this contract. Seventeen. Seventeen!”

“Wow!”

“Plus, there are ten sections. I can’t imagine why this kind of contract needs seventeen pages with ten sections and God knows how many paragraphs and sub-paragraphs. Something tells me that there is more to this contract than meets the eye.”

“Do you think Reginald is planning any subterfuge?”

“I don’t know, Michelle. He’s intelligent but I don’t think he’s all that cunning.”

Michelle smiled and said, “Are you saying he isn’t sly as a fox?”

Michael rolled his eyes and said, “Michelle, I’m the punster around here but that was a good one.” Then, he laughed.

After a couple of seconds, Michelle, who had been smirking after her little joke, joined him. She said, “What about the lawyer?”

“Mr. Weaselton? I don’t think he’s the one. He’s a decent man. No. I’m thinking it’s Reginald.” Michelle looked at him curiously. Then, he added, “Senior. Reg’s grandfather. He’s pulling some kind of tomfoolery and Amanda’s going to pay the price if I can’t find a way to get her out of this contract.”

Michelle stood up and got ready to go to work. As she picked up her handbag, she said, “If you need any help with that contract, you should ask Albert. He’s very smart and he took contract law in college. I bet he could help you find what you need.”

Michael walked Michelle to the door as he said, “Thank you, Michelle. I’ll see him in the morning. I’ll ask him then.”

At 0230 the next morning, Michael was sitting at his desk and perusing the contract. As he read the contract, he heard someone rapping on the glass pane. He looked up and saw Albert standing there. He smiled and waved Albert in.

“Good morning, Albert.”

“Good morning, Michael. Michelle said you might need my assistance. What’s going on?”

Michael pointed to the contract and said, “This.”

Albert took a look at the document and said, “What is that?”

“It’s the Arranged Marriage contract between Amanda and Reginald Francis Reynard, III.”

Albert looked again and said, “The Arranged Marriage may be part of the contract but, Michael, that isn’t an arranged marriage contract.”

“What!?”

“I’m afraid so. A Humanimal arranged marriage contract is rarely more than 2 pages in length and never more than 3. How many pages is this contract?”

“Seventeen.”

“Seventeen!? There’s more to this contract than meets the eye.” Indicating the contract, Albert asked, “May I?”

Michael pushed it toward him and Albert picked it up. He glanced at a couple of pages and the more he looked the more concerned he became. “Michael, there’s something strange about this contract.”

“What?”

“The arranged marriage is a cover. What this is is an agreement to sell a controlling interest in SoGa Industries.”

Reginald, Senior, stormed into Mr. Weaselton’s office. It didn’t bother him one bit that Mr. Weaselton was busy with another client. Close on Senior’s heels was Reginald, III. Reginald had a look of abject terror in his eyes as he watched his grandfather grab the back of the rolling chair the other client was sitting in and pushed it out the office door. As the client looked back in anger and amazement, Senior said, “Your appointment has been postponed. Reschedule with the receptionist.”

Calmly, but in anger, Mr. Weaselton arose from his desk as he said, “Mr. Reynard, I know I’m your lawyer and I have been on retainer for 20 years but, you can’t just barge in here and literally push other clients around like you own this place.”

Senior ignored this little tirade and said, “Did you take a copy of Reginald’s Arranged Marriage contract to a man by the name of Michael Thomson at SoGa Industries this morning?”

“Yes, sir. I did. Reginald called me and told me to do it. Why?”

In a booming voice, Senior said, “Weaselton! Did I not tell you to never, EVER send a copy of any of my contracts to anybody without my express written permission!?”

Mr. Weaselton shrank back as he said, “Yes, sir. You did.”

“Good! Now! You will go and retrieve that copy of the contract and you will give him this copy. You will tell him that you made a mistake and gave him the wrong contract. Is that clear!?”

“Yes, sir. I will leave immediately.”

“Good. Weaselton, you have been showing too many signs of Maudlin sentimentality lately. If you wish to remain as the lawyer for Reynard Manufacturing, you will kill those sentimentalities before quick. Got it!?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Good.” Senior turned, grabbed Reginald’s shoulder in a death grip and said, “Come along, Reginald. I’m not through with you by any stretch of the imagination!”

As they walked out of the office, Mr. Weaselton stared daggers at Senior’s back. But, he picked up the package that Senior had dropped onto his desk, walked out of his office, and said, to the receptionist, “Cancel all of my appointments for the rest of the day. I have some very important, unexpected business to tend to.”

“Yes, sir.”

“What!?”

“Yes, Amanda’s dowry is 51% of SoGa Industries.”

Michael laughed. “That’s ridiculous.” He said. “If Amanda owned that much of SoGa Industries, she wouldn’t need to work.”

“Nevertheless, that’s what the contract says her dowry is. I’m going to borrow this a little while, if you don’t mind. I’ll get it back to you shortly.”

“Sure.”

Albert stood and left with the contract.

As they started to get into their limousine, Senior slapped Reginald hard enough to cause him to stumble. Unfortunately for Reginald, Senior had a heritage trait of claws instead of nails. Those claws raked Reginald's back and left four claw marks about 6 inches long.

"Did that hurt?" Senior asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Good! Maybe it'll stick in your mind the next time you get a wild idea to stick your nose into my business when you aren't prepared for what the results could cause."

"I don't understand, Grandfather. How could an Arranged Marriage contract cause you so much anger?"

"Because, stupid, that isn't just an Arranged Marriage contract. When you marry that half-breed fox, her dowry is controlling interest in SoGa Industries. By marrying her, you will immediately become President of SoGa Industries and, between you running SoGa Industries and my running Reynard Manufacturing, we'll once again be the richest Humanimals in Catlanna. Got it!?"

"I didn't know, Grandfather. You keep too many secrets from everyone else in the family."

"I have to do that. I don't trust you, nor anyone else, to keep my secrets secret. Now that you know, I've got to trust you to keep your stupid mouth shut until after the wedding."

For the first time since he was a kit, Reginald felt regret. Sure, he wanted to be the richest fox in Catlanna but, he didn't want to do it by, basically, stealing a company from someone else but, at the same time, he didn't want to disappoint his grandfather. He looked up to his grandfather but, he loved his father as well even though Senior didn't think too highly of the way Junior ran Reynard Industries. In fact, Senior hated the way Junior ran Reynard Manufacturing. Junior tended to think about the customer's desires over the profits of the company, even though Reynard Manufacturing was worth more now than it was before Junior took over running the company. Reginald was definitely torn between the way his grandfather had run the company and the way his father runs the company. He hoped that everything would work out.

A couple of hours after leaving with the contract, Albert returned to Michael's office. He had two copies of the contract in his hand. When Albert showed the copies to him, Michael looked at him curiously. "Why do you have two copies of that contract, Albert?"

"When I saw who this contract was with, I took it to our legal department. They read it and said that it would be smart to make a copy of this contract because when he realizes what has

happened, Reginald, Senior, will demand you return the contract and, as likely as not, offer you a different one in exchange.”

“I don’t . . .”

“Just listen, Michael. Our legal department has dealt with Reynard Manufacturing before, especially, Old Man Reynard. Here’s what you should do. When his representative arrives with the new contract, act somewhat difficult. Tell him that without a good enough reason, you will not return the contract that you signed for.”

“What makes you think it’ll be a man who brings the new contract?”

“Because above all other things, the old man is a misogynist. He’s even more of a misogynist than he is a racist and a bigot. He doesn’t trust females except when doing so will help him to obtain something he wants.”

“Oh.”

“Now, debate with him for a couple of minutes, then, act like you’re caving. Michael, don’t let any type of sentimentality cloud your act. It doesn’t matter who brings the replacement contract; act difficult. That way, when the courier returns to the old man, he’ll tell him that you were difficult but you were finally convinced to return the contract. Got it?”

“All right.”

“Good. Here’s the copy that you gave me earlier. As soon as the courier leaves with this copy, call the legal department and they will send someone down to retrieve the contract that will be delivered to you. Then, call me and I’ll bring this copy to you and we can start trying to find that escape clause.”

“Got it.”

Albert left Michael’s office carrying the copy of the contract with him. Just before he closed the door, Albert said, “Michael, whatever you do, do not lose the contract you’ll be receiving soon. It could be as important as this one.”

About half-an-hour later, Michael received a telephone call. He picked up the receiver and said, “CIT Department. Michael Thomson speaking. How may I help you?”

Michael heard Mrs. Lagomorph’s voice saying, “Michael, Mr. Weaselton is here. He says he needs to speak with you. It’s very important.”

“Yes, ma’am. Send him back here.”

After he hung up the telephone, Michael said, “This must be what Albert was talking about.”

About 30 seconds later, Michael heard a rapping on his door. He looked up and saw Mr. Weaselton. He stood, walked to the door, and invited Mr. Weaselton into his office.

“Mr. Weaselton, to what do I owe the honor of seeing you again so soon? Surely, Reginald isn’t in legal trouble and needs me to be a character witness for him.”

Mr. Weaselton laughed loudly. “Ah, Michael. You have a wonderful sense of humor.”

“I try. What can I do for you, Mr. Weaselton?”

“Michael, when I arrived at my office this morning I started looking through my paperwork and I realized that I had brought you the wrong contract. I have the correct contract right here.” Mr. Weaselton indicated the package that Senior had given him.

“Wrong contract? It said, ‘Arranged Marriage Contract between Reginald Francis Reynard, III and Amanda Louise Fuchs’ on the front page.”

“Yes, I know but, the one I brought was the preliminary contract. After she read it, Mrs. Fuchs demanded that certain clauses be removed. Reginald and she dickered back and forth for several days before they agreed to this contract.”

“Are you sure this one is the correct one? I don’t want you to come in here in a few days telling me that you made another mistake.”

“Don’t worry, Michael, this will be the last time you’ll see me where this contract is concerned.”

Michael gave Mr. Weaselton a hard stare for several seconds before he finally said, “All right, Mr. Weaselton. Here’s the contract you brought to me this morning.” Michael handed him a sealed envelope. “I do hope that I’ll see you again, Mr. Weaselton. I’ve grown quite fond of you and that’s quite an accomplishment for a lawyer.” Michael stood, shook Mr. Weaselton’s hand, and escorted him to the door where he once again shook his hand and said he hoped to see him again soon.

Mr. Weaselton walked to his car, got in and sat there for several seconds. He said to himself, “Senior has underestimated Michael. If he doesn’t know for certain, Michael suspects something is amiss and has likely taken appropriate measures to prevent Senior’s subterfuge. Good! I hope Michael one-ups that old bastard and gives him a taste of his own medicine.” After thinking these thoughts, Mr. Weaselton smiled and cranked his car and drove away.

“Did you do it, Michael?” Albert asked as he entered Michael’s office.

“Yes. But, it killed me to do that to Mr. Weaselton. I never thought I’d say this but I like that lawyer. He’s ethical and honorable. Do you think he’ll convince Mr. Reynard that we’re clueless?”

“I don’t know, Michael. But, it won’t matter one whit if we don’t find that escape clause in the contract.”

“First, I want to take a look at the ‘official’ contract.”

“Good idea.”

After leaving SoGa Industries, Mr. Weaselton drove directly to the Reynard Estate. After parking his car, he walked to the front door where he was met by Mr. Wiley. “Good afternoon, Mr. Weaselton,” he said.

“Hello Mr. Wiley. I see Mr. Reynard didn’t fire you.”

Mr. Wiley smiled and said, “He couldn’t fire me. One of my jobs is to assist any other servant if they need my assistance. I was assisting Mrs. Rodentia in the kitchen when the human snuck in. Mrs. Rodentia even told him how wonderfully helpful to her I had been.” Mr. Wiley winked at Mr. Weaselton causing him to laugh.

“Are you here to see the big master?”

“Yes Mr. Wiley.”

“One moment, sir.” Mr. Wiley turned to an intercom panel and pressed a button. “Sir, Mr. Weaselton is here to see you.”

“Good! Send him up.”

“Yes, sir.” Mr. Wiley turned back to Mr. Weaselton and said, “You know the way to his office?”

“Yes. Mr. Wiley. Thank you.”

Mr. Weaselton entered the mansion and started climbing a staircase on his left. On the second floor, he walked around the staircase he had just climbed found a second staircase and climbed it to the third floor. E looked down the corridor and saw a door with a lowland gorilla standing on either side of the doorway. He approached and one of the gorillas turned the door knob, opened the door for him, stepped aside, and allowed him to enter the room beyond.

When he entered the room, he saw Mr. Reynard seated behind a desk writing. Mr. Reynard raised his eyes and looked expectantly at Mr. Weaselton. “Well?” He asked.

“He was a bit difficult but, he accepted my explanation that I had brought the incorrect contract.”

“Good. Now, he won't find any possible escape clauses and in less than three months, SoGa Industries will be owned by me. Oh, I can't wait to see the looks on the faces of the vice-presidents and the Board of Directors when I stroll into their meeting and install Reginald as the new President of SoGa Industries.”

“Mr. Reynard, what you have done violates no less than five Federal statutes and any number of Provincial and local statutes, especially the Single Action Contract law.”

“Weaselton, I really don't give a damn about that stupid law. Besides, once my grandson marries that half-breed it won't matter. As his wife, she can't say anything about her dowry. Edward Blaidd won't be able to say anything because the contract was accepted and properly enforced. The first thing I'll do is have every human working for SoGa Industries fired with no compensation. The second thing I'll do is install you as Vice-President of the Legal Department of Reynard Manufacturing.”

“No, you won't, sir.”

Rising slowly, Senior said, “What do you mean by that?”

“I mean I won't be the head of your legal department because I won't be your lawyer after I leave this office today.”

“Why you ungrateful whelp! I chose you when I needed a new lawyer 20 years ago. I make the decision of who's my employee!”

“I'm afraid you don't understand the lawyer-client dynamic, Sir. It's a partnership, a mutually beneficial partnership but, a partnership nonetheless. If either of the partners believes he is or, in actuality, forced to do something he is morally opposed to doing, then that partner has the right to end the partnership and sever all ties with the other partner. What you forced me to do earlier today qualifies as forcing me to do something I am morally opposed to doing. Therefore, I am ending my partnership with you. Oh! And don't worry, the lawyer-client privilege will continue even though I am no longer your lawyer.”

“You listen to me you good-for-nothing weasel. Nobody severs their relationship with me; I do the severing. Because you violated that rule, I'm going to make you regret that decision. I'll have your law license revoked. I'll have your bank accounts locked. I'll have your vehicles and house repossessed. I'll have your utilities turned off. I'll have your credit destroyed and all of that is just the beginning of what I can and will do to you, Weaselton.”

“I don't care, Mr Reynard.” He pulled a thick envelope from an interior coat pocket, placed it on Mr Reynard's desk and pushed it toward him. “There is the 100,000 Yenar retainer you gave me 20 years ago plus a very generous 12% per year interest. I had my accountant calculate the amount I owed you and it was over 960,000 Yenars so I rounded it to an even one million. Under the law, I have the right to sever ties with a client at any time as long as I return any retainer the client has paid me. The law does not require nor request that I include interest on the retainer. I did that on my own.”

Senior opened the envelope and noted that it was full of 5,000 Yenar notes. He pulled the money out of the envelope and started counting. As Senior counted, Mr. Weaselton stood by and waited. After counting for several minutes, Senior said, “Two hundred 5,000 Yenars notes. One million Yenars as promised. Now, get out!”

“Not until you write and give me a receipt stating that I returned 100,000 Yenars plus 12% interest per year for 20 years. I want it signed and dated by you.”

“And if I refuse.”

“I will report to National law agents that one million Yenars went missing from my savings account shortly after I told you that I no longer wished to be your lawyer. They will investigate, find the money, dust for fingerprints, and find only yours.” A look of shocked surprise crossed Senior’s face as he realized that no one but himself had touched the money. “And, if you think you’ll have me eliminated, I told my secretary, my bank officer, my accountant, and several others that you had called me here to discuss a ‘private’ legal matter.” The shock on Senior’s face grew. “Yes, sir. I believe I’ve covered all of my bases.”

Mr. Weaselton nodded his head, stood by as Senior wrote, signed, and dated the requested receipt and then, he left.

Senior put his head in his hands and said, “I must be getting old. I never figured that weasel could outsmart me.”