

Forged In The Flames Chapter 21

Forged In The Flames

Chapter 21 The Laws

Aliana POV

Nikolas groaned when I t*ouched him. He knew what was coming. He favoured my people for my sake tonight and should be rewarded for it.

“Aliana, what are you doing?” He asked me while I undid his shorts.

“Showing appreciation,” I said, and he groaned with anticipation and relaxed.

I took off his shorts and felt his hard c*oc*k. The moment I t*ouched it, my core clenched. Wanting him inside me badly. I was addicted to him.

“Take off your robe, Little wolf. I want to see you,” He groaned, and I obliged.

I took off the robe. I had nothing underneath.

He sat up and reached for my b*rea*sts. I knelt between his legs while he t*ouched my b*ody with his hands, feeling every part of me while his c*oc*k hardened.

“Beautiful,” he said, and I m*oa*ned while he traced my belly button down to my c*li*t.

I t*ouched his c*oc*k and brushed the surface with my thumb. He pulled his hands away to enjoy the pleasure I was about to give. I l*ic*ked the mushroom head. He gathered my hair with his hand holding it up so he could see what I was doing, and he m*oa*ned with approval.

I took him in my mouth until it reached my throat and made me gag. Soon we fell into a rhythm. I bobbed my head on his c*oc*k while he held my head and gently f*uc*ked my mouth.

“Aliana,” he m*oa*ned, and I was proud of myself. My c*or*e clenched and ached, knowing soon he would bury his length inside me and give my p*uss*y the attention it needed.

“I want to come in your mouth, little wolf.” He said.

I had never swallowed c*um before, but there was a first time for everything.

I continued until he stilled, and I felt his c*oc*k pulsate in my mouth, spraying his s*ee*d. I managed to swallow and l*ic*ked the mushroom head.

He was still hard, and I moved to go on top. He shook his head and stopped me. "I want dessert too," He said, and I knew what he meant by dessert.

He made me sit and then spread my legs, ready to eat me.

"Watch me, Aliana, watch me eat you," he said. His words alone were taking me off the edge. Nikolas made me sit with my back against the bed's headrest, knees up, legs apart. He bent down and l*ic*ked my c*li*t down to my s*li*t. Then I felt him stick his t*ongue into my p*uss*y. I came apart. He held me in place, grabbing onto my hips.

He f*uc*ked me with his t*ongue and l*ic*ked my entrance up my s*li*t to my c*li*t. He continued in the sequence until I came apart, my b*ody shaking, my knees were shaking. "Ahh," I cried out because he wasn't stopping.

"Ni..." I m*oa*ned, not wanting to call his name. He pulled me down and towered over me while he drove his c*oc*k into me.

His eyes were completely dark, and everything about him was primal.

"I hope you can take it, Little wolf," He said, and I was yet to come down. My p*uss*y was clenching badly, my b*ody was in a chaotic mess with sparks of pleasure everywhere, and he p*umped through it.

He p*umped, placed my legs over his shoulder, and continued pushing himself deeper, brushing the right spots.

He was big and filled me up completely. I knew I would never get enough of this.

His eyes were dark throughout, and soon, I saw his teeth elongate. The sight of it alone made me eager.

I was anxious to bare my neck for him to bite through and own me. I knew he wouldn't claim me, it was okay to dream.

He bent over and grazed his teeth on the skin, making me eager, and my b*ody began to come apart.

I felt the urge to beg for his mark. My b*ody was going crazy, his dominance and pheromones taking over my senses. My feelings and heart betraying me, making me lose control. He l*ic*ked the spot, and I knew that was the best I would get.

My o*rgas*m erupted, and I tried to contain the explosion of pleasure.

I turned my head left and right, and he continued through it.

He did not seem like we were stopping early, and I liked it. We are at it most of the night.

We did not sleep until the early hours of the morning. I knew we were loud all through, and the folks partying in the garden must have heard us.

I made my m*oa*ns louder so those Lycan b*itc*hes would understand what was happening. Nikolas figured it out, and he made sure I never stopped m*oa*ning.

Nikolas woke me up the next day with food in bed. I wondered what the occasion was. I frowned at him.

He was wearing his bathrobe. "You are finally up," he said, and I nodded, not wanting to speak.

"I want to go to two other packs in the forest to speak with the people I put in charge. I want you to accompany me." He said, and I raised an eyes brow.

"Won't they tell? I mean, your request to be King is yet to pull through," I said, telling him my fears, and he laughed.

"I want you to accompany me, Aliana. I will deal with the Hill and Snow Kings. Right now, I want to pretend we are the same and all the prohibition isn't in play. I believe we should be able to do that in our world. Forest is our world, Aliana. Please let us live freely in it," he said, and I did not feel good about it, but I nodded.

I went to the bathroom to brush my teeth and returned to the room. I went to k*iss him, and he grabbed onto me tightly and deepened the k*iss until we broke It to catch our breaths. I rested my forehead against his, smiling and admiring his handsomeness.

"Won't you eat with your officers?" I asked him, and he shook his head.

I got in bed beside him. We ate the food in the tray together, and he took the tray out and left it by the door so no one would try to enter. We went to the bathroom and spent time there. This was rabbit behaviour, but I wasn't complaining.

I never imagined Nikolas would be fun to be with. I would admit that I was still guarded around him, and I was afraid of him sometimes, but he made it easy.

I dressed up in a short dress. I wanted to wear trousers, but he said no. He wanted me to show my legs so he could feel them and tease me when he wanted, so I obliged him. We stepped out, and a car awaited us at the palace entrance

The car wasn't what caught my attention. The assembly was what caught my attention. Grant was addressing the werewolves. I tried to ignore it, but I couldn't. Nikolas stood

by the vehicle, and I knew he was listening to Grant's announcement, so I copied him. My father looked at me standing beside Nikolas, and he smiled.

'Thank you, princess. They brought us dinner and breakfast. Please, thank Alpha on our behalf. He is kind,' He told me, and I knew my father knew Nikolas could tune in to the mind link, but I knew he was also being sincere about his gratitude. Nikolas touched my hand and intertwined his fingers with mine.

"You can visit your father on Saturdays. He is off work on Saturdays," he linked me, and I squeezed his hands tightly from joy and pure gratitude.

I could not jump and hug him in public, so this must do. I had tears of joy in my eyes, and I fought them, but they fell. It made me snifle.

"Are you crying, little wolf?" He linked me, and I nodded.

"I am happy," I confessed, and he caressed the back of my hand with his thumb.

"We are waiting for Qusack, and we will be off," He explained, and I nodded.

"Listen to the announcement!" Grant started. "Werewolves are allowed to buy and sell in the market. The stalls are accessible to all of you, so if anyone asks you to pay, kindly report the person to my office, and the matter will be dealt with.

All werewolf households are entitled to free groceries on Saturdays. If you are denied this privilege, report the incident to my office. There should be work breaks between two in the afternoon to three thirty. If you are denied this right, report it to my office.

The wages remain as it was in the beginning. If you are paid less or unpaid at all, report it to my office." He said and then folded his paper.

"This is an act of kindness from the Alpha, soon- to-be King. We hope you can remain peaceful and loyal. Do not put us in a situation where we would regret this act of kindness. No Lycan is allowed to bully or maltreat a werewolf, and no werewolf is allowed to disrespect their betters.

You all remain beneath us, and if caught actively disrespecting or working against a lycan, you will be dealt with mercilessly.

Due to the unresolved issues with the Snow hunters, werewolves and halfbreeds are prohibited from venturing into the woods. As this might lead to your death. We are working on solving the issue, but it would be wise for you to listen and do as instructed," He said and sighed.

Then a badly beaten werewolf man was brought to the front of the assembly, and Nikolas tried to make us get into the car. I wanted to see what was going on.

Fortunately, Qusack came to talk to Nikolas about something so I could watch what was happening

The werewolf was bound with silver, and they had beaten him mercilessly.

He was a Delta breed by the name of Joshua. He was a handsome werewolf and a girl's crush. I never fancied him, but most girls did. I wondered what he did that caused the Lycans to flail him like this.

"When we gave you rules, we expected you to follow. A relationship between a werewolf and a Lycan is prohibited, and there will be no exceptions. Lycans are above werewolves, and it would be stupid to aim higher than your station. This werewolf broke that law by getting involved with a Lycan woman. He did not only sleep but got her pregnant," he said, and people gasped.

"His halfbreed b*astard would be handed to him, and he would be cut off from work and wages. Do not think getting a Lycan pregnant or getting pregnant for a Lycan would elevate your status as your child would be regarded as a slave and lesser to a Lycan.

We didn't make the laws, it is the law of our world, and I would advise you to obey it. Because of this behaviour, this werewolf would be sent to Lumberwood pack to serve a year of hard labour and reflect on his ways, after which he would return to care for his b*astard alone. Let this be a warning to all of you dreamers," he said, and my hands began to shake as tears rolled down my cheek. This was unfair. Why was he the only one disgraced?

What about the Lycan woman? She was equally guilty. Why shame Joshua and leave her hidden? This was wrong and wicked.

"Let's go," Nikolas said, and I wanted to pull away from him because this was an injustice. They had separated them and beat him up. They did not need to do this.

"This is what will happen to me if I break any of your rules," I said aloud without even knowing it, and he froze.

I could see why he wanted us to leave. He did not want me to experience reality.

"No," he said, and I shook my head. I wasn't a fool. After all, I was a werewolf. I became frightened and wasn't looking forward to going anywhere with him.

"Aliana, please," Nikolas said, and I shook my head, fighting my tears, afraid I might end up there.

It is bad enough that he would end this one day, and my heart would be broken. This would be too much for me. It is unfair. Why the castigation and segregation? Were we not all children of the goddess? Why?

“Today is your lucky day, Joshua, Alpha has pardoned your transgressions. You will not be sent to Lumberwood, but your child will be given to you to care for. Alpha says the beating is enough punishment so you can keep your work and wages,” Grant announced, and I looked at Nikolas.

I could see the difficulty in his eyes, but I knew he did it for my sake. He pardoned a werewolf for my sake. As kind as the gesture was, I knew it would reflect poorly on him among his kind. This was a public show of affection towards me, and I knew he might pay for it. Our world and rules were unfair, and he was trying to find a balance.

“I will fix it, Aliana. Once I become King, I will fix it,” he linked me, and I could feel his sincerity.

We got into the car and left the place.

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Chapter 22 An Invitation

Nikolas POV

I wasn't expecting Grant to go that far with Joshua.

I planned to scold him when I returned. The lycan Joshua was with said she seduced him. She confessed, and still, Grant felt the need to do this. I had to call him to order.

I did not want Aliana to see things like this. How was she going to hang on when all this was happening? She had already seen herself up there in place of Joshua. I planned to caution Grant because he knew how I felt about Aliana, and I cared about her a lot, parading her kind like that and saying those things were wrong. We were guilty of those things, and I could understand her fears. Grant had spoilt what was meant to be a romantic day for us. I had never gone anywhere with a woman, this would be my first, and Grant ruined it.

Aliana wasn't her usual happy self throughout our trip, and I couldn't blame her. I was sure Grant's words haunted her.

The cattle ranch on Timber was the last place we had to check, and I decided to take Aliana to the stables so she could see the horses there. I had bought the horses from Hill land. She would be excited because they didn't have horses in Forest.

“Come on,” I said and went into the stables with her. Wanting to be free with her, I ordered Qusack to stand guard and ensure no one entered until we left. Aliana was in

awe of the horses. She smiled genuinely for the first time since the horrible scene she saw in the morning.

I was glad we saved the ranch in Timber for last. I wanted her to see all I was doing in Forest, and she approved. Forest was far behind development-wise because of the isolation, but I planned to catch up and surpass the others.

Once we were done admiring the horses, I pinned her against the wall in the stables and k*issed her passionately. "Do not compare what we have to others, Aliana. No one would dare do that to you," I said and caressed her plump juicy l*ips with my thumb.

Her l*ips had always driven me crazy. It was a sin for a woman to be as beautiful as Aliana, and I was a sinner for wanting and loving her. "Once I am king, I will fix the divide," I said, and she was speechless.

"To make you happy, no werewolf would be paraded like that again," I said, trying everything I could to please her and make her happy. There were so many things I wanted to tell her in those minutes, but this wasn't the time.

The thing I was sure of was that no one would dare parade her like that for getting pregnant with my child. Even if I weren't King, I would damn the consequences.

"I am scared, Nikolas," she finally confessed.

"Your people honour the law, what would happen to my people? It isn't a crime to love," she said with tears.

"You do not know how painful it was seeing him up there. I have broken more rules than he did, Nikolas. I have fallen in love, and I know I shouldn't. I fight it every day, preparing my mind for the day you will have to cast me aside and ascend the throne. Yet I am free. I feel like a hypocrite and an overprivileged b*itc*h," she said, tears streaming down her cheeks. Had she just told me that she had fallen for me?

"Aliana," I said, holding her chin to look at me so I would have her attention.

"We are both guilty of the same crime," I said, searching her eyes, and she was surprised.

Her tears did not stop, but she was surprised. "I love you, Aliana. I have loved you for a long time now. I tried to avoid you, thinking it would disappear, but I had to accept it. I love you, so you are not in this alone. I want to have a life with you, Aliana. I want babies by you, so I was reluctant to put you on birth control. I want you to be my queen, but I can't make those things happen now.

I am trying to be King, so I can do what I want without consequence.

As Alpha, I am still bound by the laws of the Unity which the three kings formed. Once I become King, I can challenge and abolish the law on my land. Even if Hill and Snow refuse to abolish it on theirs, it would no longer be a Unity Law. I am working towards that, so I keep pleading with you to give me time, Aliana. Please," I confessed to her, and she crashed her lips on mine.

I knew my words had renewed her hope, but I needed the kiss. Her sadness affected me, and I wanted her to be happy. I kissed her passionately, and she responded. Then finally, we broke the kiss to catch our breaths. I rested my forehead against hers.

"I will be patient, Nikolas. I will pretend and wait for you to get there," she said, knowing exactly what I needed her to do. I knew we would pull through eventually.

We left the stables, and Aliana's mood was no longer down.

By the time we got back to Riverhead, Aliana was exhausted. She headed straight to our bedroom while I went to my office.

I found Grant and Abraham in the office, and they were on a couch working on some documents.

Grant greeted me, and I went to him and punched him. He fell back on the couch. "Did you have to make a spectacle of the werewolf guy? The girl confessed that she went after him, seduced and professed love, yet you still did that and had to say all those fucked up things knowing Aliana was watching. She is a fucking werewolf, Grant! What do you think would happen? She started seeing herself up there, and you know I care about her. Why couldn't you just beat the guy and give him a mild punishment knowing he did not actively break the law? Why?" I asked Grant, and he could not speak.

"I have done everything for all of you. Took you all from rogue status, gave you a pack and home, and the first time I try to make myself happy, you try to fuck it up," I said, and he bowed his head in shame.

"I am sorry, Alpha I wasn't thinking. I didn't see it like that. I was just following the law," He said, and I growled at him.

"Where was the law when you were to be beheaded, Grant? Where was the law when your family was massacred in Snow? Where were these laws? If anything, you should revolt because the laws did not favour you," I said, and his head remained bowed.

"Do not put me in that situation again, Grant. I mean it," I warned him, and he nodded. Then I went to sit on my chair. Qusack sat on another couch and was laughing at Grant. Abraham handed me a white envelope with a royal seal on it.

“That is from the Hill King, Aleksander Zieliriska,” Abraham said, and I opened the envelope. I guess Zieliriska wasn’t an arrogant douchebag like Frederick.

“Dear Nikolas Kowalski,

It is an honour to learn of your existence. Your father was a good friend of mine, and it was sad to learn that his subjects turned against him. I know you will make a good King and restore the honour of your family and your people. You have risen from the ashes of your family and made something of yourself. I have to commend you for it.

Unfortunately, because you did not inherit the throne, there are specific requirements that you would meet to acquire kingship.

I would waive it because I know the throne is rightfully yours, but Frederick isn’t as easygoing as I am.

So, I now invite you to my palace in Peakland in the Hill territory. I want to help you ensure you meet the requirement for kingship I would await your response.

King Aleksander Zieliriska”

It read, and even though I was yet to meet this man, I sensed he would not be a difficult person. I told Abraham and Grant to excuse me while I discussed the letter’s content with Qusack. “This is good news. I think you should honour his invitation. I would hold the fort here.”

Qusack said but honouring his invitation meant staying away from Aliana for three days to get rid of her scent before going there.

I did not know how he felt about werewolves, but I needed his support for the kingship. I left my office to return to my room.

How would I tell Aliana that I would have to sleep in a separate room from her for three days because I wanted to be rid of her scent before visiting the Hill King? It would be messed up because I had just confessed my feeling for her. It will be like taking one step forward and two steps backwards.

I braced myself for it.

I entered my room, and Aliana was reading a book lying on the couch. She sat up, and there was joy in her eyes.

Since I confessed my feelings to her, she had had that glow in her eyes. I did not want to wipe it off, but I had to see the Hill King, so I decided to talk to her about it.

I sat beside her on the couch, and she k*issed my cheek.

“Aliana,” I said, and she was attentive and put the book down. “The Hill King reached out to me, and he seems in support of my kingship,” I said, and she clapped excitedly.

“He wants me to visit him at his palace in Peakland,” I said, and she remained happy. Then I sighed because this was the hard part. “To do that, I must rid myself of your scent. I do not know what he would think if I went there smelling of a werewolf,” I said, and her smile did not drop.

“It means we must be a part for a few days. I can manage, Nikolas,” she said to my surprise, and I was shocked.

“You have to be King. Our love, lives, and the welfare of my people depend on it.

If it means pretending and staying apart from you for some days, then so be it. But I do not think you can sleep in your room because my scent is everywhere. You have to sleep in a room I haven’t slept in,” she said, and I was completely shocked. I was troubled for nothing

I figured Aliana was great for me. She was the right companion for a king. Although revenge and hatred brought her into my life, something beautiful came from it.

I k*issed her and decided I would love her all night long. The separation will start tomorrow. As for tonight, I planned to reward her for making things easy for me and trusting me.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 23

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 23 Trip To Peakland

Nikolas POV

It took three days to get the werewolf scent off me before I decided to set out to the Hill Kingdom.

I decided Grant would follow me because I did not trust him to be impartial.

Qusack would have been my safest option, but I needed him around to protect Aliana. A lot of Lycan women had it in for her. I feared they might carry out their plans when I was not around.

Besides fulfilling my mother’s wishes, Aliana was part of why I wanted to be King. I wanted the right to love her and have children with her, and I did not want my children to be discriminated against.

I was doing this so we could have a future.

I did not want anything bad to happen to her.

With Qusack in charge, while I am away, I would have peace of mind knowing she is safe and all right.

I left in the early morning hours and was eager to know what the Hill King had in store for me. It would be nice to have a royal ally. I knew it would make my quest easier.

“Alpha, our men have started hunting in Snow, and I am sure the Snow King will soon reach out,” Grant said while we were heading to the Hill Territory.

What Grant said explained the new werewolf faces I had seen in the cells. I thought they were offenders I had to ask to be clear. “Where do you put the captives?” I asked Grant, and he laughed.

“In the cells. We do not want them mixing with our werewolves. Those things are treacherous, as you already know; outside knowledge might help boost their morale,” He said, proud of himself, and I knew cruelty was part of his speciality. I should have put Qusack in charge of this.

“I doubt they would want to go back to Snow, Grant. I want them released and assigned duties immediately. They are people, not livestock.” I cautioned him, and he apologised for presuming that was what I would want. I dropped the matter and focused on the journey. The place was seven hours away from Forest through the shortcut, so we were in for a long ride. The road wasn’t good either. It was clear that Forest had been cut off from the world entirely.

I planned to fix everything.

One thing I commended Gabriel for was that the gold reserve was massive, and he never took any for himself.

Even when I told him to evacuate the palace and hand over the pack and territory, he could have stolen some of the gold, but everything remained. The wealth I found was more than what my mother told me. Forest had gold mines, so it was normal to have an abundance of it. It was the reserve I was using now to build social and economic infrastructures that would bring about the region’s development. I could easily be the wealthiest King in our world when I become King.

The drive was long, and even though sleep came, I refused to fall. I liked staying vigilant at all times just in case an ambush or treachery was about to occur; I wouldn’t be caught unaware.

I secretly hoped we wouldn't stay more than two days in the Hill Kingdom because I was dying to return to Aliana.

It was sad because if she were a lycan, she would have accompanied me on the trip as my Luna, but I had to hide her away in Forest like a dirty secret because she was a werewolf. I wondered why slavery even began and what caused it.

I wondered why my father and the other kings would legalise slavery with the Unity law. I knew they were treacherous people, but seeing things from their angle, I knew people could only take so much.

The way Grant paraded Joshua for getting a Lycan pregnant was just cruel. They weren't animals; they were people like us, but we had different wolves that made them lesser.

I hoped a day would come when I would not have to wash Aliana's scent off me, and I would not have to leave her behind.

We arrived at the Hill Kingdom, and the place was magnificent. I had not been away from Forest before, so this was my first time. Its vegetation wasn't as rich as Forest, but the mountains and high peaks of the place were breathtaking.

We bought a map at the gate and used it to navigate our way to Peakland. As we moved, I could see s*lave a*uctions and Adverts. I could also differentiate between the werewolves and the Lycans They did not look like they were suffering. They were well-fed and healthy, more healthy than the ones in Forest, but it was obvious that they were slaves. None of them looked into my eyes. They all bowed their heads as we drove past. I looked at them through the window and wondered what King Aleksander Zieliriska would offer.

The castle was modernised. It did not look old like mine, and it was normal. The man would have made some improvements over the years. Had my father been alive, I knew Forest would have been more developed and beautiful than Hill.

I exited the car, and Grant coordinated our luggage and the small gold chest we had brought as a gift for the King. He would appreciate gold because other territories spent bronze and copper as currency. Gold was a valuable commodity, and only Forest had it. One gold coin equated to a thousand five hundred copper coins, eight hundred bronze coins or three hundred Silver coins. I had a thousand gold coins, so I knew he would appreciate it.

I was treated with respect, and we moved into the palace.

It was beautiful; there were paintings and carvings on the wall. It wasn't dark like the one in Forest. It showed the King's personality as a fun-loving person. I saw paintings of him and his family members.

I was led to a waiting room. I sat on one of the couches while Grant stood behind me. He dared not sit because it was a royal lounge.

A man about my age approached me where I was waiting. The guards in the lounge referred to him as His Highness, so I figured he was Aleksander's son.

My life would have been as easy as his if Gabriel had not done what he did. Sometimes when I think of what Gabriel did, I want to march to his home and slaughter him in cold blood I want him to suffer, but how can I when his daughter was in my bed, and I was madly in love with her? Life was messed up sometimes.

I thought defeating and destroying Gabriel would be easy, but now I know better.

The prince greeted me with respect, and even though he was the prince, he bowed his head to greet me.

"I am Piotr Zieliriska. Crowned Prince of Hill Kingdom. My father would join us soon," he said and decided to sit on the couch adjacent to mine. Grant remained standing behind me, and he bowed to greet the prince.

It wasn't long before a brunette entered the room. She was pretty, and she was smiling at Piotr.

"Isn't Father here yet?" She called, and I figured she was his sister.

"Manners, Lena," Piotr warned her, and she smiled and curtsied.

"Welcome to Peakland, your Majesty," She said with charm and winked at me.

"The prince isn't a king yet, Lena. Don't start rumours," Piotr warned her, and she giggled. "He will be very soon and be the most powerful, too," she said, admiring me, and I got uncomfortable.

"Stop flirting with him," Piotr said, and I smiled. I did not want to seem hostile.

"The world is talking about you," Lena said, sitting beside her brother. "No one has done what you did You took back your father's Kingdom. You are indeed worthy of Kingship. King Fedrick is just jealous and afraid." She said, and I thanked her for the compliments because that was what they were.

We were served drinks while we waited for the King. Piotr discussed many things with me and hoped we could be friends.

They were hoping I would open trade between our regions again, and I was yet to look into it, but I said I would consider it.

He told me he would be taking over from his father once he turned thirty-three, which was in four years. He also hoped his father would live long so he could watch him grow their Kingdom, something I was robbed of and could never dream of.

They were easygoing people, and it was understood that they would be that way since they had had a soft life.

Aleksander finally joined us, and we all stood to greet him. I bowed my head to greet the King. That was the first time in my life I would bow to anyone.

It was also difficult for Bane and me, but we did it anyway.

“Welcome, Nikolas. You are indeed a very handsome man. You took after Isabelle, your mother,” He said, and I thanked him for the compliment.

He moved close to me and hugged me. “I am proud of you, son, and I know Mathias would be proud.” He said with a shake in his voice. He must have cared for my father a lot. “Come on, join me in my guest lounge. Piotr. Lena, you can come too,” he said to his children, and they followed. I left Grant and followed them.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 24

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 24 With The Hill King

Nikolas POV

The lounge we were led to was smaller and more private than the one we left. I was offered a seat, and I sat down.

“The maids have prepaid two rooms for you and your Gamma. I ensured your rooms were beside each other if you don’t mind.” Aleksander said, and I smiled and thanked him.

“Also, there are pretty Lycan entertainments for you,” He said and leaned close with a whisper. “Or do you prefer werewolves?” he asked. I frowned at him, and he relaxed, laughing. “You do have your mother’s blood running in your veins. She hated those things so much. Where is Isabelle, by the way?” He asked, and I knew it would be wrong to lie to him.

“She became feral nineteen years ago,” I confessed, and everyone gasped. I could see the horror in Piotr and Aleksander’s eyes.

“My goodness. You were a child!” the King exclaimed, and I nodded.

“Yes, I was a child, and I have been taking care of her ever since,” I said, and he was shocked.

“I learned you were hard and ruthless, but now I know why,” he said with Sorrow in his eyes.

“Fedrick was cruel not to accommodate his sister when she ran home for refuge,” he said, and I was flabbergasted. I could not believe what Aleksander had just told me.

“Sister?” I asked, and he nodded.

“You look more like Fedrick than your father,” he said with a smile.

“Your mother was his sister. When she escaped the massacre in Forest, he refused to allow her into his Kingdom.

He said she was weak and should have ruled Forest by force. He said she had no home in Snow. He sent her away with her maid. Honestly, he hated her because she accepted help from a werewolf.

A werewolf helped her escape the massacre. Because of that, Fedrick believed she was compromised and had broken the unity law. He banished her and sent Lycan hunters after her. We never heard from her again. It is amazing to see she survived long enough to bring you into the world,” he said, and I was surprised at his words because my mother did not tell me any of these things. I wondered what else did she hide from me.

“I see she never told you. It was normal behaviour since he rejected and denounced her. There was no point telling you of her relatives. Isabelle was always the proud kind. I would have married her, you know, but she chose Mathias because he was rich and very powerful. He was also a charmer. I must say she chose well. Your father was a fine man. What the werewolves did to him is unforgivable.” He said, and I could see him going down memory lane.

“Please tell me what you know, your Majesty,” I said, and he looked at me a bit and nodded, then asked his children to excuse us. He waited for them to leave before he spoke.

“Mathias was the most lenient of all of us. He made Forest a haven for the werewolves. It was unheard of. Lycans usually separated themselves from werewolves, but when Mitahis took over from his father, he brought them together. There was a rumour that he fell in love with a werewolf, but the rumour died when he married Isabelle.

Your father was kind. He fought against the unity law, and Fedrick hated him for it. I remained neutral and planned to go with majority votes because I loathe wars. At least Piotr is good at combat and leading now, so I can dare to do some things. Back then, I was easily bullied.

My land was poor, so I was at the mercy of the two Kings,” He said and sighed.

“Which reminds me of what I want to ask you. Sorry, I had to digress, but I need to chip this in,” he said, and I nodded that it was okay. “I would like to trade with Forest. Trading with Snow is tedious, and most of his people sell loot from Forest. That is why he always has hunters there,” he said, and I was in shock, but I wanted him to tell me of my past, so I did not ask the question in my mind, so we did not digress completely.

“We are dealing with the hunters’ issues, and I would love to open a trade line if you help me with my kingship,” I said, and he smiled. “Smart man indeed. I will get to that after telling you about your parent’s pasts.” He said, and I was grateful.

“Where did I stop?” he asked, sipping his juice. “My father was neutral and fought against the unity law,” I said.

“Ah yes, that part,” he said and laughed. “He fought Fedrick on it, and even with Isabelle’s influence, Mathias refused to pass the law. He couldn’t. Gabriel Nowak was his Beta, and Giles Wojcik was his Gamma. Mighty men in their time, and they were werewolves.

Mathias couldn’t do it until Gile murdered Miathia’s Half brother, Leon. Giles claimed that Leon was planning an uprising and wanted to usurp power. He was strong about it, but he couldn’t prove it. Everyone he claimed was involved mysteriously died by poisoning. Because the Werewolf Omegas were in charge of food, they were blamed for it. Mathias believed the werewolves were the ones trying to usurp power by killing all the Lycans closest to him.

Giles claimed Mathias’ brother, Leon, was the perpetrator, and the other men that were killed were in League with Leon.

Honestly, I would believe that Giles was after the crown.

It was odd that the people Giles said were involved miraculously died like that. Either the werewolves were planning an uprising, or someone was, and they were caught in the mess.

Mathias loved Leon so much, and the grief of what happened to his brother made him pass the Unity law.

Giles was beheaded for his crimes, and Gabriel and the other werewolves in the ranks were removed and reduced to slave status,” He said, and his eyes were misty.

“I had never seen Mithais so broken before, and Fedrick did not hesitate to laugh at him whenever the opportunity presented itself. Miles made life a bit difficult for the werewolves after what they did. He did it to put them in check because he had no Lycan

might to push back, so he had to keep them in check. They had murdered his top officers with poison, so he was now alone.

Wanting to reduce the stress, he signed an agreement with Fedrick to allow Fedrick to help him manage the slaves in his region in exchange for some warriors. Fedrick did it, but we do not know what happened. One day we just heard that Gabriel had finally done what he wanted. He and his friends fought your father and killed him. I heard they would have murdered Isabelle, too, had a werewolf not taken pity on her and helped her escape.

The Gabriel you know now isn't the same as before. Had it been the Gabriel of then, you wouldn't have succeeded in taking Forest. Fedrick tried to seize control of the forest several times, and they fought him to a standstill. They might not have special abilities like us, but they are very deadly, Nikolas. You have to be careful." He said, and I was shocked.

My mother never told me everything in detail, but this just made me realise how deeply my father was betrayed.

I wondered what made Gabriel finally kill my father.

For Aliana's sake, I will investigate, but for now, I want to focus on being King.

"Thank you for the history lesson, your majesty. I really appreciate it." I said, and he smiled and nodded.

"Mathias was my friend; you are like a son to me. You might look like Fedrick, but you have Mathias's eyes and jawline. He would be proud of you. I know it," he said, and I could not feel sentimental about a man I did not know, but I was glad to know someone that knew him, other than my mother, and the beautiful things he said about him had warmed my heart. My mother wasn't lying when she said he was a good man. What Giles did was unforgivable, and then Gabriel completed it. He would have let them go if they did not want to serve my father anymore. They did not have to meticulously usurp power like that.

"About your Kingship, Nikolas," He said with a severe expression on his face. "It is rightfully yours, but that bastard would not want you to have it because he wants to take over Forest Everything is there. Gabriel had pushed back all this while. Now that he could push no more, you come along.

Fedrick wants Forests for timber, gold, rubber, coal and slaves There are countless mineral resources, and he would make more money if he was sitting on them than having to steal them.

You taking over Forest has foiled his plans, and there is no way he would make it easy for you.” He said, and I realised why Fedrick never responded. To think the bastard was my uncle and to believe he refused to take my mother back.

“Honestly, Fedrick is a fool. Had he taken Isabelle back and you grown up in his Kingdom, Forest would be his by proxy, but he didn’t want that. I was sure his greed would not allow him to share his loot with anyone. This was all Gabriel’s fault, and I hope the bastard suffers for his crimes,” he said. At least we all had one common enemy.

“You can either tick all the boxes, and he would have no choice but to sign, or you can declare yourself King and go to war with whoever chooses to oppose it,” He said, spelling out the two options.

The truth was I could not afford war right now because I did not have the might to take Fedrick on. I needed a werewolf army to withstand the might. I had killed off the fighters and doubted I could trust the people there.

“Seeing the look in your eyes, I believe you have done the math,” Aleksander said, leaning forward in his chair.

“You do not have a werewolf army you can trust, and your Lycans aren’t plenty to withstand Fedrick’s might. Fedrick has a lot of warriors. Weres and Lycans alike, and they are deadly.

You and your men might be the strongest, but you will fall if attacked at once with that might. Fedrick won’t move against you now because you are Lycan and royalty. It would be a crime. As long as you aren’t breaking any law on your land, you are untouchable, so he will try to frustrate you. Send spies to your land and even steal from you to make you move against him or find something he can use against you. It would be best if you were careful, Nikolas. Meanwhile, you have to ensure you tick the boxes. Create alliances with alphas from other regions. Get on the union committee as a member, have a credible Luna from a prestigious family and then present your matter to the committee.

I will vote in your favour, and so will all the alphas in my region, but you have to woo the alphas in Snow, too, to get it.

Fedrick will have no choice but to sign, and you won’t have to deal with him again. It is the easiest way to get there,” He said, and I relaxed on my chair.

“What if I do all that and decide not to have a Luna?” I asked him, and he nodded.

“It will work too. You just need votes, but the Luna part will make it easier as most of the people you will try to ally with would request you mate with their daughters. If you refuse, they will take offence because you are single. If you already have a Luna, they

wouldn't bring it up, and no one would be offended," He said, laughing, and I wondered if he was trying to get me to marry his daughter. I was suspicious of people like that.

"What about Lena?" I asked, and his face dropped.

"I would not give you my daughter just so you can be King, Nikolas. You do not know her, and she does not know you. I do not force things like this. I am just telling you what you need to know. You can marry from any prestigious family you like," He said, and I had a new level of respect for the man and smiled.

"I do not plan to settle down anytime soon, but I would work on what you told me," I said, and he nodded.

"Please stay a day to meet some of my alphas and know my lands. I hope we can open trade between our regions. Piotr seems to like you; I am sure when the two of you are Kings, our world will be a better place," He pleaded and got off the chair.

I shook his hand and bowed again. Then he signalled for them to usher me to my room.

"Thank you for the generous gift, by the way. I have hidden it somewhere safe," He said on his way out and winked. He liked the gold coins I brought. I joined the servant and followed him to the room allocated to me. I had a lot to think about and much to do.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 25

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 25 While He Is Away

Aliana POV

The three days apart from Nikolas were like hell. He allowed me to visit my father daily, and I was even allowed to spend the night in his house, but nothing felt right without him.

I would often stay up at night and wish I was a Lycan. I wished there wasn't a divide between our races. It made me seem like a traitor, but my heart was aching badly.

It was tough.

I often stared at the garden and saw him sitting quietly beside Qusack. He linked me always, but hearing his voice in my head was not enough. When it was time for him to leave, I became more worried.

As much as I tried to be brave, I knew anything could take him from me. He could get there and meet a Lycan he might like or someone he would have to marry to get what he wants.

What was I compared to his ambitions? He couldn't have meticulously planned a takeover for so long and just thrown it away because of me.

I would be silly to think he would do that. I knew his motivations had to do with his mother, and I hoped he would tell me one day.

"Hey, are you still sleeping?" I heard Nikolas in my head while I was wide awake. I had slept in my father's house, so I sat up in bed immediately. I looked at the clock, it was five in the morning.

"I am awake," I replied. "I am leaving now. I promise I won't stay long." He said, and my heart sank.

It was a lot easier when I knew he was around, but now that he was going away, I knew my heart would ache every day until he returned.

"Are you all right?" he asked me, and I took a deep breath.

"No," I confessed. There was no point lying to him.

"I am afraid you will no longer be mine when you return," I said. He was silent for a bit.

"I do not break my promises, Little wolf. I meant what I said. I will be home in two days. I love you," He told me, and his words melted my fear away.

"Make sure you show them who the boss is," I said, knowing he would laugh.

"Qusack is in charge. If anyone messes with you, let him know. You are not to run errands for anyone or bow to anyone. We are hiding our relationship, but I will not humiliate you. If anyone messes with you, report to Qusack immediately," He said, and I giggled.

"Yes, Alpha," I linked him back and heard a low growl.

"See you in two days, little wolf," He linked me and closed the mind link.

I placed my head back on the pillow, smiling.

I had butterflies in my stomach, and I could not stop blushing.

I knew I would be smiling all day long. I couldn't wait for the two days to pass so I could see him again. Other than my heart, my body wanted him too.

I left my father's house in the morning and returned to the palace.

I was still having trouble referring to the place as a palace because I had lived there all my life, and it was our packhouse. I guess new management, new rules.

I went to Nikolas's room and found two Lycan women cleaning the place. "What are you doing here? Your master isn't around," one said, and the other touched her arm and shook her head. I guess the big mouth was new to the job.

"She is Alpha's mistress. Ingham lost his position because of her. I would watch my tongue if I were you," She said to the big mouth, and the big mouth immediately continued what she was doing.

I would have giggled but did not think I needed to rub it in.

One thing Nikolas did not hide was his feelings. He let people know that I wasn't to be messed with. Whether they saw me as his whore or mistress was their problem. I knew the truth between Nikolas and myself, and that was all that mattered.

"Have Lisa and Ania come to check on me?" I asked them, and the one that cautioned the big mouth looked at me.

"We just got here, Aliana. Maybe you should link them. Do you want us to change the sheets to fresh ones?" She asked, and I shook my head.

"When Alpha returns," I replied, and she nodded. I left the room and went to my old room to give them space to comfortably fix the room.

It wasn't long before I sat on the bed when I heard Lisa in my head.

"We are with the Queen. I hope you are on your way. We will have breakfast in her room," She said, and I got up immediately.

I returned to Nikolas's room and ignored the maids. I showered in a hurry and threw on something simple.

My hair was wet, but it didn't matter. There was no reason to look nice.

On my way to the Queen's chamber, I ran into Erica and Gezel. I honestly did not have time for their b*ulls*hi*t, but I knew they had time for it.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't the w*hor*e," Gezel said and looked at me s*cornfully.

"I heard Alpha cast her aside to get her scent of him," She said and smiled.

“No matter how good of a f*uc*k you may be, you are still what you are. A werewolf and a w*hor*e with no honour,” She said and looked around. I wondered if she thought she had honour. I did not see a mark on her neck, and she spent her evenings entertaining the officers. At least I belonged to one man, she was for everyone. “Alpha is still having fun with you. I have seen two women in your situation, and they were Lycans. He dumped them and moved on. Do not get too comfortable because he would dump you too. You are just a c*un*t to him and nothing more. A c*un*t he is using to hurt Gabriel, the traitor. And when he rips your heart out, you and your treacherous father will feel the pain.

Nothing would be more painful than breaking your heart and leaving you with no honour. Hope you know no one will touch you or want you after this. Enjoy it while it lasts,” Gezel said, and they laughed.

Her words stung, and there were times it crossed my mind, but I wasn't going to let her win. I planned to take my chances with Nikolas and see where it led.

If indeed what she was saying was true, then so be it.

I planned to enjoy every moment. One thing I knew was no matter how cold Nikolas was, he would break his heart if he broke mine. We will both suffer.

“At least I sleep in his bed, and I don't have to be a dancer to get his attention,” I replied, knowing he had never touched them. Erica growled at me and tightly held my shirt collar with her might. Raven wanted to let loose, but I controlled her.

“Watch your mouth, s*lu*t. We will be waiting for you when he is done with you.” She said, and I laughed.

“If you want him so much, tell him instead of picking on me because you are jealous...” I said, and she let me go.

Then Gezel decided to slap me. There was no way I was going to let that fly. She was shocked when I slapped her back with some wolf strength. I saw blood at the corner of her mouth.

“Try that again, and I will report you to Beta Qusack. I guess neither of you got the memo. I am off limits,” I said and pushed past them. They were in so much shock, and neither uttered a word.

They must have thought I was afraid and weak. I only kept my head down because of my father and my people, but now that Nikolas had given me his word, I would not allow anyone to walk all over me. Especially the Lycan b*itc*hes.

I entered the Queen's room and found that Ania had finished feeding her.

“Took you long enough,” Lisa said, and I had to apologise.

“I am so sorry. I had a run-in with Gezel and Erica on my way here,” I said, and Ania looked surprised.

“Those two won’t rest. Alpha had them disciplined last time. I guess they have a knack for suffering,” Ania said, and I was surprised to learn that Nikolas had disciplined them the last time. Thinking of what happened when I gave up their names made me w*et immediately, and I knew blood rushed to my cheeks.

“I guess you caught the bug, Aliana. You can’t stop blushing and smiling like a wolf on heat everytime Alpha is mentioned,” Lisa said, giggling, and I looked away, a bit embarrassed. I couldn’t tell them what was going on in my mind. It was mine to keep. Ania finished caring for the Queen, and then they brought us breakfast. It was a late meal but still morning, so it was okay.

We ate and talked about many things. I was yet to ask them why they were referred to as halfbreeds. I did not know why I avoided it, but I believed it was best to ask them now.

“Ania,” I said, and she looked at me. She had sauce on the corner of her lips. I pointed at it as she wiped it away, smiling.

“I want to ask you something, and I do not want you to be offended,” I said, and both of them stopped eating and paid attention.

“Why do they refer to both of you as halfbreeds?” I asked, and I saw sorrow wash over their faces.

“That is because we are halfbreeds. My father was a half werewolf and half Lycan, while my mother was a Lycan. Lisa’s mother was a werewolf, and her father was a Lycan,” Ania said, and I was shocked. It was prohibited. They would have been killed if anyone had found out when they were little.

“How come?” I asked, and Ania sighed. “Forest had always been a haven for werewolves, and there was a time King Mathias had werewolves in the ranks. He saw them as equals, and reproduction between both races wasn’t prohibited in Forest. Our parents were the products of that time.

My father told me everything was great until the werewolves moved against the King.

Their treachery made the King agree to the unity law.” She paused and looked at me. I knew she had something to say. So, I exhaled and nodded, letting her know it was alright.

“What your father and his friends did cost all of us. It ruined all our lives. I heard King Mathias was a great man. Now it is impossible for werewolves and Lycans to mix, and people like Lisa and my father are caught in the middle. I am also affected because I do not smell right to Lycans. Children like Lisa and me are regarded as werewolves even though we may be half or quarter Lycan and look completely Lycan.” She said, and I felt terrible.

I could see why some Lycans had it in for my father, and I could only imagine what he was going through out there. Even though he never spoke, I knew he was keeping a lot.

“But if your father was the half-breed, how come you are referred to as half-breed?” I asked, and Ania sighed.

“Our werewolf genes taint us. To werewolves, we smell like Lycans. But to Lycans, we do not smell right. That is how they know we are not fully Lycans,” She said, and I remembered what she said about Ingham complaining about her scent.

“Was that why Ingham said you didn’t smell right?” I asked, and she nodded. “He said I was too flowery for him,” She said and laughed.

“That was why they assigned you two to work with me because they do not regard you as their equals,” I said, and Lisa nodded.

“I used to deceive myself that we were the same, but now I know better,” Lisa said with a haunted look.

I was already depressed about Nikolas not being around, there was no point in making them feel gloomy.

“Well, I am glad we are together. I am sure one day things will change,” I said, and Ania held my hand.

“If Alpha becomes King and makes you his Queen, we will have a better life. If only King Mathias had married his mate instead of the Lycan princess, things might have been great for us. I heard she was a werewolf, but she died suddenly, and he was broken for months before he married the princess,” Ania said, and I wondered how it was possible that werewolves would be fated to Lycans. I thought they said the goddess created us apart. If we could be fated, that meant we were supposed to mix.

“Fated, mate?” I asked, and she shook her head.

“No. It doesn’t work like that, Aliana. When a Lycan and a werewolf pair up, it is the same as being fated, the Lycan would feel the bond and pull gradually as he or she spends time with the werewolf, likewise, the werewolf. It won’t be love at first sight like Lycans to Lycans and werewolves to werewolves. This is because of the difference in

senses and scent, but the bond is there, and it is strong," She said. I had never heard it before, so it was informative to me.

I wondered if that was the appeal between Nikolas and me because it all happened so fast, and we tried to fight it.

"So, was this werewolf the Kings fated?" I asked her, and she shrugged.

"My mother said they couldn't stay away from each other, and what they had was similar to the pull, but I guess we would never know. She died," Ania said.

"I wasn't alive in King Mathia's time, but my mother told me a lot about the Lycan king betrayed by the werewolves," Ania said. I had a knot in my stomach because I had heard much of that lately, and everything they said was contrary to what my father told me about the King.

If there were any traitors, my father was the traitor. But why would my father betray a kind King? I was determined to talk to him about it because Nikolas saw werewolves as traitors

too. I wondered if it related to what happened to King Mathias. I made a mental note to speak to my father about it. I hoped he would be honest with me no matter how ugly his part was. The rest of the day went quietly, I could only long for Nikolas.

Although I did not appreciate the mind links during our three days apart, now I appreciate it because it was better than silence.

The silence made me feel alone and made me long for him. I held on to hope and prayed he would come home to me and still feel the same way.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 26

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 26 While In Peakland

Nikolas POV

My time with King Aleksander was informative, and I had something to work with. I planned to dig deeper to know how to deal with Fedrick. If he were my uncle and could work against me, I wondered what he did when my father was alive. I kept my suspicions to myself and focused on what was at hand I wondered what Aliana was up to and if the Lycans were giving her trouble.

I had promised I would not stay more than two days, and I planned to keep it.

Morning came, and Grant and I were invited to have breakfast with the King and his family. They ushered us to the dining room, and everyone, including the Queen, was seated. Lena looked like her mother, and the woman seemed warm.

I bowed to both of them, and they responded with respect.

Then I was asked to sit beside Piotr while Grant sat beside Lena on the opposite side of the table.

“Finally. Forest will have a king,” The Queen said, smiling at me, and I smiled back out of respect.

“Hopefully,” I said, and she frowned.

“It is rightfully yours. I am not happy with what Fedrick is doing. I hope he remembers he worked against you when you finally ascend. The man can’t see beyond his greed.” She said, and Aleksander cautioned her. She held her tongue and composed herself.

“Please enjoy your meal. I hope you will stay with us a bit to meet people,” She said, and I smiled at her.

“I will be leaving tomorrow, your Majesty. I have a lot to attend to at home. We are trying to develop the place. A lot still needs to be done, and there is a need for supervision,” I said, and she nodded.

“I heard Gabriel ran the place down. I wondered what the traitor thought when he usurped power for himself.

I am glad you took back what was rightfully yours.

The bright side is that, unlike the Snow and Hill region, you have a lot of human resources in Forest, so finding cheap and free labour to get the job done won’t be hard.”

She said, referring to the slaves in Forest. I composed myself and nodded, knowing it would be unwise to show sentiment towards the werewolves. Aleksander might not have issues with the werewolves, but his Queen seemed to have issues with them.

“Isabelle was right about those things,” she said, hissing.

“I am glad Aleks listened to me after Mathias’s demise. I am sure the ones here would have had the bright idea of usurping power for themselves after Gabriel succeeded in Forest. You should be careful and wary of them, Nikolas. Do not let them get close to you,” she said, and Grant looked at me a bit funny with worry in his eyes. I wondered if the idiot was trying to give away my secret.

“They are in their place In Forest,” I said quickly, and she nodded.

“If you show sympathy towards them, Fredrick might use it against your ascension in the committee. The Unity Law forbids it. I hope you know,” She said, and I nodded. My

heart was heavy while I listened to her because I knew the world wasn't ready for what Aliana and I had.

I knew it would be rough and hard. I just hoped we would survive it. Bane was quiet in my head. He, too, was uncomfortable about her words.

"I do not think werewolves are bad. It is just that Gabriel was a traitor. Let us not generalise, Racheal," Aleksander said, and I heard the Queen's name for the first time.

"They are the same," she said, and he sighed.

"Yet your best workers are werewolves," He countered her, her cheeks coloured with embarrassment.

"Nikolas does not share the same views as Fredrick and Isabelle, so you can relax, Racheal. He knows to be wary of Gabriel and his people, but I doubt he shares the same views with his mother. He is like Mathias." Aleksander said, and I was shocked to know the woman said all she said so they would not be in trouble for being lenient towards Werewolves. I knew it was odd that the King would offer me werewolves as companions. I realised he was just as lenient as I was, but he did it secretly.

"Riotr would take you to see the town, maybe it would give you ideas. I have organised a dinner tonight, so you will meet the alphas in my kingdom and some of the Committee members," He said, and I thanked him for his kindness and hospitality.

"May I join them, Father?" I heard Lena say, and my stomach churned. I remembered how she was flirting with me when I arrived and did not want to get in her father's bad books by turning her down.

"Sure, you should hang out with them," Racheal said, and I decided to speak up. "I do not think it would be necessary, your Majesty," I said quickly, and she was about to speak when Lena spoke up.

"Relax, Nikolas, I am seeing someone. I just want to hang out with you two. Please relax. Seeing you, I know you are seeing someone already," She said. I felt a bit embarrassed, but I maintained a calm face.

"You are seeing someone?" Racheal asked her daughter, and she nodded.

"Yes. Miles Bradford from Snow," She said quickly, and the dreamy look on her face showed she wasn't lying. I wanted to laugh, but I held it.

"Fredrick's nephew?" Aleksander exclaimed, and she shook.

I did not want to be around for it. I wiped my mouth with the napkin to excuse myself. Piotr did the same, and Grant copied. We respectfully left them in the dining room and headed out.

“There is this cool restaurant in town you would like. Something tells me food with my folks won’t be the same again after this. They loathe Fredrick. They hate him and anything that has to do with him. Except you, of course, and that is because of Mathias,” Piotr said, and I took a lot with those words.

We headed into town with Piotr behind the wheel.

All the ladies flirted with him, and he seemed a charmer too. We drove past a lingerie store, and a red lace caught my eye.

“Let us check that store out,” I pointed at the store, and Piotr looked at me and smiled.

“You have great taste, Nikolas. I bring my girlfriend to shop there most of the time. You will love their stuff,” he said, turned the vehicle around, and headed for the store.

When we got there, he stopped the engine and stepped out.

“Warning, a werewolf owns the place,” he said quickly, and I told him it was okay. Grant was silent all through. We went to the shop, and the owner greeted Piotr with respect.

“This is the Forest King,” he told them, introducing me respectfully, and the women knelt immediately. They were also looking at me as if they were auditioning for something.

“Do not start rumours, Piotr. I am yet to be King,” I said aloud so the news does not get to the wrong ears.

“All formalities, we know the crown is yours already. You own the place already,” he said, and I moved towards the red lace at the window that caught my eye.

I knew it would be perfect. It was a size ten. I knew Aliana would look beautiful in it. I found others and bought about four sets. When I paid them with a gold coin, they were in shock.

“That is too much, Nikolas. We pay Werewolves with copper here, but I won’t tell,” he said and winked at the shop owner, who thanked him and hid the coin.

She then gave me a bracelet made of gemstones. It was beautiful, and the emerald stone and amethyst looked divine. Although it was held together with bronze, I knew it was the best she would have since they were not allowed silver and gold.

“For the special someone, your majesty,” she said, and I collected it. I did not know if Aliana would like it, but I hoped she would.

We left the shop, and Piotr showed us about Peakland. We ate at a local werewolf restaurant, and I realised that Piotr liked werewolves. I wondered if his girlfriend was Lycan or a werewolf. Everyone was secretive about such things, so I did not bother to ask.

I noticed that werewolves in Hill looked good but weren't free, and they weren't treated well either. They ate and shopped separately, lived in poor homes, and lacked variety.

They had no dedicated medical facility, and the schools they attended were run down. But I knew they would be grateful for it because they were better off than the werewolves in Snow. To the world, they would believe they were better off than the werewolves in Forest. No one knew we paid wages, gave free food, and let them maintain their homes in Forest, and I planned to leave it that way.

The King kept his promise and organised the dinner.

I met many people, and most of them knew my father. They had a lot to say about him and said I had their full support on the committee.

They also hoped I would open trade with Hill. I told them I would work on it when I got home. A few tried to find out if I was mated, but I found a way around the question to avoid offending anyone.

Marrying someone just to be King was not right. The dinner ended, and I retired to my room.

I had informed the King that I would leave early so they would not see me during breakfast.

Queen Racheal was unhappy about it, and since I did not see Lena around, I figured her parents grounded her. It seemed they did not approve of her relationship with Miles, who happens to be my cousin.

Queen Racheal pleaded with me to visit soon, and I told her I would. Piotr also said he would visit me in Forest. I told him he was welcome. He wasn't a bad guy, and he seemed like someone I would like to have as a friend. Morning came, and Grant and I left Peakland, ready to return to Forest. I was eager to get home, dying to hold Aliana in my arms and make love to her.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 27

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 27 Lets Talk About The Past (Aliana POV)

The day was very long. I did not know if I should remain in the palace or spend the night in my father's house.

Nikolas had told me he wouldn't be spending more than two days in Hill, so there was a possibility he would return the next day and not tonight. He wasn't in danger of anything on the road, so he might return tonight, but I doubted he would want to rush.

I decided I would spend the night in my father's house.

I knew I couldn't do that again once Nikolas returned. I also doubted I would want to spend the night away from Nikolas once he returned.

I closed for the night and linked Beta Qusack to inform him I would stay in my father's house.

He was silent for a bit but then responded that it was okay. I thanked him and headed to my father's house.

I had a lot of things bottled up inside me that I wanted to ask my father before Nikolas returned. I hoped my father would be honest and tell me exactly what happened with King Mathias.

All I had heard so far was that my father and his friends were the villains in the story, but my father was a peace-loving man. I could not see him actively moving against the King. Or maybe I was wrong because I wasn't born when it happened.

My father hadn't even mated with my mother then. Could his values have changed over the years? Could he have realised his mistakes and has been living in regrets? I could never tell until I spoke to him, and he has divulged his truth.

I was uncomfortable with my mission because I did not know how it would end. His health has been better since I started going to care for him. Nikolas had kept his promise on food, and there was a lot to eat. They were also allowed to buy and sell in the market. Anyone that refused to allow the werewolves was dealt with.

The only down part was we could not leave Forest, we could not choose our jobs, and we weren't paid as well as the Lycans. What the werewolves were given was more of an allowance than wages. Still, the werewolves were getting by with free groceries on Saturdays and rights to buy and sell in the market. My father had stated clearly that we had it better than others.

As much as I hated to think about it, I, too, was getting a taste of what my life would be without Nikolas if he decided to end it.

The werewolves did not like me because I reeked of him. He had marked me with his scent, so there was no way I could wash him off.

I doubted I would be able to meet anyone and settle down after this, as much as I tried to be happy and take Nikolas's words for it. Gezel's words rang in my head. If he casts me aside, I will be alone. It was a bleak future if things go in that route, but a tiny part of me prayed it would be otherwise. I prayed it would work out and Nikolas would keep his promises to me.

I knocked on my father's door, and he answered immediately.

"Princess, I thought you would sleep in the palace tonight," he said when he opened the door. He looked tired, and I could smell food.

"Having dinner?" I asked him, stepping in, and he moved aside for me to enter and left me at the door to close it.

There was a plate of food on the table, and it had no protein in it. It was plain rice.

"Rice?" I asked him, and he nodded and said down to eat it.

"Too tired to cut up vegetables and prepare a steak. This would do," he said, and I took the bowl from him.

"It won't take time; I will make us some stir-fried vegetables and steak to have with the rice," I said, and he smiled and relaxed on the couch.

"When is your boyfriend returning?" he asked me, inquiring of Nikolas, and I blushed.

My father suspected I had feelings for him. After telling me to be careful many times, he dropped the matter and accepted things.

"I hope you know it would be short-lived?" He asked me with concern, and I nodded and smiled. There was no point telling him what Nikolas had promised me. That was between Nikolas and me.

"I do not see him as King with you by his side. Even Mathias did not marry his fated. She was pregnant before she died, you know. He remained single and would have raised their baby together.

Unfortunately, she died the same night she gave birth. It was mysterious because her baby was stillborn. Mathias never saw the baby and her corpse, his half-brother Leon helped him with the funeral. The two were close," My father said, and I saw he was going down memory lane. He had just given me information that he had never discussed with me.

"Why would an evil King have a werewolf mate?" I asked him: he sighed and bowed his head. His eyes were misty.

“He wasn’t always that way, Princess. I try not to tell you the story because it was the past, but with all the talk of werewolves being traitors now flying around, I think it is best I tell you the whole story because I know you can’t be having it easy in the palace too.

I doubt Nikolas would trust you. He might even be playing with your emotions to hurt you and hurt me since I am the one they all believed betrayed the King. I fought King Mathias, Princess. Don’t get it wrong, but it isn’t how they make it sound,” he said and got off the chair to help me in the kitchen.

The living room was in the same space as the kitchen, so it was easy for us to communicate. My father picked up the aubergine and helped me prepare it.

“King Mathias was my friend. I was his beta,” he said, and I was shocked.

“Yes, he was kind and did not see the divide between us. When King Fedrick ascended the throne, he wanted to enforce a slavery law, called the Lycan Unity law, on the werewolves, but

Mathias kicked against it. Aleksander was a coward, so he was the neutral party.

He did not have the might to go for battles, and his land was poor, so he had to keep his head down and answer to Mathias and Fredrick.

Mathias was the richest King because Forest had the richest lands in our world. We had ample natural resources, so everyone traded with us. Our vast army consisted mostly of werewolves, so we couldn’t be intimidated. It was a vast empire.

Before Mathias became King, there was a subtle divide between the Lycans and werewolves; see it more like racism.

The Lycans believed they were superior to us. Their evolution differentiated us. They had special abilities and could stand on their hind legs, while we depended on fate and nature to survive.

Mathias had the largest werewolf army, making him a very powerful king. Werewolves were best in the army because they were strong, easy to coordinate, and moved in unison.

Lycans tend to want to act solo, which is why there are a lot of rogues among them. They aren’t entirely loyal unless they know you can beat them. They cannot be coordinated like the werewolves, which made us very valuable.

However, we were still regarded as lesser wolves.

When the Unity law was presented, Mathias refused to sign it because of us. He had a werewolf beta and gamma. How could he sign such a law?

We were his friends. We weren't that close, but we were close enough. When he started seeing Olive, we hoped he would marry her and she would be the first werewolf Queen, but the committee kicked against it. They said he either gave up his kingship to marry her or remain King and keep her as his mistress because they did not want a halfbreed heir.

Mathias would have given it up, but Leon, his half-brother, convinced Olive to plead with him and remain as his mistress.

Mathias agreed but claimed her, making it impossible for either to have other spouses.

Some believed they might have been fated, but we would never know," He said and finished dicing the aubergine, then picked up the Cauliflower while I prepared the steak.

"Anyway, when she and their baby died, Mathias was devastated for months. To console him, Leon introduced him to Isabelle, the sister of King Fedrick.

It took a while for them to click, but her kind and loving nature made him like her, and he decided to marry her.

The wedding was quiet because Mathias felt he was betraying Olive. Sometimes he would divulge his inner feeling to me, and I would console him.

As kind as Isabelle was, she hated werewolves, which was understandable because she was Fedrick's sister.

I noticed her effort to like us.

She put in a lot of effort, but sometimes her hatred would sip through. One thing I respected her for was that she never acted on it. She tried for Mathias's sake, and I could almost believe her hatred dissipated." He said and stopped what he was doing, and sighed. I guess he was getting to the hard part.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 28

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 28 The Hard Part (Aliana POV)

I gave my father a minute and did not trouble him to speak. I planned to listen to him and not interrupt to get the whole story. He took a couple of deep breaths and continued to talk.

"One day, Gamma Giles told me that he had overheard Leon planning to usurp power. He wanted to murder Mathias. I could not say he was lying because he had no reason.

We decided to investigate and found out he wasn't Lying.

Leon wanted to be King; he had a grudge that he was to be King had his mother not been a mistress.

He also hated werewolves because his brother made me his beta and second in command, giving me and Giles more power than him.

He was envious.

I tried to tell the King subtly, but Mathias refused to listen. He loved his half-brother dearly.

We let it rest and kept an eye on Leon and his group. The other Lycans on the rank supported Leon's agenda, and we knew all of them.

We managed to spoil most of their plans, but they finally planned a bold move to murder the King.

We told Mathias about it, and he promised to s*tri*p us of our rights and power if we continued trying to poison his mind against his brother simply because his brother did not like us.

We should have left it alone, but we were afraid that if Leon succeeded, it would doom the werewolves of Forest.

Forest would not be a haven for our kind anymore. Gile then decided to sacrifice himself for the cause.

I was to round up the traitors while he would go after Leon on the night they chose to murder the King," he said, tears streaming down his cheeks. My father was crying. I guess it was a demon of his past.

"It didn't go as planned. Princess, and what was supposed to be a simple arrest turned to a battle, and Giles killed Leon," He said, crying bitterly. "Mathias went crazy. I tried to explain to him that it wasn't intentional and that we were trying to arrest the traitors. He did not believe me, but he did not act immediately.

Isabelle said we were trying to usurp power, but Mathias was wise enough to think that if that was what we planned, we would have come after him and not Leon.

The Lycan officers in Leon's camp mysteriously died while the investigation was ongoing. That made us look more suspicious because Werewolves were responsible for food, and all the officers died of poisoning.

The Lycans demanded justice, and the werewolves working in the kitchen were executed, and we were removed from the ranks. I do not know what happened, Princess, but Mathias went crazy. He signed the Lycan Unity law, and hell began for us.

Giles was executed, and the rest of us were turned into slaves. What we were trying to prevent had happened to us.

I never knew a good man could turn so wicked. We were not allowed to see the King or complain to him. Things got complicated, and his officers made our lives difficult.

Soon the werewolves in the army came to meet me to help liberate our kind. Even though they had removed us from the ranks, they left us in the army so we could die like cattle in their stead. It was horrible.

Our part of the military was underfunded, and we were sent to battle with nothing but our wolves.

Forest being a rich territory, had a lot of anonymous attacks, and we were used to fend them off.

I wrote several letters to Mathias to inform him of our dwindling number. Still, he made it more complex instead of making things a little easier. Then we learned that he was going into partnership with Fedrick and that Fedrick would be allowed to source for slaves in Forest Freely.

Until then, Forest was the only place hunters weren't allowed to source for slaves. Even though our living condition was terrible, Werewolves still came to Forest to survive. This agreement was going to ruin our lives completely.

It meant werewolves would no longer have a haven. With all the hardship in our world, it would be unbearable not to have shelter.

The able-bodied men of the werewolf community had a meeting, and we all decided that Mathias had gone mad.

We tried to save his life, but he had paid us back severely. Giles had been k*ill*ed for Leon's death, and the werewolves in the kitchen had been slaughtered for the poisoning. The crimes had been paid for; what he was doing was extreme and mad.

We decided to group ourselves and demand emancipation from the King. We requested he allows us to settle in Woodland, away from his riches and his people. We did not want him as our leader anymore." He said I plated the steak so it could rest.

I was listening, but I did not want to say or do anything that would make my father stop the story.

“We sent him the request twenty times, and when he finally responded, he said he would rather die than let us go.

He said he knew what we were planning and would never let us take over Forest. He said he regretted being friends with our kind. Our treasonous behaviour would never allow him to leave us unsupervised.

He said we should be happy that he did not wipe us out. The letter was long, and it enraged us.

He had killed half our population because of his brother and the officers who were trying to kill him. We had had enough.

I had had enough. We knew we would have no future under a mad king, so we decided to fight for our freedom.

We stopped the work we were doing and gathered ourselves to leave for Woodland. King Mathias came for us,” he said and bowed his head.

“Something odd about the night of that battle was that he spoke as if he had not spoken to us since his brother’s demise.

He behaved as if he did not receive our requests or sent us a letter. He kept saying, ‘How dare you plan to attack me after everything I did for your kind? How dare you try to attack me? Leon was right about our kind’,” my father said and wiped away his tears.

“I told him everything he did to us and how he expected us to continue living under such circumstances. He said he had been lenient enough, but we were going to die that day,” My father said and sat on the high stool in the kitchen.

“I didn’t want to kill him, but Mathias won’t stop fighting. He said he rather die than let us usurp power from him and divide his kingdom. He fell on his own sword,” my father said and began to weep.

“People praised me as if I had done something exceptional. But I had lost a friend. I could not handle the praises and knew our days would not be pleasant. We just wanted a settlement in Forest, not the entire thing, but Mathias was too arrogant to listen.

Isabell was dragged out of the palace by the men. They wanted to kill her, and I stopped them. She was carrying Mathias’ child, I could not let his lineage die like that. I knew he was misled and misguided. So, I told them not to touch her and sent her with her maids to King Fedrick.

I told her to please return when the child is of age. The scorned werewolves would eliminate her and her child if I let her stay. She knew it too, but a rage in her eyes let me know she might not return. I pleaded with her to return. I promised I would keep

everything as is for Mathias's heir. That is why we never embarked on any project and never built anything.

We isolated ourselves from the world and fought off the Snow King until he had no choice but to stop attacking us. I suspected Isabelle was trying to get revenge for her husband, but I decided we had sacrificed enough. That was how Forest became the werewolf home.

Isolated from the rest of the world until Nikolas came and took over," He said and bowed his head.

"If Mathias's heir is still alive, I believe I have failed him or her because I did not fight Nikolas. I could do just so much with a nonexistent army in a weakened state." He said, and I turned off the stove and went to hold him.

I could not process everything now, but it was clear that my father was caught in the middle of everything all along. It was unfair that he bore the burden of it all.

"These people will never like us, Princess. This world has never been kind to our kind. I do not know the goddess's plans, but I pray she remembers that we are her children and she turns the tide in our favour. I do not want Lycans to suffer; I just want us to live at peace as equals and continue to exist peacefully." He said, and I could understand his pain.

Even though he had told me this, I knew it would be stupid and impossible to share it with anyone, especially Nikolas, who hated my father. No one would believe us. "Do you still have the letter?" I asked, and he looked at me, a bit confused.

"The reply King Mathias gave you and the copies of the ones the werewolves sent," I said, and he swallowed.

"I might, but I would have to search for them," he said, and I wasn't so happy about his response, but the letters would help me.

"Please find the letters, Father. They might help us," I said, and he shook his head.

"We demanded Woodland, and Mathias explained why he would not grant us our wishes. It won't help with any argument you present, Princess, but I will look for it for your sake," He said, and I thanked him.

I tried to cheer him up after it all and plated our food so we could eat.

We ate silently and retired to bed.

My father was unhappy throughout, but he wore a smile for my benefit.

It was hard seeing someone as strong as he belittled. I wondered what our future would be like. Nikolas wasn't Mathias, and my people weren't free. I had knots in my stomach, knowing that the chances this might end well for me were slim.

The odds weren't in my favour, but I was still hopeful. Hopeful that Nikolas' love is genuine and that he would keep his promises.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 29

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 29 Falling On His Sword (Aliana POV)

I spent the night tossing and turning, thinking of everything my father had told me.

One thing that stuck with me was why Mathias would fall on his sword.

Did they not fight in their wolf form? I knew I would not have peace without an answer, so I planned to speak to my father in the morning before I left.

Sleep never came due to anxiety. I was anxious to see Nikolas the next day, and I was anxious to find out why my father said Mathias fell on his sword.

I needed to understand the battle because, based on my father's accounts, Mathias seemed confused, and he was behaving as if they hadn't spoken in a while.

I needed to be sure of certain things. I also wondered if Isabelle was in Snow with her child or if something terrible had happened that prevented her from returning to claim Forest over the past twenty-nine years.

I wondered what Nikolas would do if that should happen.

Would he hand over to Mathias' heir, or would he insist and push back?

If I wasn't in love with him, I wouldn't have bothered, and it might have been a relief, but it didn't feel like it.

Typically, Kings inherit the throne when they are Thirty-three years of age, so there was a possibility the heir was yet to come. Regardless, I knew I would have to give Nikolas the heads up on the matter when I could because speaking to him of my father in that context always triggered him.

No matter how he cared for me, his hatred and mistrust was deeply embedded, and his emotions could not be handled. It was something that I would have to discuss with him when the opportunity presented itself.

I would ask my father what happened that made Mathias fall on his sword and keep the information to myself. Then I would compare everything and present my understanding to Nikolas if he ever brings up the past. One thing I am sure of is that I won't be able to tell Nikolas until he brings it up.

I heard movement in the early morning, and I knew my father was preparing for work. I knew my entire day would be messed up, and I might have to close early just to catch up on my sleep.

I rushed out of bed and went to the bathroom to rinse my mouth. I hurried to the kitchen to prepare breakfast and pack lunch for my father.

He came to the living room around the time that I had finished packing his lunch. "Good morning," I said, plating his breakfast on the kitchen island so he could sit on the high stool and eat.

"Good morning, Princess. Did you sleep well?" he asked me, picking up his fork and admiring the content of his plate. This was my opportunity to ask him what had troubled me all night.

"I didn't sleep at all. I stayed up wondering about what you told me last night," I said, and he sighed and put down his fork. I think I had messed his appetite up.

"I am sorry, Father," I said quickly, and he looked at me.

"What do you want to know?" he asked, lifting his fork again, ready to eat. I studied him a bit and then decided to ask him.

"Why did Mathias fall on his sword? I assumed he would fight in his wolf form. Why with a sword?" I asked him, and my father nodded.

"That was a brilliant observation, my dear. Now I will tell you a truth that the werewolves refused to accept, my truth," he said, and I picked up my fork to eat. I wasn't hungry, but I knew watching him eat would be awkward.

"We gathered ourselves to head to Woodland. We didn't have much, and we didn't have weapons either. So, we headed to the palace in multitude to tell the King we would leave Riverhead and go to Woodland.

We wanted to tell him we would no longer mingle with the Lycans, but to our surprise, Mathias was already coming for us with his army of Lycans.

When he faced us, he accused us of wanting to attack him.

Someone had informed him that we were coming, but the person did not tell him what we were planning to do. The person told him that we planned to attack and take over.

Mathias didn't have many Lycan warriors, and his army of werewolves was with me. Fighting in his wolf form would not favor him, so he chose to fight with galvanised silver swords.

They could use it to injure and kill many wolves more quickly than fighting combat in wolf form.

Remaining in his human form would make him swift on his feet, so it became a sword fight, but we had none.

He did not want us to have a fighting chance, so he chose the only weapon to make it easy. A weapon we did not have.

We did not have silver swords because of the underfunding of the army, so we had to rely partially on our wolves, but there was just saw much Jaws, teeth, and claws could do.

Many of us died in that battle, but we obtained some swords from the fallen lycan soldiers, which helped us.

The Lycans Mathias was using were newly recruited, so they weren't as skilled as the werewolves that had years of training. We were able to wipe them out with their swords," He said, sighing.

"I took Mathias on, and we fought until we were away from the others. Some werewolves wanted to help me, but I knew they would aim to kill, so I ran towards the woods, knowing Mathias would follow to kill me because he believed I was the group's leader.

When we got to the woods, I pointed my sword at Mathias and pleaded with him to yield. I told him we did not want his kingdom, we just wanted to live in Woodland. I told him of all he had done to us and why we wanted to be apart from him. He was in disbelief.

He did not trust me, so he held on to his grudge, but there was a look of realisation in his eyes, and it haunted me ever since.

He was an Alpha and a King. He knew he had lost the battle, and alphas had their pride. There were two things for him to do to keep his honour, run away or die. He chose to die, and when I refused to kill him. He pierced his heart with the silver-coated sword he held and fell on it until the hilt was at his chest and the blade had gone through him completely.

I screamed and knelt by his body, weeping. His last words hunted me.

Mathias told me, 'I am sorry, Gabriel. They said you were coming for me',” my father said and wept.

“Someone was feeding him lies, telling him we wanted to usurp power. Someone told him we were coming to fight him, so he prepared.

But by the time we could figure it out, a war had broken out, and he had to keep his honour. I pulled the sword out when Israel and Austin came to where we fought; I was about to tell them what happened when the others came and started hailing that I had ended the mad King.

I tried to tell them it wasn't like that, but they refused. They thought I was just being modest. They thought I was being kind.

They carried Mathias's body and his sword and headed back to the entrance, where Isabelle was made to kneel while pregnant with her baby.

They wanted to execute her, but Mathias's last words made me realise we had all been played.

I wanted her to remain and continue to lead until her child was of age. However, I knew whoever planned the unfortunate war might still be alive and might eliminate her and Mathias' only heir. The werewolves might kill them too. Mathias had already lost an heir once I could not let his bloodline end. So, I asked for her trusted maids to send them off to Snow.

The werewolves fought me for my decision, claiming that The Snow King would come for me and that if he failed, the child in her womb would seek revenge.

I did not care.

I was grieving my friend, and I was willing to die in those moments because I felt like a traitor. A name that was alien to me had become my reality.

I had no will to live until I met Gwendolyn, and we had you, Princess.” He said and wiped away his tears. He continued to eat the food until he finished.

“Your boyfriend will be returning today?” He asked, and I nodded.

“He said he won't be away for more than two days, so I expect him to be back today,” I said, and he nodded.

“Good. I like that. You do not deserve how the werewolves are treating you. If his being sincere, I would pray for the day he would finally claim you, but if not, I will try to be here to shield you from everything that will happen after,” He said with a promise, and I

smiled at him. "The people never really liked me anyway. It doesn't matter," I said, and he laughed.

"I am sure they are just jealous," he said, and we laughed.

It was good to laugh. He left the house, and I cleaned up and returned to the palace to attend to Nikolas' mother.

I showered in a hurry and headed to the Queen's room. While I walked, I thought of all my father had told me and worried about what would happen to Nikolas and his poor mother when the heir suddenly appeared.

I learned that Nikolas and his mother lived in the wilderness all their lives, so this was a beautiful gift he could give her, making her a queen even though it isn't a recognised title. I would feel awful for them if everything was taken away from them.

It also crossed my mind that the heir could be a girl; maybe they might insist he marries her. Perhaps that was why the Snow King refused to sign his coronation request and insisted he visits him.

Did the Snow King want to introduce Nikolas to the true heir? I paused midway, and my heart began to beat fast.

I doubted Nikolas would walk away from everything for my sake. I tried to steady my heartbeat and then entered the room. Ania and Lisa were already there, and I joined them to perform the chores.

A few hours later, I sat on the couch in the Queen's room, watching over her as she slept.

Someone entered the room. I knew the scent from anywhere. I turned and saw Nikolas.

He had kept his promise and returned.

I rushed towards him and hugged him.

I noticed he smelled of the trip, meaning he had yet to settle in. He wrapped his arms around me, laughing.

"You are back," I said, holding on tightly, and he laughed and then k*issed my neck. "I could not stay away, little wolf," He said, lifting me in his arms.

"Let Ania and Lisa do the rest of the work. You should welcome me home properly," he teased, and I was shy immediately. Was he going to carry me in his arm and walk through the hallway to his room with everyone watching?

He opened the door and stepped out, and I knew he would do precisely that, so much for not showing our affections publicly. They were no doubt that our hearts beat the same. I held on tight.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 30

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 30 I Am Home (Nikolas POV)

I could not wait to get back to Forest.

Throughout the journey back from Hill, I kept thinking of Aliana and wondering what she was up to. I was sure she wasn't hopeful that I would return early.

I had a joke to crack with her when I got home, and I could not wait to see the expression on her face when I told it.

We finally got to the palace in Forest, and I looked at Gabriel's house to see if Aliana was there. The door was locked, so I figured no one was home.

I alighted the vehicle and went into the building. Leaving Grant and the driver to handle my luggage.

I did not need to guess where Aliana would be.

On my way there, I heard Qusack in my head.

"Welcome home, Alpha," He said, and I growled slightly. I didn't want him to be the first to welcome me home.

"Thank you, Beta, see you soon," I said, closing the link.

I went to my mother's room and took a deep breath. Bane was eager to see Aliana, and so was I.

I turned the knob, opened the door and walked in. She was sitting on the couch looking at my sleeping mother.

The moment she looked in my direction, her face lit up, and she ran to me.

I wrapped my arms around her and breathed in before k*issing her sweet spot. It had only been five days, but it felt like I had been away for a while. I held on to her and allowed her scent to surround me. The very scent I had to get off me before going to Hill.

It had been five days since I held and touched her: three days of staying apart, and two days since I had seen her; now that I could do all those things, I doubted I could let her go.

Was this what being in love felt like? Was this what finally having a home felt like?

This was the first time I would be welcomed home warmly in my entire life. This was the first time I would be hugged and greeted with warmth.

The first time someone missed me.

I didn't want to get emotional, but I would be a fool to let this go. I lifted Aliana bridal style and carried her to my room. I noticed she had dark circles, so I figured she had not been sleeping well.

While we headed to my bedroom, I linked Ania to care for my mother for the rest of the day and the next day.

I doubted I would be leaving my bedroom soon. Whatever I needed to do could wait. "Take care of the Queen and have food served in my room. You and Lisa would also be working alone tomorrow, and I would not like to be disturbed," I linked to Ania.

"Yes, Alpha," She replied, and I shut off the link.

"Qusack, I will discuss matters with you later. Tomorrow or the day after," I told him and closed the mind link before he protested. I deserved some joy and peace too.

Entering the room, I noticed my luggage had been placed there. I could not wait to see Aliana in the lingerie I had bought in Peakland, but it could wait.

"You carried me all the way," Aliana said when I placed her on the bed. She sat up, and I took off my shoes and knelt before her on the bed. Then I bent to k*iss her. She tasted sweet. I deepened the k*iss, and soon we broke it. I caressed her cheek and looked into her honey-coloured eyes.

"You didn't sleep?" I asked, and she looked away.

"I told you I would be back. Do not doubt my promise," I said, and she nodded. Seeing her mood, I wondered how she would handle my joke.

"Don't do it," Bane said, but I liked mischief. I still planned to tell it.

I sighed and sat beside her, resting my back against the bed's headboard.

Aliana moved close to me and leaned on me. I could smell her arousal and held out a bit before telling my joke.

“What is with you?” She asked, sensing something was the matter. I sighed and looked at her.

“I do not know how to tell you this,” I said, and she became worried, but she tried to mask it. I had to commend her for her ability to look brave even when frightened.

“The Hill King wants me to marry his daughter, and I accepted,” I said, and she froze and moved away from me. She did not say a word. She just moved away.

“I guess this is it then,” she said, sounding as if she had expected it. Which meant she didn’t believe any of my promises to her.

“Is that all you have to say?” I asked her, and she turned away gradually.

“I have nothing to say. The good part is you will get your wish and be crowned the King of Forest.” She said, and I could hear a crack in her voice. I guess the joke was too hard.

I pulled her close, and she pulled away from me, refusing to look at me and wanting to escape. Fighting me.

“Aliana,” I said, and she refused to look at me.

“Look at me, do not make me use my command or force on you,” I said gently, and she gradually turned to look at me. Tears were streaming down her cheeks, and I felt horrible. I wiped them away with my thumbs immediately.

“You never believed a word I said about never giving you up,” I said, and her tears continued to flow.

“It will be wrong to have a mistress when you are married...” She said, and I shook my head because that wasn’t what I meant.

“You were expecting me to return with this news,” I said, and she nodded gently. “I do not break my promises, Aliana. If that was the only option given to me, then I would k*iss the Kingship goodbye,”

I said, and she looked at me with confusion.

“I meant what I said, Aliana,” I said, feeling bad about cracking the joke in the first place.

“It was a joke. I am not getting married,” I confessed, and I saw relief in her eyes. She pulled away from me, a bit annoyed.

“How can you Joke like that?” She asked, and I knew I had overdone it.

I should have listened to Bane and done something else. This was my first real relationship, so I wasn't any good at it.

"Hey," I said, making her look at me, and she did. I pulled close and looked into her eyes.

"I promise I won't joke like that again," I said, and she nodded.

I k*issed her, and she wrapped her arms around my neck and held on tightly.

Our k*iss was hungry.

I could feel her relief that it was a joke.

I did not know she cared this much until this moment. I dared not break her heart. What she was doing was taking a massive risk with me, and I planned to make it worth it.

I planned not to disappoint her.

"I am sorry, Aliana," I linked her, and she came on top of me, k*issing me and unbuttoning my shirt.

I broke the k*iss and stopped her. Her eyes were confused, but I wanted to be the one to serve. So I laid her on the bed and gently took off her clothes.

"I missed you, and I want to take my time," I said to her, and she tried to relax, but I knew she wanted me badly. I could feel and smell it.

I went to her b*rea*sts and worshipped them. Her n*ipp*les were hard and ready, and I s*uc*ked and l*icked them, making her moan, and I knew she would be extra wet.

She grabbed my hair, and I moved down her body, k *issing every part and t*ast*ing her skin. My c*oc*k twitched, eager to e*nter, but I wanted her to come first. I wanted to take my time. Her breathing quickened. She was anticipating it.

I felt between her legs with my f*ingers, and she was soaking w*et.

"I want you i*nsi*de me", She finally said. I knew it took a lot of effort for her to be vocal. She was too eager for f*orep*lay. I decided to honour her wishes.

I knelt between her l*egs and w*ent in. I did not know how much I had missed it until I was d*eeep inside her.

I p*umped while she moaned. Her voice was like music, and her pl*easeure was my reward.

I placed her legs over my shoulder, knowing she liked it that way and pushed through. It got to my head, but I had to wait for her release. The moment she came, I poured myself into her.

I wasn't tired, but I noticed she was.

I knew it was because she did not sleep in the night. Instead of troubling her for more, I lay beside her, and she placed her head on my chest and fell asleep.

While I lay there in bed with her, I wondered what to do. The hatred for werewolves in our world was intense. I wondered how we would be able to beat all that. I did not want to lose Aliana. I didn't want to give her up. I doubt anything could make me give her up, but it also means I must fight for her.

If my kingship was denied because I refused to settle with a Lycan from a prestigious family, I was determined to take the other option. The only issue is that I doubted the werewolves in Forest would fight for me.

I doubted they could be loyal. They had betrayed their kings once, what if they do it again? Training them would be a massive risk because they could turn against me as they turned against my father. Could Aliana make them loyal? Could she convince her father to persuade them to fight for me?

I wondered until I finally fell asleep.

I got up to use the bathroom. Aliana was deep in sleep, and I doubted she would wake soon.

She was exhausted when I saw her. I saw the bracelet, the store owner in Peakland had given me on the floor. It must have fallen from my pocket when we undressed in a hurry. I picked up the jewellery and placed it on my dresser. I planned to give it to her when she woke up.

I was in the shower when I heard Qusack's voice in my head. He also sounded urgent.

"Alpha, a letter just arrived from King Fedrick. I think you need to come to your office," he said, trying to sound calm, but I knew something terrible had occurred.

I told him I would be there and left the shower. I did not wait for my hair to dry. I wore a shirt and shorts with slippers and headed towards my office. Grant wasn't there, but Qusack and Abraham were there.

I went to sit on my chair, and Abraham and Qusack stood up to greet me.

"Welcome home, Alpha," they said, and I nodded, eager to know what the matter was because I did not plan to leave my room.

"I think King Fedrick knows of your Visit to the Hill. You know he has spies everywhere," Qusack said, and I nodded.

"So, what did he say?" I asked, and he looked at Abraham, who handed me a letter with a broken seal. I took it and looked at both of them.

"I read it," Qusack confessed, and I nodded. It was okay because he would read it anyway.

"Nikolas,

I heard you honoured Aleksander's invite but are yet to honour mine. I find it highly disrespectful. I only asked you to come so I would know if you are a fraud. But since you have refused my invitation, here is my argument, and I will table it before the committee. The same committee members you have managed to make friends with in Peakland.

I am Laughing right now because I know what Aleksander is trying to do for you. If you plan to claim the throne as an inheritance, you are not one to succeed your father. That is if Mathais is genuinely your father.

At the time of his death, Mathais had only one child, my nephew Miles Bradford. He is the son of Mathias with his first mistress before he mated with my sister.

I was given custody of the boy to protect him from the werewolves of Forest. Thus, I cannot hand his inheritance to a stranger who grew up in the wild.

I am yet to divulge his true identity to him, so I will tell you this, come to Snow so we can discuss the future of Forest, or I will present the legitimate heir of Forest to the committee. You will have to relinquish your hold.

If you think you can stake a claim because you conquered the region, I have the army to subdue you and take it by force.

I am not to be meddled with. I doubt Isabelle was your mother because she would have told you who I was.

Nonetheless, I will give you a month to decide and set my plan into motion." The letter read, and I wondered if it were the ramblings of a madman or something I should be worried about.

Had my mother been well, fighting back would have been easier.

If push comes to shove, I will need Gabriel to identify her as their Queen.

I knew the Hill royal family would not openly move against Fedrick, and I doubted any Lycan would, but the word of the werewolf Alpha that betrayed my father when my mother was at his side would do. All I needed him to do was recognise her.

I would have to plan with Qusack and secretly get word to Aleksander before I make my move. I knew it would be foolish to overlook my uncle's threat.