

Forged In The Flames Chapter 61

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 61 Coming Home (Nikolas's POV)

We arrived at Forest in the early hours.

Compared to what we discovered on our way to Snow, I realised we were relaxed about security. I needed to find a way to make our defence and protection more efficient. Above all, training the werewolves was necessary because I doubted the journey to get the crown would be easy.

I alighted the car and entered the palace.

I could feel people's eyes on me. I was sure by now news had travelled about what I went to do in Snow. I was sure they were wondering if I got the crown. I knew they would soon find out what King Fredrick had to say about me and my mother.

I felt a wash of shame just thinking about it. Being called a bastard was hurtful, no matter how I tried to mask it. Fredrick got me there, and it was all thanks to my mother.

I felt ashamed remembering everything Fredrick said about me and my mother in public. The way the committee was silent and how people looked at us attentively.

I felt alone.

Aleksander had made an effort, but I was alone at the end.

My mother dared not deny or challenge him. It had nothing to do with the fact that he was a King. It was simply because he was telling the truth.

I moved quickly and felt my mother chasing after me. I wanted to get to my room. I needed to be with Aliana for the sake of my sanity. I needed peace.

"Niko, Niko, Please," She said with a shaky teary voice. I halted at the bottom of the stairs, sighed and turned around to look at her. She was crying, but I wasn't moved by her tears. She had cost me everything, including my dignity.

"What is it, mother?" I asked her, a bit short.

"I am sorry, Niko. I will try and fix it. I will prove Fredrick wrong," She said in tears, and I chuckled.

"You can't prove him wrong after keeping silent and accepting his words. You confirmed everything he said at that committee. You can't take it back. At least if I never got the

crown, it wouldn't be because I didn't try. It would be your fault. Not Gabriel or Aliana, like you would want to blame, but you. You and your secrets and lies," I said, and she stood frozen to the spot.

I had nothing to tell her. She was useless.

I moved up the stairs briskly while I linked Grant.

"Grant," I linked my Gamma.

"Welcome, Alpha," He said, and I sighed. I was about to gamble, but it was necessary.

"You and Ingham should shortlist Werewolves for the army. They will need a lot of training. We can't continue living as sitting ducks in the forest. Also, start a fence project to gate the entrance to our territory from the highway. I want the place heavily guarded and access controlled." I ordered.

"Yes, Alpha. I will be on it." He said, and I closed the mind link.

Asking him to work with Ingham was a gamble because I had removed Ingham from the ranks because of his actions.

Still, I could not think of anyone better to train the warriors. As things were, Qusack and

Abraham would have to work closely to help me with the crown issue. I would have to trust that Ingham would see this as an opportunity to redeem himself. i

I wanted to spring into action, but I needed to rest. I was mentally tired from the events in Snow, and I needed to empty my mind and let go of my anger to proceed wisely.

I hoped Aliana would be in the room and not in her father's place. I did not want to link her, so it would be a surprise.

I got to the door of my room and turned the knob. Stepping in, I saw Ania and Lisa sitting on the couch with Aliana.

Aliana looked up and saw me.

There was fear in her eyes, but it was brief. She wasn't quick to hide it because it registered. I walked in and felt the atmosphere in the room.

It was glum.

It made me wonder if I had brought gloom with me from Snow. Seeing Aliana's reaction, I knew something was wrong. I began to fear that she might have lost her father even though Grant would have told me if the man had died.

As much as I disliked the man, I could not bear seeing Aliana hurt. Ania and Lisa looked worried too.

“Leave us,” I ordered the women, and they hurried out of the room.

Aliana got up and rushed towards me. She hugged me and rested her head against my chest. Her scent filled my senses, and I wrapped my arms around her and helped her relax by stroking her hair and her back.

“I missed you,” she whispered, and I held on a bit tighter.

“I was only gone for a day, little wolf,” I reminded her, and she held tighter without saying a word.

I knew something was wrong, but I was hoping she would tell me on her own without me prompting her.

We finally broke the hug, and I decided to take a shower. I removed my clothes while standing by the bathroom door and stretched my hands to Aliana to join me. Although she seemed excited, there was no light in her eyes.

Whatever was bothering her was eating her up from the inside. I wished I could figure it out and ease the pain, but I wasn't a wizard.

My abilities consisted of listening to the mind links of those connected to me, blocking access and healing fast, among other things. Guessing people's fears wasn't among them. I doubted if any Lycan had that ability.

“Join me,” I said, and she t*ouched my hand and followed me into the bathroom, fully clothed. That was all the sign I needed to know something was wrong. Backing her against the wall, I gently took off her clothes.

“What is the matter, little wolf? You do not seem that happy to see me.” I said, and I could smell her fear.

“I t*ouched her chin, and she raised her head to look at me. Her eyes were teary, and she was shaking with fear.

“Please do not make me tell you now. I am handling the matter,” she said, tears streaming down her face, and I knew I would not be getting the peace of mind I had hoped for.

“You know I wouldn't rest until I know, right?” I asked her, and she looked at me. Her lips were quivering. She was trying to speak, but the words seemed caught in her throat.

“Aliana,” I said, gently caressing her cheek, and she closed her eyes. I watched her tears roll down her cheek and caught them with my thumb, gently wiping them away from her face. “Little wolf,” I prompted her to speak, and she leaned her cheek against my palm. I guess my touch gave her comfort. Did that mean she could also feel the bond?

“I do not want to talk about my father,” She finally said, and I was taken aback. I wondered why her father would stir up such strong emotions in her. Even when he suffered in slavery, and I tried to work him to death, she did not act this way. I wondered what must have

gone wrong to cause such strong emotions. She seemed afraid, and I could not understand why. “What happened to Gabriel,” I asked her and she opened her eyes and looked at me.

“His health is stabilising. I was just afraid, thinking what I would have done if something had happened to him.” She said, and I held her to my chest.

“Oh, little wolf,” I said, and she wrapped her arms around me and began to sob.

“I will be alone,” She said, sobbing profusely.

Her words cut deep because it meant she did not believe I would keep my promises. She did not believe I would remain with her. She did not believe I would not take a Lycan queen.

I wondered if my trip to Snow was a part of it.

Maybe she felt I would return home and tell her I was getting married?

How could I? The only reason I am pursuing the crown is so we can be together. Otherwise, I am okay being the Alpha of Forest.

My hope for a future with her is why I stood in the committee meeting and took Fredrick’s insults. It was the only reason it had come to that, and he had gotten away with it. I hated to admit it, but she was my strength and weakness. How could she think she would be alone should anything happen to her father?

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Chapter 62 Strange Fear (Nikolas POV)

Although Aliana’s words cut deep, I controlled myself and tried to ease her pain.

“I am hurt that you think you will be alone should anything happen to your father. What about me, Aliana? Do you not see me as your family?” I asked her, and she tightened her hold and pressed her head against my chest, crying.

She was gripping on tightly as if she felt I would pull away. I wondered what must have led to all this.

“Well, if it makes you feel better, no one asked me to take a Lycan queen. It is not like I would if they asked me. I meant what I told you, Aliana.” I assured her and decided to lead her to the shower. Maybe the water would make her relax a bit.

I turned on the water and allowed it to fall all over our bodies.

Once I felt the water had rinsed Snow from my skin, I turned it off and led Aliana back to the room.

When we entered the room, she was shivering, and I wore her a bathrobe. Her hair was matted to her skin. Her cheeks were rosy, and her honey eyes were wide, observing me curiously.

I moved toward her to ease the cold and brushed her hair aside to expose her neck to me.

It was bare, and it hurt because my mark should be on it. She was mine. Mine to love and mine to please and no one else's but the path we walked was filled with so many obstacles that we had to move carefully, patiently, and wait just a little longer.

I bent down and k*issed the spot. She m*oaned as I grazed my teeth over it to calm her down. Her skin was soft and sensitive. It felt different to t*ouch. I did not know why, but I believed it might have been the water and anticipation.

I s*ucked on the sensitive spot, and a m*oan escaped her lips. I could smell her arousal.

Choosing to warm her up with my body, I opened the robe and gently rolled it off her shoulder until she was out of it.

Then I lifted her in my arms, and she wrapped her l*egs around me.

I arrested her lips and k*issed her hungrily while I carried her to bed.

She tasted sweet, and I pushed my tongue in to savour the goodness.

I gently laid her on the bed to pause to admire her.

She looked breathtaking and innocent.

She looked fragile, but I wasn't fooled by it. She was strong and resilient, and I loved that about her.

Trailing her body with my hand, I cupped her b*reast and squeezed lightly. She gasped and then m*oaned. They were tender; I could feel it, and her n*ipples hardened while I t*ouched them.

I placed my m*outh and s*ucked.

Aliana m*oaned.

I s*ucked, feeling the nub harden in my m*outh. Her response aroused me, and I wanted to do more.

While I s*ucked on the n*ipple, I reached for her nerve bundle with my hand and rubbed her lightly with my index f*inger. She arched her back and m*oaned.

"That is it," I linked her gently and moved to the next n*ipple. I s*ucked on her n*ipple while I rubbed her nerve bundle.

Gradually, I slipped my f*inger into her wet p*uss*y. It was soft, and her scent was intoxicating.

"Aliana," I m*oaned, fighting the urge to bury my hard, twitching c*oc*k into her right away. I wanted to make her feel good and come before I delved in.

I pumped my f*inger gently and lightly, and she ground her p*uss*y against my hand. Then I moved down.

I did not leave her room to adjust. She gasped, and her breath caught when I delved in with my tongue.

"Ah," She m*oaned.

Her body shook with pleasure, and I went to work while she ground her p*uss*y against my tongue.

"Knees up," I linked her, and she obeyed, giving me the access I needed to taste her properly.

I knew she was coming with how she was grinding herself against me, so I steadied her by grabbing her a*rse.

She screamed from the intensity of her o*rgasm.

Bane was proud of what we did.

I was proud of myself.

I placed my f*inger into her, and the walls clenched hungrily. I could not wait anymore.

I had overworked myself. I positioned my c*oc*k at her entrance and drove myself in.

It was tight, soft, wet and slippery. I had to control myself, so I do not come immediately. Aliana gave in to me willingly.

While I pumped, all that mattered was the two of us. Everything that troubled me was distant. "I want you to give me your back," I groaned and pulled out. She turned on her hands and knees, and I pushed in from behind, deep inside her.

"Nik..." she m*oaned, and I drove in harder and pumped faster without remorse. I was losing control, and the pleasure was getting to my head.

"Say my name, Little Wolf," I groaned and pumped harder into her.

I wrapped my hands around her upper body, squeezed her b*reasts, and pulled her close until her back was almost against my chest.

I rammed into her fast and hard, and I felt her p*uss*y clamping my c*oc*k. I knew she was coming. I maintained my rhythm the way both our bodies wanted it; grinding, deep, taking, and giving at the same time.

"I am coming," She m*oaned, and I held tight. "Not yet. Hold on a little longer", I ordered her, and she began to go crazy because I did not relent. I continued to pump into her with the same precision.

"Nikolas., please," she m*oaned. Her juices were rushing all over me. Aliana was super wet. Just right for me, and I took her fast.

"Don't you ever think I will leave you," I managed, trying to control my o*rgasm too.

I pumped faster while she pleaded with me to let her come.

Grabbing onto her best and squeezing with one hand while her back was almost to my chest, I reached for her clit with the other and rubbed the sensitive nob.

"Nikolas, Please," She cried. Her body was going crazy, and so was mine.

"Please, Alpha," She m*oaned, and soon unable to hold it anymore, we both erupted at the same time.

My waist pumped on its own, trying to sustain both our climaxes. I emptied deeply into her and felt her p*uss*y, taking every drop.

A loud groan escaped my lips while I stilled inside her to ride what was left of the climax.

I gently let her go, and she fell forward on the bed.

I lay beside her trying to catch my breath.

I pulled her close, and she placed her head against my chest, panting too.

The o*rgasm had drained us both.

Laying in bed bedside Aliana, I felt light and on top of the world. Nothing Fred*ic*k said or did at the committee affected me again. I was at peace and hoped it was the same for her because of the mood I met her in.

Aliana fell asleep in my arms. While I held her, I thought of Gabriel and decided to link the physician I sent to check on him before I left for Snow.

“How is Gabriel?” I asked the doctor.

“Alpha, Welcome home. The werewolf is responding to treatment,” he said quickly, and I wondered why that would scare Aliana.

“So, what is your professional opinion on the matter?” I asked him and waited for his response.

“If I may speak freely,” he requested, and I wondered what he had to say that he would need permission.

“Yes, you may,” I replied.

“I would advise he doesn’t do anything rigorous. He needs to rest a lot because he is hypertensive. I have given him medications that would help, but he is bound to die if he returns to work in this condition.” He said, and I sighed.

Gabriel was lucky he was Aliana’s father, and now I had a stronger motivation to make sure he was alright. He had a version of the past that I needed to know. Also, Aliana would be distraught should anything happen to him.

“I have already stopped his work. Just make sure he gets the care he needs.” I told the doctor and ended the link.

My tummy grumbled, and I decided to link Ania to bring me food.

Aliana was asleep, so I did not bother to include her. They could always bring her something when she wakes up.

Seeing how deeply asleep she was, I knew it would take a bit before she woke up. I snuck out of bed, slipped on my shorts, and sat on the couch, waiting for Ania.

Ania did not bring the food until thirty minutes later.

I noticed she was afraid when she placed the food on the table, and I wondered why.

Her hair was packed in a bun, and I saw the brand on the back of her neck.

It made me ashamed of myself. I had completely forgotten that we branded women before we came to Riverhead.

Ania was one of those that were unfortunate to be branded because none of my officers wanted her, and the fact that her father was a halfbreed did not help matters either.

I would have to make a law that states branded people could mingle and settle with whomever they please. No one should walk around like cattle. The woman I saw in Snow was an eye-opener. She represented everything that I would not do to my people. Everything that I must abolish. I was grateful to Aliana for breaking down my walls and softening my hardened heart.

“Did Aliana go for medical check-up yesterday?” I asked Ania while she prepared to serve my food, and she almost dropped the serving spoon. She looked at Aliana, who was sleeping peacefully on the bed, and I wondered what her deal was. Was she expecting Aliana to answer my questions?

“Are you dumb? I just asked you a question,” I said, feeling irritated by her action.

“A., al. Alpha,” she stammered, then started serving my food so she would not look at me. “Aliana spoke alone to the nurse. We were not with her, but she is fine. If anything was the matter, I am sure she would have spoken,” She said and placed the food on the table in front of me.

“Who attended to her?” I asked her, and Ania stepped back.

“There were about five nurses in the clinic. I cannot say who attend to her precisely. Maybe she will tell you when she wakes up,” She said quickly, shifting the questions to Aliana. She had systematically shifted the questions back to Aliana to answer.

I nodded and told her to leave, then looked at Aliana.

Ania’s body language was off, and I did not need anyone to tell me they were hiding something.

Ania has never behaved like this with me. I wondered what was so dreadful that she was afraid to say and wanted Aliana to say it herself. Was Aliana ill? I prayed to the

goddess that wasn't the case because I planned to have a long blissful future with her after I had taken the crown and liberated her people.

She has to be healthy and alive for all of it.

I stopped worrying and decided to eat while strategizing my next course of action for the crown.

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Chapter 63 Making Plans (Nikolas POV)

I ate the food that Ania brought, hoping Aliana would wake up, but she seemed to be in a deep slumber. I wondered what activities she must have engaged in to be this tired. It was close to noon. Was it our lovemaking that got her this tired? If so, I had to pat myself on the back for a job well done.

I glanced at her and chuckled.

Even though I had arrived in a foul mood,

Aliana had found a way to lift me up. I was grateful.

After the meal, I took the dish out and decided to meet with Qusack and Abraham in my office. We needed to act because I doubted Fredrick would make the crown accessible to me.

I left my room and found my mother at my door. She kind of creeped me out. I wondered how long she was waiting there. Her eyes were swollen, and she still had tears in her eyes.

"What do you want, mother?" I asked her, and she touched my hand.

"Please forgive me, son. I promise to find a way to make it right. Please. I can't live with myself knowing you are annoyed," she said, and I sighed.

"You need to give me space, mother. Thanks to you, I have to start digging into the past. How do you think that makes me feel? You made me look like a fool in public," I said to her, yanking my hand from hers.

"Excuse me, I have matters to attend to," I said, and she nodded and wiped away her tears.

"I loved Mathias more than anything, but he never gave me a chance. I always competed with dead Olive, and how could I beat a ghost? Leon made me happy. He made me forget my troubles," She said, and I chuckled.

"And the others? I learned werewolves were among them, mother. The same vile creatures you claim to loathe. Fredrick told me you wanted Gabriel. Is that what all this hatred is about? Because he rejected you? Because he was sensible enough not to attempt to sleep with his queen? Is that why you hate him so?" I asked, and she was in shock.

"You are nothing but a hypocrite, mother. All you have told me ever since I was a child was about the werewolves being your enemies. You never told me the truth. When you got your senses, you gave me hell for having a beautiful werewolf Mistress. Little did I know I was living your fantasy," I said, and she was ashamed.

"I must give it to you, Gabriel is a very handsome man, and he must have been charming in his youth. Hell, see his daughter; she is gorgeous. It is okay to want nice things. But I hate that you were hypocritical about it," I said to her in a low, sinister tone, and she flinched.

"Now, if you would excuse me. And I meant it when I said you should stay away from Aliana. Do not get her worked-up mother. You have done enough," I said and walked away. I briskly headed to the stairs. Moved down the stairs and headed to my office.

When I got there, everyone was there, including Ingham. It was awkward seeing him after a while. He bowed his head in shame when he saw me.

I was unaffected by his remorse and went to sit on my chair.

They all sat and started giving me reports on the errands I had given them.

"We will have to train them in Timber and Woodland. I wanted to know if we are to include women in the army," Ingham asked me, and I shook my head.

"Leave the women out of it for now. The women should be trained along with the rest of the pack that wouldn't be in the army. Everyone should know how to defend themselves. We will try to get our goal without a war, but should it come to it, we have to be prepared." I said, and Grant spoke up.

"Do you think they will support us if it comes to it? They can also betray us to pay us back for taking over Forest and enslaving them." Grant said, and Ingham shook his head.

"They will be stupid to call what they have slavery. I am sure they know what is happening in Snow and Hill. This place is a haven for them. No one is hunting or selling them. They are treated as people here. They will be stupid to think they will have it

better outside. I am sure they will fight by our side. They would rather have Alpha Nikolas as their King than Fredrik or weak Aleksander.” Ingham said, and he had hit the nail on the head. Their allegiance could be calculated based on logic; based on logic, they had it best here.

I really missed Ingham’s input, but I could not go back on my words. He disregarded and disrespected me by messing with Aliana, which would forever be a crime over his head. He is lucky that I involved him in this.

“King Fredrick said he has spies here; what should we do about it?” Abraham asked me, and I nodded.

“Nothing, really. There is no guarantee to catch them all, so it is best not to even start because it would seem like we have something to hide,” I said. Abraham frowned because I contradicted my initial plan.

He was about to ask a question when realisation dawned in his eyes that I did not trust Grant and Ingham. He nodded, immediately agreeing and allowing me to change the topic.

“Meanwhile, we need to prepare for the arrival of Prince Piotr. The werewolves should act normal and not cross their bounds. Kindly relate that message to them. Since it is no longer a secret that they are treated with respect in Forest, we can continue the way we are with little restrictions for the time Piotr would be here.

I believe he is coming with his Mistress, a werewolf, even though he said she is his maid. Please have a room ready for him,” I ordered, and Abraham nodded, knowing that responsibility would fall on him.

I did not officially have a Luna yet, so my officers would have to handle the domestic matters too. I could not put my mother to it because I did not trust her, and Aliana was a werewolf. If I give her many responsibilities, Fredrik’s spies would have something to report to him.

I thought of how proudly the man mentioned to us that he had spies in Forest, and I concluded he was a very shameless man. I believed my mother was like him too because only a shameless woman would try to sleep with her husband’s subordinates in the name of feeling lonely. The woman was a disgrace. I hoped she knew it.

“Have we thought of the trade deal?” Grant asked me, and I nodded.

“We are still compiling the list of things we would add to our trade list. Gold, Timber, Iron ore, Quarts, asphalt and cash crops are already on the list. We are thinking of others,” I said, and he nodded.

“Will we join the slave trade since it is part of the requirements?” Grant asked me, and I shook my head.

“I have told the kings we do not have slaves to spare. We do not have enough workers; why would we sell what we don’t have ample of?” I asked him, and he nodded.

“We can sell the retired workers to appease them and get the crown, then go and Liberate them,” He said. As bright as his idea seemed, it was a huge gamble; we needed an army to achieve that. We did not have the military for it, so there was no point.

“I would not want to be a deceptive ruler. We can’t sell our slaves and then go to war to get them back. I have told them my stance on that, and I am sure they get my message,” I said, ending that conversation.

Grant and Ingham left to head to Timber so they could start drafting people into the army. I knew it would take a while before they could return to river head. We will need the break.

Once they left, Abraham headed to the library to read up on our laws and find loopholes I could use to counter Fredrick and the opposition to my coronation.

Qusack and I remained in the office. My friend looked at me. He could tell I was tired.

“What are we going to do about the spies?” He finally asked, and I did not know where to start.

“I do not know, but one thing for certain is that the culprits are Lycans. I do not see werewolves working for Fredrick,” I said, and he nodded. “I will narrow my investigation,” He said, and I knew he had something to say. I could tell from the uneasiness in his body language.

“What is it, Qusack?” I asked my friend, and he sighed.

“Since what has happened has happened, it wouldn’t hurt if you discuss the past with Gabriel. Let us hear his version to shed some light on the issue. Your mother has not been forthcoming and lied too often for us to take her words seriously. We need to know the other side of the story to figure out what to do,” Qusack said, and I sighed.

I knew he was right. I had already decided to talk to Gabriel about it but doubted I could bring myself to do it. I was still mad that he killed my father regardless of what he told Aliana. I suspected he had lied about that part, but some things he said Aliana had checked out.

“Do you think he would lie to his daughter?” I asked Qusack out of the blue, and he shrugged. “I know he has told her some things,” He said, and I was shocked. He raised his hands immediately to calm me down.

“I did not go looking for information. I didn’t ask her anything. I went to check on him after the battle with the intruders, just as you had instructed. I heard him discussing the past with his daughter while I was at the door. You can ask Aliana to tell you what he told her. I must tell you some things he told his daughter checked out. It corresponded with the allegations made against your mother, Nikolas. It has to count for something. Don’t you think?” He asked me, and his words sent me into deep thought.

Qusack was right about me seeing Gabriel as soon as possible, but I will need Aliana to be there so I can control my temper should he say or do anything that annoys me.

He wasn’t the type to offend deliberately, but my natural hatred for him could easily escalate a non-issue. The last thing I wanted was to hurt Aliana’s father because I was mad.

Qusack and I discussed other things, and I left the office with him to make some rounds.

I checked on the people within the compound and ensured the ongoing project in Riverhead was attended to.

Something I noticed about the people was the level of respect they had for me. I would think they would hate me, but they looked at me differently. Had Gabriel told them who I was? I doubt it, and if he had, then I suspected them.

I wondered why they would respect the son of the man they killed to Liberate themselves. The very son that had returned to enslave them. It was a puzzle.

We finished our round, and I returned to my room in the evening to rest, attend to some trade documents and eat.

I hoped Aliana would be awake when I returned, but to my surprise, she was still asleep on the bed.

I checked on her to see if she was okay. She was breathing fine. I began to suspect she might be sick. I planned to get the truth out of her one way or the other. If she refuses to tell me what is happening, I will visit the Werewolf clinic and get the details out of the nurses.

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Chapter 64 Telling Him (Aliana POV)

I woke up feeling sick in the night. Nikolas was sitting on the couch attending to some documents. He seemed to be engrossed in what he was doing. I looked at the clock, and it was eight in the night. How could I have slept throughout the afternoon? I was hungry and nauseous simultaneously, and I did not know what to do.

Feeling the vomit coming while my stomach ached. I got off the bed and rushed to the bathroom immediately. I got to the toilet seat and emptied whatever was in my stomach.

Seeing that it was the food I had in the morning, I figured I might be suffering from indigestion. Was it part of the symptoms?

“Are you alright, little wolf? Did you catch a bug?” Nikolas asked me with concern. I knew he was by the door because his voice was close, but I did not want to look in his direction. I did not want to lie to his face.

“I am fine; it is just indigestion,” I said and went to the sink to rinse my mouth. He was quiet and did not say a word.

Once I was done, I looked at him and walked out of the bathroom, brushing past him.

He held my hand to stop me from moving away and pulled me to his chest.

“Are you sure you are alright, little wolf? You are scaring me. First, you sleep for so long and now throw up. What did the nurse at the Clinic say?” he asked, and I tried to wiggle out of his arms.

“I am hungry,” I replied and went to the table where they usually place the food. I opened the dishes, and the food was cold. For some reason, I didn’t want to eat cold food. Nikolas noticed because he chuckled.

“I will ask Ania to bring something hot for you,” He said, moving past me to sit on the couch.

His question about the Clinic lingered in the air, and I did not know how to avoid it. I really did not know what to do.

I stood frozen by the table, refusing to move from the spot, knowing I would have to answer his question once I turned around. I did not know how long it would take me to figure out what to tell, but I doubted I had time.

“I heard you retired all the werewolf elders working for you,” I said, remembering what the nurse had told me at the Clinic.

I looked at Nikolas, and he smiled at me. “A kind gesture for my woman,” he said, resting his back on the couch. He looked handsome with his unbuttoned shirt and semi-wet hair. Nikolas was breathtakingly handsome, and I am sure he knew it.

The scar added to his looks. It made him look strong and dangerous.

I still wondered who got close enough to harm him like that. He must not have had access to his wolf when it happened hence why it scared him, but I guess that was his secret to tell.

“I learned your father is hypertensive,1’ He said, and I nodded.

“Thank you so much for being kind to him. I know, to you, he does not deserve it, but I am grateful,” I said quickly, and his smile dropped. “At this point, I do not know what Gabriel deserves, Little wolf,” he said and looked at me. “Come here, don’t stand over there; you make me feel like a monster,” he said with a smile, making me chuckle. He laughed too, and I went to sit beside him.

The moment he held me, tears filled my eyes. I was afraid of the outcome of our relationship.

Why did life deal us a shitty card? Everything was great. A baby would ruin everything. Our love, our lives and his aspirations to be King. A baby would mean bye-bye to the crown and bye-bye to Liberation.

How could I be so careless? I should have done some research instead of taking what that quack said. Clearly, he knows nothing about reproduction. Could it be deliberate? My mind was messed up.

Nikolas’ s voice brought me back to reality, and I looked at him.

“Aliana, I need to ask you something,” he said on a serious note, and my heart began to beat fast. Had he found out? Did someone tell him? Ania or Lisa, perhaps? Did Nurse Alison sell me out?

“Be calm, Aliana,” Raven said, and I tried to compose myself the best I could.

“Qusack and I had a lengthy discussion based on the outcome of the meeting I attended in Snow. And he said some interesting things.” He said and then made me look at him.

“I need you to tell me everything your father told you about his history with my father and mother. I need to know what he shared with you before I speak to him,” he said on a serious note, and I became worried.

“Please, Nikolas, do not make me speak of it. You might not like what he said about your mother,” I confessed, and he did not look surprised. Instead, he nodded.

“Did he tell you she had an affair with my uncle Leon?” He asked, and I nodded reluctantly.

“Not just Leon, Nikolas. Some officers too. She made passes at my father, and he refused her. She hated him for it,” I said quickly, rushing through my words, waiting for his reaction.

“I see,” He said and sighed deeply.

“I will have to discuss the past with your father, and I want you to be there. I need you there so I can control my temper. Do you think it is something you can do?” he asked me, and I looked at him worried.

“Who am I to stop you when you are angry, Nikolas? Even I can’t protect myself from your rage,” I confessed, remembering the few encounters I had with him when he was angry.

He touched my cheek gently and brushed it.

“I can never hurt you, little wolf. You are my center,” he said and k*issed me on my lips. I hope his opinion will remain the same after I tell him the truth.

Just then, there was a knock on the door, and Ania brought a tray of food.

She put it down and looked worried. We dared not link each other because we knew Nikolas’s ability. Her look of concern was enough for me to know something was wrong.

“That reminds me,” Nikolas started while Ania remained in the room.

“Ania said there were multiple nurses at the Clinic. Which of them attended to you?” Nikolas asked, and Ania hurried out of the room.

She did not want to be around for what I was about to experience.

“Nikolas,” I said, placing my hand over his, and he looked at me curiously.

“Know that I will never try to be smart or do anything to jeopardise your mission. Know that I mean well and will do anything to please you.” I said, and tears started streaming down my cheeks because I wanted to tell him the truth.

I got off the couch and stood before him at a distance, afraid of his reaction when I tell him the truth.

“You are making me nervous, Little wolf. What is the matter? Why are you afraid, and why are you crying? Are you ill?” he asked me, and I shook my head.

“I did everything required of me, Nikolas, I swear. I will never abuse your kindness towards my people and me....” I said my body was trembling on its own because there

was no time he told me his rules did not stand. We discussed many things, but having a baby wasn't one of them.

"Aliana, you need to stop this and tell me the matter. I can't deal if I do not know what the issue is. You are getting me worried and making my wolf restless," he said, slightly irritated.

I nodded and wiped away my tears. There was no time he wouldn't know. I knew it had to come from me. I had to tell him, or he would feel hurt and betrayed.

"I went to the clinic yesterday, and they ran a series of tests, and the nurse said I am pregnant," I said quickly, and everything was still.

The room was quiet. Even the air was still. I stood there waiting for Nikolas to react, but he remained frozen. Soon he bowed his head and rested it on his palms.

"I thought you were on birth control?" He finally said without lifting his head, and I nodded.

I went to get the tablets to show him. I had placed it on the table before him when I realised it didn't prove anything.

"I took it the way the doctor said, but the nurse said I used it wrong. It is a heat suppressant, and I was supposed to take it on my first heat for it to be effective. The doctor never told me this," I said in tears, but his head remained bowed.

"But you are a woman; you should know these things," He said calmly, and his calm scared me the most.

"I don't, Nikolas. I did not know anything. I wasn't s*exually active before you, and my mother wasn't around to teach me anything. I am learning on the go. I swear I didn't do this deliberately. Please tell me you believe me." I said, and his head remained bowed.

"Other than the nurse, who else knows of this?" He asked with a dangerous tone.

"Ania and Lisa, but that is all. No one else. I told them not to tell you; I will tell you myself," I said quickly, hoping he would look up and tell me something, but his head remained bowed.

I could feel his rage.

He was angry at me.

Tears were streaming down my cheeks while I stepped back. I had nowhere to run to if it came to it.

“I will terminate it if that is okay by you. I know you do not want halfbreed pups,” I said quickly.

Even though I did not want to terminate the pregnancy, there was no way Nikolas would allow it.

He looked at me slowly, and his eyes were raving mad. It sent a sinister shiver down my spine, and soon my back was against the wall. “I will terminate it,” I whispered pleadingly, and he growled lowly.

“Don’t you dare!” he said calmly but with a sinister tone, and I wished I could sink into the wall. I was confused as hell. I did not understand why he would say that.

“Please, Nikolas. I am sorry,” I apologised, and he got up from his chair and advanced towards me. I closed my eyes, flinching. He pulled me to his chest and hugged me tightly. He held me for a while. I was finding it hard to relax. I was scared.

“It’s an okay little wolf. We would get through this together.” He said, gently breathing in my scent.

His scent and proximity calmed me down.

“It isn’t your fault. Do not blame yourself, and do not be afraid of me,” He said, and I began to cry tears of relief.

“I am sorry,” I said repeatedly, holding myself to the spot.

“You have just given me a reason not to give up on my quest, Aliana. I must do whatever it takes to get the crown. So that our children can have a future in this cruel world,” He said and held me.

I wrapped my arms around him and cried.

I cried tears of relief, knowing I wasn’t alone in this and would not have to terminate the pregnancy.

I held on to him, and he k*issed my neck gently. “I love you, Aliana. Never forget that,” he said calmly, and I held on tightly.

I wouldn’t forget his words to me because he had given me hope.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 65

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 65 Talking About It (Nikolas POV)

Aliana and I stood in the same spot for a while. I held on to her while she cried. I had never seen her so afraid before. She honestly dreaded the situation.

I wouldn't lie and say I wasn't shocked by the news. I dreaded it. It had just complicated everything. Something that was supposed to be a thing of joy had created a cause for worry.

I did not know what to do or how to handle it. I wanted to calm Aliana down. I knew she had been shaken since she heard the news, and I figured her weird behaviour when I arrived was because of this. It wasn't because her father was hypertensive.

Ania's fear made sense. What broke my heart was the fact that she thought I would be mad at her and the fact that she suggested termination.

I doubt I would ever forgive myself if I had suggested that. Aliana needed to have faith in me and know I would never hurt her. I might have temper issues, but she was safe from

them. I wouldn't dare harm her; Bane wouldn't dare it. She had nothing to worry about where I was concerned. I hope she finds out one day.

"So we are going to be parents?" Bane, my wolf, said, sounding excited, and I was utterly silent because Aliana was still crying.

"You need to calm down, Little Wolf. This isn't bad news. It just came at the wrong time, but we will make it work," I said, and she pulled away and looked at me with swollen eyes.

"What about the Unity law and your crown?" She asked, and the fact that she was still thinking of my needs and desires touched my heart.

"None of it will matter without you, Aliana. I will find a way to get it all and ensure our children have a life. King Aleksander seems to be on my side. I just have to find a way to get my uncle to agree," I said and used my thumb to dry her tears.

"You should not feel this way or stress too much so you do not harm our child," I said, and she laughed a bit.

"What is funny?" I asked, wondering what I said.

"Has nothing to do with what you said. It just has everything to do with the fact that I see your doctor as a quack," She said, which was funny.

The man seemed so indeed.

He should have confessed that he knew nothing about reproduction and referred us to a specialist. Instead, he just brought the pills, and Aliana did as suggested.

“I will have a word with him soon,” I said, and she shook her head, which made me frown.

“Why shouldn’t I speak to him?” I asked, and she stepped away and adjusted herself.

“I do not know how to say this, but I have been thinking about Doctor Newton since I got the news of my pregnancy,” She said, and I led her to the couch.

I did not want her to stand for long.

“Do you want to eat more food, meat perhaps? My mother told me pregnant women liked lots of meat,” I said, going down memory lane, thinking of our time in the woods hunting deer. Aliana laughed and shook her head.

“I will be happy if I keep anything down. Eating has been pretty h*ard lately,” She confessed, and I stroked her hair gently.

“What about Newton you wanted to share with me, Aliana?” I finally asked her, realising I had digressed.

She cleared her throat and adjusted her sitting position to face me.

“I do not get involved in pack matters, and I have learned to keep my opinions to myself, but after this pregnancy thing and knowing how it would affect your cause, I thought deeply of Doctor Newton’s tensions,” she said, and I was attentive.

“When you put me to work for your mother, remember he deliberately did not sedate her, so it will be impossible for me to do my work. Remember the terrible condition she was in before all this? It was as if he wanted her to die. As her physician, he should have known she was underweight and underfed and thought of ways to help her. I am not an expert, but there are certain things people in the medical field know.

The nurse that attended to me explained things that Doctor Newton deliberately missed. I used the word deliberately because Alison is a Nurse. She is just a Nurse, Nikolas; the doctor should have a vast knowledge of her. Why would Doctor Newton mislead me like that? We all know he is vast in the medical field, so an omission like this must have been deliberate. We both know what will happen should I get pregnant by you. You aren’t royalty yet, so it is a crime punishable by law. Why would Doctor Newton put you in such a precarious situation? Why would he expose you like that? It is as if he does not want you to get anywhere. With your mother dead, you won’t be able to prove you are King Mathia’s son. You can just be an average Joe posing to be the heir of the King hence why your mother’s survival was crucial, and now this,” She said I did not know how to tell her my legitimacy was questioned.

“Well, no one has to worry about my legitimacy anymore. Apparent my mother slept around casting a shadow on who my father really is,” I confessed to Aliana, and she was in shock.

“Her brother used that information against me. He humiliated her. I wished I didn’t bother going there, really, Aliana. It was a shame. It seemed she slept with many people,” I said, and she shook her head.

“But you are really Mathia’s son. My mother was your mother’s maid and Midwife. Had she been here, she would have testified to it. My father said, your pregnancy was planned. Your mother wanted to have a baby with your father badly so she would stop living in his dead mistress’s shadow. She wasn’t sleeping around during the time of your conception. She wanted to be sure she conceived for the King. Why will King Fredrick humiliate her like that?” She asked, and I frowned because she had said something very Valuable.

“You mean your mother was my mother’s midwife?” I asked, and she nodded.

“My father told me. They weren’t mated then, but my mother told him about it when he, too, doubted your legitimacy. She swore you were Mathia’s,” Aliana said.

Although it was great news, I could not use it because Amelia’s mother was dead.

“Had your mother been here, it would have helped me figure out what to do? I honestly doubted my legitimacy, too,” I confessed, letting her know that Fredrick had somehow gotten into my head.

While I thought of it all, I figured Fredrick could have known that Aliana’s mother was my mother’s Midwife. Could she have been killed deliberately because I had started conquering Forest when she went missing? He did say he always knew where we were and what we were doing. Could it be that he took her for this very purpose? I did not know, but I intend to find out.

It wouldn’t do much, but it was something that would lead to another.

“This thing you said about Doctor Newton is disturbing, Aliana. As much as I want to brush it off as a conspiracy, I can’t, especially knowing that Fredrick had spies in Forest. Doctor

Newton might have been one of his spies. He joined my pack six years ago when Adam went missing. Adam was my physician then, and thinking of everything, my mother was healthy around that time too,” I said, thinking aloud, and Aliana touched my hand.

“Whatever you decide, you have to be careful, Nikolas. If there is a shadow of doubt about Doctor Newton, then he has no business rendering medical services to people close to you. We will also have to keep this pregnancy secret. As much as I hate to say

it, I do not want our baby to be used as a tool against you,” She said, and I looked at her.

Her eyes were filled with concern. Aliana wasn't selfish; she genuinely cared about my well-being and wanted me to achieve my dream. I was indeed blessed.

“For now, we will be silent about it. I will feed Newton some false information that only he would know and see what happens. If he happens to be one of Fredrick's spies, he will be dealt with mercilessly.” I said, and she agreed with me.

“I think you should send him to another settlement to serve in their hospital anytime you have something important to do. If truly he is a spy, we will be saving ourselves from setbacks,” She added, and I agreed.

“Well, it is nighttime, and you have slept most of the day, Little Wolf. Would you be able to sleep tonight?” I asked her, and she smiled.

“I hope so,” She said, and I chuckled, knowing it would be a long night.

“I will meet with your father in the morning and send for the nurse that attended to you. We have to control this news in the best way possible. The fewer people know, the better for all of us,” I managed, and Aliana nodded, understanding my reasons.

“What would your mother do when she finds out?” She finally asked me, and there was a tinge of fear in her eyes. I figured my mother must have said some things to her, but I let it rest. I was sure Aliana would tell me if there was any need for concern.

“She is one of the people who should remain in the dark on this. And if she says or does anything to you, let me know. You are more important to me right now. That woman has hurt me in irreparable ways. I will also advise you to be careful around her. She is desperate for my forgiveness and approval and might try to use you to get it. I do not trust her yet. She has much to prove to me as my mother and pack member,” I warned, and Aliana nodded gradually.

“Please take it easy on her. Her hatred will dissipate eventually, but she is the only family you have left. Do not cast her aside,” Aliana said, and I frowned at her and pulled her close.

I Do not tell me that simply because you do not bear my mark. You and our baby are my family, and at this point, the two of you are all that matters to me,” I said and caressed her neck where my mark should be.

“One day, I will sink my teeth in, forever making you mine, and I will be unapologetic about it,” I said, and she giggled sweetly.

I bent to k*iss the spot and nibbled a bit. I felt her body come to life with a s*exy m*oan, and I was ready to start our love exercise. It might be a long night, but it won't be boring.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 66

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 66 A Picture And A Light (Nikolas POV)

Morning came, and I could see Aliana had a good night's sleep. Contrary to what I thought, she was fast asleep after our first round. I guessed it was the pregnancy making her so tired. I

watched her sleep peacefully and was thankful for her strength. I gently snuck out of bed to freshen up and plan my day.

As things were, every second counted.

I needed to get the crown before Aliana began to show, so I needed to get on it quickly. Being on a clock made me more focused because now the time of achievement was no longer indefinite, and there was no room for unfounded situations. I planned to discuss Doctor Newton with Qusack and tell him about Aliana's pregnancy before we headed to Gabriel's house.

Aliana had finally given up the name of the nurse that attended to her at the clinic. I needed to control the situation.

I showered in a hurry; Ania and Lisa were plating our food by the time I left the bathroom.

I noticed their demeanour change, and it made me chuckle a bit. The three of them were unlikely friends, and their loyalty towards each other was extreme.

Ania and Lisa had stuck out their necks for Aliana countless times. Especially when I was acting like a fool and battling with the mate pull. They continued doing so up till now.

Seeing Ania, I remembered the brand on her neck, and I planned to also deal with that matter and abolish it today. People should not be rejected and branded simply because they aren't full breeds. It was wrong what Grant did to her. I planned to fix it.

"Good morning, Alpha?" The women said, and I placed my index f*inger on my lips to indicate they should be quiet.

"Link me instead," I linked both of them, and they nodded.

“I am heading for a meeting now; remain with her and ensure she has everything she needs. Also, no one should get close enough to know she is pregnant, not even my mother,” I linked both of them, and Ania looked at me with surprise.

She did not think Aliana would have it in her to tell me.

I wondered what they were planning to do if she did not tell me. I did not have to think too long. I figured terminating the pregnancy seemed like the only option to them.

I gazed at Aliana where she lay and remembered the fear in her eyes. I really needed to watch my emotions around her. She was easily affected by it. I guess I sometimes forget she is a Werewolf. I wondered how she and Raven cope when I am annoyed.

I headed to the closet and dressed up.

Ania and Lisa remained in the room. They looked more relaxed, and I could see that Ania was a little bit happy. She must have been worried for Aliana and the baby.

Well, now she knows she has nothing to worry about. Her friend was safe.

I left the room and headed to my office. I planned to walk with Qusack while discussing the matter, then head to the Wolf clinic with him before seeing Doctor Newton. I had it all planned out. I hoped to finish before noon so I could see Gabriel. Hopefully, he would be forthcoming and have credible things to tell me.

“Are you in the office?” I linked Qusack.

“As always, Niko, good morning to you,” he said, and I walked down the stairs.

I feel light-spirited and happy. Indeed the news would have been great had it not been for the circumstances surrounding us.

I entered my office and was glad to see it was only Qusack there.

“Care to take a stroll with me? I plan to check on the werewolf hospital construction this morning, and then I will see Gabriel and get his side of the story.” I said, and Qusack raised an eyebrow.

“Wow, that serious?” he asked, and I nodded. “My mother told too many lies for me to rely on her account of the event. I would use Gabriel’s instead since some things he told Aliana checked out,” I said, and Qusack joined me outside my office.

“So you spoke to her?” Qusack asked on our way out of the building, and I nodded.

“We had a lengthy discussion last night. Some of which I will link to share with you because I need your help, and you are the only one I can trust not to betray me,” I said, and he was attentive. We walked out of the compound onto the road.

“Are we taking a Rickshaw, or are we walking?” he asked.

“Let us walk a bit, then take a Rickshaw. I am not in the mood for exercise today,” I said, remembering my ordeal the last time I walked home from the werewolf clinic. It wasn’t funny, and I did not plan on doing it again.

We walked a bit, and I decided to link him.

“Aliana is pregnant,” I said, and he stopped walking abruptly.

“What!” he exclaimed, and I widened my eyes to let him know he was to keep it down.

“What?” he linked me, and I nodded.

“That was why she was acting weird. She found out she was pregnant while we were away.

She was planning to terminate it. She was scared, Qusack.

You should have been there. She was terrified. Not because of me but because she felt it would jeopardise our mission,” I said, and he was silent.

“That isn’t all. Aliana thinks doctor Newton misguided her on how to use the birth control pills deliberately. She feels he is a traitor,” I linked him, and he frowned at me, unable to make sense of what I had told him and relate it to Aliana being pregnant.

I broke it down for him, as Aliana told me, and he agreed.

“If she puts it that way, it seems so, but we must be sure. There was a high possibility that he was genuinely clueless about female reproduction, and as for your mother, maybe he did not feel there was a need to waste resources on a feral wolf. You know, even Doctor Adam was difficult sometimes,” Qusack said, trying to be logical about it. It seemed coincidental if he put it that way, but I did not want to dismiss Aliana’s view. I needed to take her seriously because she would be my life mate. She was also brilliant.

“Still, Qusack, I want to test his loyalty,” I linked my attentive friend.

I told him what I planned to do. Qusack felt it was the best idea yet.

Feeding Newton false information and waiting to see what he would do with it. Confronting the doctor will have to come after the test, not before it but for now, I will limit his interaction with everyone close to me.

Qusack felt we should send him to Woodland to work for a month after we have fed him the misleading information.

Once the issue with Newton was out of the way. I figured we could talk about other things.

“So, hope you know we have to get the crown before the news about Aliana’s pregnancy spreads, or you will violate the Unity law, allowing Fredrick to attack should you refuse to submit yourself to the committee for a trial. We already know what would happen if a trial should ensue,” Qusack said, and I knew it was a problem.

There was no guarantee that we would achieve our goal before then. If I hid Aliana away, people would know something was off. I had to come up with a plan B first.

“Let’s take it a step at a time. I want to figure out Nurse Alison and ensure she does not speak of it to anyone. She needed to know the dangers of what would happen should it get to the wrong ears,” I said, and Qusack stopped me from walking.

“If that is why you are going to the clinic. Then do not bother. I will do it on your behalf. It is best this way,” He said, and I contemplated for a while, then agreed eventually.

“So, what is next on our list?” Qusack asked me playfully when we turned back.

“Abolish the branding tradition. Every person branded should be allowed the right to mingle. We should also find a way to eliminate traces of the brand from the back of their necks.” I said, and Qusack was in shock.

“Your heart is indeed increasing in size. Please tell me what made you think of this?” He asked me.

“Ania,” I said, and he was silent.

“Honestly, I fought Grant for what he did. It was completely unnecessary. So she was a mixed breed. I rejected her because I wasn’t in the mood for company, and she could not play chess. Ingham said she did not smell right. You know him; it has to be a Lycan or werewolf, nothing in between. Grant should have left her for the kitchen work. He completely ruined her life with what he did. I am glad you are ending that practice, Niko. The woman is too young for that kind of thing,” He said, and I was surprised he never supported the branding.

“Honestly, when I saw Fredrick’s slave with the mark at the back of his neck, I felt we were one and the same. I do not want to be anything like my uncle. Both he and my mother are mentally unstable. I am beginning to suspect madness runs in that family.” I said, and Qusack laughed. “They are just extreme people. I learned their father was worse,” Qusack said, and I was silent.

We headed back to the palace, and I went to get Aliana to join me to see her father. Qusack had already gone ahead of me. I dreaded my discussion with the man, and I hoped it would yield something substantial that I could use to my benefit. Had his wife been with him now, I would have used her testimony under compulsion to debunk what my uncle said about me. But she wasn't.

I wondered when Uncle Fred*ic*k would stop getting Lucky.

Aliana was dressed when I went to my room but did not look too good. Following my better judgement, I asked her to remain and instructed her friends to take care of her. Seeing Gabriel with Qusack had to do. I did not want to do anything that would put the baby at risk.

I took a deep breath when I stood by Gabriel's door. He made the small quarters look homely. I wondered how he got the time to plant flowers in the front. The glass on the windows was clean too.

Something about the house screamed contentment.

Gabriel was a man that was easily content. I could tell from how he ran Forest and how much gold he left.

Everything seemed to add up.

He must have kept the gold to keep his promise to my mother, waiting for her return.

He indeed kept his promise literally by not touching or changing anything.

Could it really be that my father was misled and fell on his sword because Gabriel did not seem like the type to betray his master?

I knocked on the door, and Qusack was the one who opened it to let me in.

I entered the small house. It was tiny and homey. The kitchen and living room were in a small space, and then there was a tiny hallway that led to the rooms and the back door.

Everything was visible from where I stood in the living room by the entrance. The house was practical.

Gabriel stood up with worry in his eyes and a thin breathing tube across his nostrils. I was glad I did not come with Aliana because he looked ill. I decided I would send for a werewolf doctor to attend to him and treat him instead. Since Aliana did not trust Newton and he had given me a reason to believe her theory, we could not expose Gabriel to him.

Gabriel offered me a seat. It was evident he knew what I came for. I sat on the couch, and he sat on the three-seater that was placed against the wall.

Besides the three-seater was a stool with a small picture frame of a blonde woman. She looked so familiar that I pointed to it, and Qusack reached for it to give it to me.

“That was my wife, Gwendolyn. Aliana’s mother,” Gabriel managed, breathing heavily and sounding hurt, but his words flew over my head while I stared at the image in the frame.

Aliana was a brunette with honey-coloured eyes. I guess she took after her father.

I would have never suspected this woman to be her mother; I wouldn’t have, but that wasn’t what drew me to her. I began to think about Fredrick and how deep his plot was because this was the same woman that served me dinner when I was in Snow.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 67

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 67 A Talk With A Haunted Man (Nikolas POV)

“Alpha, are you alright?” I heard Qusack’s voice, which snapped me out of my deep thoughts. I was staring at the Photo of Aliana’s mother, who was currently in Snow as Fredrick’s slave.

“Do you know this woman?” I asked, handing Qusack the Photo? He looked at it and shook his head.

I wanted to know if I was the only one she served. It seemed I was the only one.

Seeing Aliana’s father’s condition, I did not want to raise any alarms. I might not get anything from him if I told him what I saw. He might end up in the clinic.

I figured Fredrick must have forcefully claimed her, and that was the severance Gabriel felt that made him believe she was dead. Only a Lycan of his breed could achieve stealing a mate of a lesser breed.

It was easier for Gabriel to believe his mate was dead than to think she had been claimed forcefully by an Alpha Lycan. It wouldn’t have crossed his mind since Lycans believed

Werewolves were beneath them, but Gwendolyn was a beauty like her daughter.

It should have crossed his mind.

I couldn't control myself when I set eyes on Aliana, and it had nothing to do with our bond.

She might not look like her mother, but she was in a league of her own and did not have to make any effort to look the part.

I tried to compose myself while connecting the dots in my head.

If I was the only one she served, Fredrick wanted me to know he had Aliana's mother.

Unfortunately, I did not know her, and he figured it out when he came to see me in the room.

All the talk was just to know how much I knew.

Apparently, I was clueless, hence his satisfaction.

The woman had referred to me as royalty and told me she was from Forest, but how could I connect the dots?

Gwendolyn was also the only person that knew of my legitimacy.

I began to suspect that Fredrick had grabbed the woman and kept her alive on purpose.

He grabbed her around the time of my conquest.

He must have known I planned to take Forest and did not want me to get my crown. How else can I prove my legitimacy when everyone in Forest, when I was conceived, had died in battle? My mother's midwife was the witness and the only person that could vouch for me under compulsion. He knew what he was doing.

Gwendolyn was also Gabriel's wife, so he will know everything I am about to discover now, which means he will constantly be ahead of me.

"Are you alright, Niko?" Qusack linked me, and I adjusted myself. There was no point raising the alarm.

The Photo was back in its spot, and Gabriel looked at me strangely.

I did not need to guess why.

I had asked Qusack if he knew her. Clearly, he shouldn't, but I had asked him regardless.

The woman went missing around the period I was taking over settlements in Forest. I knew exactly what Gabriel was thinking.

"It is not what you think, Gabriel. My warriors have nothing to do with her death. I was just wondering because her face looks familiar. Also, Aliana looks nothing like her," I said quickly, and he relaxed.

"I never killed women and children in my quest.

Just warriors that challenged me," I added so he would know it wasn't my thing.

The living room was silent, and I couldn't help but ask him about his wife.

"I do not mean to stir up unwanted emotions, but can you tell me how you confirmed Gwendolyn's death? I want to know if it was when they attacked them or later?" I asked to know if Fredrick had come by himself.

Gabriel shook his head and looked at the picture. "Aliana claimed she wandered beyond the imaginary border. She was pretty shaken up. I sent men there to see if we would see them, but time had passed, and they had taken her. I knew Gwendolyn would be killed because she would rather die than be a slave, so when the severance came a day after they took her, I knew the bastards that took her had finally ended her life," He said with tears in his eyes.

"She was a wonderful woman. She helped your mother with your conception. You know. She monitored her heart and told her the time to be with the King. As mean as your mother was to werewolves, she was very kind to Gwendolyn.

Gwendolyn begged that we send her with Queen Isabelle, but Isabelle refused. She said her brother was an a*sshole and he won't be nice to werewolves. She would instead Gwen stays and have a life than follow her to be a slave in Snow," He said in tears, and I decided I needed to talk with my mother and then find a way to get Gwen away from Uncle Fredrick.

I could not help but notice Fredrick was possessive of her too. Getting her from Snow would take a lot of work, and we did not have the might to do it. I hoped my mother would tell me the truth for a change.

"I was just wondering that Aliana looks nothing like her?" I said to justify staring at the picture intensely because I knew Gabriel was no fool. He would know that I was hiding something. He relaxed completely after that and nodded.

"She takes after my mother. Aliana is a spitting image of my mother. Gwen used to tease her about it. Aliana wished she looked like her mother badly since most girls looked like that around here; she felt she would have been mated faster that way..." Gabriel said, but I growled before I could control myself. Bane had a way of embarrassing me at times, and he had just done it.

"Of course, it served her well," Qusack added to calm my wolf down, and I smiled.

“Please ignore my wolf. He can get possessive sometimes,” I said, and the man frowned. It was as if he was trying to figure me out. I knew it won’t be long before he would realise Aliana and I were fated. Still, I intend to be silent about it for as long as possible.

I relaxed on the couch, chasing my thought about Gwendolyn aside and getting straight to the reason I had come.

“Gabriel, I am sure you are wondering why I have come here, and I am sure Beta Qusack has already informed you.

I want to know your account of what happened in the past leading to my father’s death. I want to know how you killed him and all that happened after,” I said, and Gabriel nodded.

“I swear to tell you the truth as I have experienced your, Highness,” he said respectfully. I knew it wasn’t a formality for him; he genuinely respected me as royalty.

Gabriel told me some pretty intense things that seemed to add up. By the time he gave accounts of my father’s death, I saw a man that had lost a friend.

It was clear that both he and my father were deceived, but what I did not understand was why my father would be extreme to the point of defunding the werewolf military and sending them to their deaths, knowing that the strength of a kingdom relies heavily on the strength of their werewolf army.

Could someone have been actively working against him and reducing his military force by systematically killing off the werewolves to leave Forest open for an invasion?

Could Fredrick or Aleksander be behind his demise because only a King could invade another King’s kingdom? Or could it be an average dreamer who felt he could achieve much by conniving with those closest to him? There were a lot of questions.

“After speaking with my uncle, I know it is possible that Leon planned to kill the King, and it is possible that Giles had to sacrifice so my father could live. Fredrick did not trust Leon either and had nothing good to say about him,” I said and leaned forwards.

“Is there anyone you suspected on my father’s cabinet that could have intercepted the letters, drafted the letters, and made decisions on his behalf that could have caused the ill-treatment of the werewolves that led to their massacre, forcing you all to revolt? I mean, someone with the authority to reply, send letters on his behalf, and give commands without cross-checking with him?

If my father was grieved stricken because of Leon’s death, he must have delegated the work to someone else,” I said, and Gabriel shrugged. “I thought as much, but I am not in the position to point fingers as I wasn’t in your father’s government at that time. He had

new officers whom I did not know. Maybe your mother can shed light on that," Gabriel said, and I chuckled drily.

"She is a liar, so I cannot believe anything she says. You left out the part where she made passes at you," I reminded him, and he bowed his head feeling ashamed.

I believe he had left out that part to help her keep her dignity, something her brother was incapable of doing. The man was indeed modest. "I do not want to embarrass Queen Isabelle. She wasn't in a good place then. King Mathias wasn't mentally well and did not give her the love a woman needed, so she sought comfort elsewhere.

I confess that she pleaded with me to let her be my mistress since I had taken over Forest. She wanted to do it for your sake. She was pregnant with you then, and I knew she feared being alone.

But I could not betray my friend even in death.

I did not want to have many things to be guilty of neither did I want your future tainted because if I accepted, you would be automatically disqualified from claiming the throne. We would have had to go to war to get you the crown. That was why I rejected her offer. Had I known that Fredrick would be mean to his sister, I would have found other ways to protect her and ensure you both had good lives here.

You need to understand, your Highness; I never planned any of this. I did not want to rule a territory or become a king. I did not want Mathias to die. I just wanted him to let us go to Woodland and live there in peace, away from the trouble that plagued us in Forest.

We hoped he would oblige because Woodland was poor with no resources but Timber, which could be found in other parts. We just wanted to be left alone, but he had to attack and force us to defend ourselves. I am sorry, your Highness," he said in tears. The man was weeping.

"Because of this, my only child will have no honour. I beg you to do right by her. She does not deserve all this. The humiliation and shame are much even from her kind.

If you have to kill me, do it to balance the grudge but do right by Aliana." He said, and hearing him speak, I knew it was a pain that weighed heavily on his mind.

I remember the words I said to him when I ripped Aliana away from him. I had said she would never have honour or bear my mark. I wished I could take it back right now.

Sometimes, I wonder what I thought when I said those words, knowing we were fated.

I planned to reject the bond I believed she was incapable of feeling and make her suffer, but all my plans had backfired, and I found myself eating my words.

I did not say anything to him regarding Aliana; I just stood up from the chair.

“I will be changing your doctor, Gabriel. I do not want a quack handling your health; you are all Aliana has. It is important that you survive. You can get help from any werewolf doctor you trust. I will foot the bill.” I said, and he nodded. “Are you leaving, your highness?” He asked me, standing up while Qusack stood up, and I nodded.

“Then I must add something important. It is based on a private investigation I launched looking into the death of the Lycan found in the woods. The murder that Gamma Ingham humiliated my daughter for.

I have to protect my people, and seeing my daughter suffer for it did not sit well with me, so I started investigating it to vindicate us,” He said, and I was attentive.

I did not want to think of the painful things that Ingham did to Aliana that day, but I had to. It was indeed part of the event.

“Go ahead,” I said, sounding unaffected and uninterested.

I did not need him to know he had gotten to me. I wanted him to remain on his toes. I did not doubt his account of the past but did not trust his tensions yet.

We still had a long way to go in the trust department.

“A woman said she saw a brown-haired man shift into a black Lycan wolf and murder the man. It was as if the Lycan had caught him doing something he wasn’t supposed to do. He ran away after,” He said and pleaded with me to wait.

I watched him walk towards his room in the tiny hallway. He entered a room on the left and returned with something in his hand. He had wrapped something in a piece of paper.

“This was a piece of his shirt, your Highness. Because he didn’t remove his clothes to shift, they shredded in his transformation,” he said and handed it to me.

Still, his eyes looked like he had already figured it out but wanted me to figure it out alone.

“And whose shirt is it?” I asked him, wanting him to get straight to the point. I wasn’t one for suspense.

“I am not trying to point f*ingers or anything. There is a possibility I could be wrong. Do not take my word seriously, Alpha, but when the doctor attended to me yesterday, he had the same scent as the shirt.

I wrapped it in foil so the smell would not dissipate. Underneath the old stale smell, you will pick traces of Doctor Newton's scent," he said, and I opened the paper and saw a folded foil paper in it.

I did not let any expression show on my face. I just thanked Gabriel and left his house.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 68

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 68 Hope She Tells The Truth (Nikolas POV)

Qusack walked briskly behind me.

"Do you really think he is right?" He linked me as we walked.

He was referring to what Gabriel had told me about the doctor, and I did not know how to respond.

Everything was necessary now, and I did not plan to take chances.

If what Gabriel said was correct, then Aliana's hunches were right too, and I would have found one of the moles, but who was he working for?

Could he have been under Fredrick's employ all this while? I did not know, but acting immediately would make me make mistakes, so I planned to launch an investigation on Doctor Newton and have him fall into my trap.

"We will investigate the bastard. Right now, I need to see Mother urgently," I said, and

Qusack stopped me from walking so I could look at him.

He had a worried expression as if he was afraid about what I was about to do to my mother.

"You heard Gabriel, Niko. She was in a bad place. Please let it go. I am sure she is sorry by now.," Qusack said, trying to protect her from my rage, and it was understandable he would think I was mad at her because of her flings.

I wasn't mad at all.

I just need her to give me details about Aliana's mother. I needed to know if she knew the woman was there. If Fredrick made her serve her food.

I needed to know if she chose to be silent because Gwendolyn was Gabriel's wife and Aliana's mother.

My mother had proven that she was vindictive, so I wouldn't put something that low past her.

She might have kept quiet so the woman could suffer.

She might have felt betrayed that she married a man she fancied or maybe even married a man that rendered her and her son homeless.

With my mother, one could never know what to expect.

I shook my head so Qusack would know he was far from it. I really did not care about who she slept with or who she fancied. She had successfully messed up her life; that was her problem, not mine. Honestly, I was over it.

"That is far from it, Qusack," I said, pulling him aside.

"Mind link only," I linked him, and he nodded, realising it was something serious.

"Gabriel's wife is alive," I linked him, and he gasped. I nodded immediately.

"Fredrick made her serve me food in Snow. He has claimed her hence why Gabriel believes she is dead. He made her his mistress. She reeked of him so much.

I was shocked because I had met her in Snow and had no clue she was Aliana's mother.

I want to find out if my mother knew. If they were so close, and she knew, then it would be wicked of her not to tell," I linked Qusack, and he shook his head.

"We can't rescue Aliana's mother unless we want to go to war, Niko. I am sure your mother knows that and might have held on to the information to protect you from doing something irrational like sneaking the woman out when we were leaving.

If she is Fredrick's mistress, she is valuable to him. Taking her from him would leave an opening for him to attack us.

We do not have the might to push back. We just started drafting werewolves to join the army. We need months of training to be battle ready;

even with that, it will be a suicide mission.

We have to be smart about it. In the worst-case scenario, plan a trade and hope he will want it," Qusack linked, and I sighed.

I doubted Fredrick wanted anything from me other than slaves. I also know that Gabriel and Gwendolyn would not be happy that I agreed to sell their people to get her back. I would have to figure out what to do soon.

“I also agree it would be low if your mother knew she was there and remained silent when we returned. Hearing how Gabriel spoke of her relationship with Gwen will mean your mother is downright wicked and unredeemable,” He said.

As painful as it sounded, he was right.

“I will go into the archives with Abraham and see if we can trace the people that worked with your father thirty years ago and who were likely to have the power of that magnitude to be able to create a problem between your father and his werewolf subjects.

All I could see was a group of people loyal to a fault.

Giles literally sacrificed his life so your father could live.

Werewolves are indeed better than our kind, Nikolas. Their Loyalty is unquestionable no matter their situation; they remain faithful,” He said, and I nodded.

The same is true for Aliana.

She was willing to hurt herself to please me. She put me first every time. She was allowed to be selfish, but she put me first; I will never forget that.

We parted ways when we entered the building, and I headed to my mother’s room.

As I edged closer to the room, I prayed I was wrong.

I did not want her to be a monster.

Angry and bitter were okay, but downright evil would be wrong.

I prayed that she did not see Gwen and genuinely did not know that the woman that helped her and stayed with her was held captive in Snow, used as a bedmate by her psycho brother.

I hoped that she would at least have a heart.

I stood at the door for a bit, contemplating whether to knock now or come back later, but there was still so much to do, and I believed Piotr would arrive tonight.

I won’t be able to do much when he is here, so I need to move quickly.

I also had Doctor Newton to deal with. There was a lot of work lined up.

I managed to lift my hand and knock on the door. I knocked three times before someone finally answered. I was surprised to see Erica. She looked like she had woken up from sleep.

I wondered what she was doing in my mother's room and why she was always with my mother. I did not like the b*itch, and I was nervous about her intentions.

"Why are you always around my mother?" I asked her, and she looked worried and began to stammer.

"I always come to keep her company, Alpha. Today she refused to eat, and she has been crying a lot. I just managed to get her to sleep," She explained, and I wondered why the b*itch was suddenly being helpful.

When my mother was wasting away for lack of proper care, why didn't she offer her expertise then? I believe Erica had something dubious up her sleeves, or maybe my mother might have promised her something because Erica never applied herself unless she would be benefitting something from it.

I also did not forget that she tried many things to get into my bed, and I could not stand her sly behaviour.

I moved past her into the room and instructed her to leave.

I told her to move far from the door and ordered a Lycan kappa to stay close to ensure no one was eavesdropping.

While I barked orders, my mother woke up.

It was deliberate. I raised my voice deliberately to wake my mother. What I wanted to ask her could not wait. I needed to know what was going on.

"Niko," She said, almost smiling, and I sat on the two-seater facing her bed. She looked at me, a bit puzzled.

"What did I do this time?" She asked, reading my countenance, and I shook my head.

"You did nothing," I said, and she relaxed.

"Were you served food by the servants in Snow?" I asked her, and she shook her head.

"Fredrick made me join him with the other alphas," she said, and I realised she did not see Gwen. I tried to feel for lies, but there was nothing. It was evident that she was telling the truth.

“Did you meet his mistress?” I asked her, and she shook her head immediately.

“Some alphas spoke of her beauty, but Fredrick said she was reserved for his amusement alone. It was werewolf males that served the dinner. I could not get anything down because I was too ashamed to eat after everything the bastard said about me,” She said with tears streaming down her cheeks.

I could not be bothered about her situation. I got up to leave, and she got off the bed.

“Where are you going to?” she asked, and I shrugged.

“I am leaving. You really can’t help me since all you tell is lies,” I said, and she rushed to me and touched my arm to stop me from leaving.

“Try me, son. Tell me what you want, and I will tell you all I know,” She said, sounding desperate, and I was glad to have gotten her where I wanted.

“I want you to tell Qusack everyone on fathers cabinet before the uprising and their strengths. Also, I want to know which of them was my father’s right hand,” I said, and she shrugged. “That was Isaac Lucas, a retired Military officer from Hill. Aleksander sent him when your father claimed he did not trust anyone anymore. Your father trusted him with his life. He died in the battle. I am sure Gabriel murdered him,” she said, and I could not sense deception in her.

Either she had mastered lying to me or was telling the truth. She was too depressed to try to lie. I believed she was telling the truth.

“Why are you asking these questions, Niko? Anything the matter?” She asked, and as much as I would have loved to share my findings with her, I decided against it because she was myopic, and she wouldn’t see the truth even if it was glaring at her face.

“Not really; I wanted to investigate what happened back then. I was hoping I could find someone to prove my legitimacy,” I finally said to throw her off.

“That would have been my midwife, Gwendolyn. Her testimony under compulsion would have helped, but the fool married

Gabriel, birthed your mistress, and died. I heard she was captured as a slave and then killed,” She said, which confirmed she did not see Gwen in Snow. It made me relax a bit, and I nodded.

“Well, I guess with Gwen dead, we are at a dead end then,” I said, and she shook her head.

“I am thinking of how to fix this, son. I will find a way, I promise. I will prove that I am sorry and love you very much.” She said, and I nodded, not wanting to continue the conversation.

She had given me a valuable name to dig into and informed me where he came from, which meant I would have somewhere to look at.

Isaac must have had family in Hill, and something I could dig.

I needed to know why anyone would play my father against the werewolves.

If such people had not been dealt with, then there was no way they won't be a problem for me because their goal was to leave my father open for invasion.

Unfortunately, it backfired because it tightened the security in the Forest until I came along.

Could Aleksander be behind this since my father had already signed a slave trade deal with Fedrick? Or could the bill have been a lie to get the werewolves to act?

I needed to dig and find out. I decided to call it a day and go be with Aliana while I waited for Piotr's arrival.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 69

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 69 Between Us (Nikolas POV)

Aliana was asleep when I returned to my room.

It was a very eventful day and was still ongoing.

What her father had told me about Newton bothered me, but I needed to be careful. I was also contemplating telling her that I had seen her mother in Snow.

It would be a hard pill to swallow, and I did not know the effect it would have on her health.

How could I tell her that her mother is alive and she is in Snow as Fredrick's forced mistress? How could I tell her that I won't be able to rescue her mother without starting a war? I felt weak and incompetent in those moments.

I watched her sleeping peacefully. Judging by her outfit, she was dressed to follow me to her father's house, but I had changed my mind last minute.

She was sleeping peacefully, and she looked innocent and free in those moments. She also looked fragile, and I did not want to be the one to break her. I decided I would hold on to the information a little while longer until I figured out what to do because I could not live with myself if I allowed Gwendolyn to remain in Snow at the mercy of Fredrick.

I removed my clothes to unburden myself and decided to sleep a bit. I wanted to be well rested when Piotr arrived. I did not know if his intentions were friendship or to serve as his father's spy, but I plan to find out.

Now that I know that my father's right-hand man at the point of his death was from Hill, and he was recommended by Aleksander, I was wary of anything from that territory.

I lay in bed, and Aliana stirred and turned towards me. She moved close, still asleep, and placed an arm and leg on me, holding on to me tightly. She wriggled her nose a bit because of a strand of hair close to it and flashed a gentle smile that faded immediately as sleep claimed her facial muscles again.

I held her, brushed the strand aside without touching her skin and stared at the ceiling, thinking of all that needed to be done.

Sleep finally came, and I let it engulf me.

I hadn't had a nightmare in a while, but I finally did.

I was surrounded in the woods by brown Lycans, and I could not shift.

I woke up panting, and to my surprise, Aliana was beside me, wide awake, sitting on the bed.

She looked at me with concern, and I tried to calm down.

The dream signified a deep feeling of helplessness. I felt surrounded by enemies and did not know who to trust.

It must be my subconscious interpreting my predicament and limits.

I adjusted myself by sitting, and Aliana smiled at me.

It was clear she had been up for a while because she looked well-rested, and all traces of sleep were gone from her face.

"Bad dream?" She asked gently, and without warning, I pulled her into my arms and crashed my lips on hers. I needed to quiet the noise and calm down. The sudden stress had gotten to me, creating unrest in my subconscious. I needed her to help me calm down.

She returned the K*iss, and I felt my heartbeat steady. Soon we broke the K*iss, and she stared into my eyes, searching for an explanation.

“I guess I need a break,” I teased her, and she smiled at me.

“I wish you could just take one, too,” She said, and I smiled at her. I understood her words.

It had been crazy for a bit now. I haven't even been able to attend the evening garden parties. I haven't been able to do much. My team and I were working round the clock. I was mad at my uncle for putting me in a condition where I had to work hard. It was just unfair.

“Were you able to speak to my father?” She finally asked, and I nodded.

I thought she would ask more questions, but she didn't.

I did not need anyone to tell me that Aliana was guarded around me, especially concerning her father and her people.

I could see she was walking on eggshells, and I wished I could help her relax a bit more.

“I believed him,” I confessed, and her eyes softened.

The worry in her eyes changed to hope. I k*issed her hand, and she wrapped her arms around me in a tight hug.

“You do not know how I have hoped you will listen to his version, Nikolas. I am thrilled right now. At least you have more information to work with,” she said, and from her reaction. I could tell it was something she had bottled up for a while.

She broke the hug and looked at me, and I decided to ask her something important.

“Based on your father's account of events, what do you think was the cause of confusion at the time of my father's death?” I asked her, and she looked worried. I held her chin and looked into her eyes.

“You should never be afraid of telling me what you think and how you feel, Aliana. If you do not tell me the truth, who will?”

You should never be afraid of me, Little wolf. I will never hurt you.

I want to hear your opinions. You will see things from a different angle. You will see what I might overlook. I want you to always share your thoughts and opinions with me, no matter the situation.

Know that I will listen. I will never judge or hate you for it," I said and sighed.

"I love you too much to be mad at you, Aliana," I said, tears streaming down her cheeks as she sighed with relief.

She hugged me and rested her head on my chest. "I love you too, Nikolas, but sometimes you are scary. You get angry, and the pressure becomes so much. It takes a lot for me not to cower sometimes. I do not know what would set you off.

I have to be afraid and worried.

I have nowhere to go from here and do not want to lose you.

I did not want us to return to the past when you avoided me completely. I like being around you, seeing you smile and crack jokes. I love seeing you at peace and being a certain way you aren't with others.

I do not want to lose that, so I will watch my words and behaviour around you, Nikolas," She said and exhaled. She wiped away her tears to compose herself better and continued to speak. "I also hear what people say and do not want it to seem like I am controlling you. You fought hard to gain your respect. It has nothing to do with your bloodline. You have come this far alone; I do not want you to lose your respect. I do not want you to lose face in the eyes of your kind. That is why I do not speak of my father, my people or my thoughts because I know you might react, and what you feel for me would be obvious to your kind. So yes, Nikolas, I am afraid. I am afraid I might cost you your crown, and I am afraid of losing you," She confessed, and I held on to her tightly.

Her words had pierced my heart. Hearing the amount of fear in her heart broke me. I was mad at myself every time I growled and frowned when she tried to speak up. I promised to watch my temper and do more to ensure she was comfortable around me.

"I am sorry you feel that way, Little wolf. I will make more effort, I promise," I said.

"So, do you mind telling me what you think might have caused the miscommunication between our fathers based on your father's account of events?" I asked her, and she broke the hug and dried her tears. Her pregnancy had made her emotional, and it was pretty cute too. Her tears did not fool me. She was still tough underneath it all.

"To be honest with you, I think they were both played.

I believe there were people in your father's government that wanted to create a problem between him and the werewolves to force him to agree to the slave trade proposal, and those that would benefit from it were very much involved.

The Kings and Lycan officials on his cabinets were the most likely culprits.

They stood to gain more.

The kings stood to gain more slaves in their territory to help with the work and also crash the prices of slaves, making it more affordable, leading to cheap labour for their projects.

While the Lycans on your father's cabinet stood to earn money from it as the sale of slaves is more valuable than gold.

I also think some of them envied the closeness between our fathers and sought to completely destroy their relationship because whether we liked it or not, your father was lenient by not enslaving them after all that had happened. Somehow I believed your father valued his friendship with mine, and his Lycan officers knew and sought to ruin that too.

If we also have to narrow it down by saying it wasn't everyone on his cabinet that was bad; it had to be someone that sought to control your father and be his sole adviser.

With my father still in the picture, your father might still have forgiven the werewolves and continue to seek counsel from my father. The reasons for manipulating and deceiving the King leading to an unwanted and unplanned battle, are endless, Nikolas.

The best way they could do it was to create hatred between the werewolves and the King, ending their loyalty to your father," She said, and it made a lot of sense; it was also my thought but a bit different.

"I believe this because my father said he sent the King multiple letters demanding that he let them leave, and none were answered. When the answer finally came, it was provocative," She added, and as she spoke, I knew it would be important to look into the right-hand man.

"I plan to investigate his right-hand man. He died with him in battle, but he wasn't from Forest; he was from Hill.

I do not know why my father would decide to reach out to King Aleksander to get him a right-hand man. I felt it was stupid and very unlike my father, at least in the stories I have heard of him.

Why would he make himself vulnerable by asking another King to get him a right-hand man? It doesn't add up, but I plan to get to the bottom of it," I said, and she sat beside me on the bed.

"By the way, I forgot. You were right about Doctor Newton," I said, and she widened her eyes with surprise. Seeing her expression, I could tell she hoped to be wrong about the doctor. Honestly, I hoped she was wrong, too, because it meant we had gambled with our lives.

Newton was my personal Physician. He would have harmed me if whoever he worked for wanted him to harm me. I also thank the

Goddess that I never fell sick, so there was no avenue for him to harm me.

I do not know what to do when I catch the bastard, but I know it will not be good. I plan to do a number on him when he is caught red-handed.

“Remember the murder Igham tried to blame on the werewolves?” I asked, and it was a rhetorical question because I knew she would never forget about that incident. It had broken the barriers between us but also brought immense pain for her.

“Well, your father launched an investigation, and a woman saw when a Lycan killed the man found in the woods.

Unfortunately for the Lycan, he did not remove his clothes to shift, so they were shredded into bits during his transformation. The lady had the wisdom to pick and store pieces of the fabric. She gave the fabric to your father, and your father said Doctor Newton’s scent was the same as that on the fabric,” I said, and she gasped, surprised by what I had just said.

“I know how you are feeling; I wonder why he had to kill the Lycan. I wondered what the poor man saw and who Newton was working for, but I plan to investigate him,” I said, pulling her close.

“Enough about the serious stuff, little wolf; Prince Piotr from Hill is coming tonight. He plans to spend two weeks with us. He said he is coming with his werewolf maid because she knows how to serve him. He does not want to trouble my workers,” I said. Aliana laughed because she was thinking along the same line as me.

“As my Mistress, I would like you to join me to welcome him. It isn’t a secret that I have a werewolf mistress, and I am not King yet, so I might as well flaunt you,” I said, and she giggled.

“I think she is his mistress, too,” Aliana said, and I nodded.

“You needed to see him in Hill; he loved everything that had to do with werewolves, and he kept creating reasons for it as if he was guilty about something,” I said, and we laughed.

Aliana and I remained in bed while I linked Ania and Lisa to bring our food. I was famished, and I knew Aliana would be too. It was time to start getting food in.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 70

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 70 Welcome Piotr (Nikolas POV)

Piotr arrived at six in the evening. I was told of his arrival and left the room to receive him in the foyer. Getting down the stairs, I saw him with a pretty red-head. She was very attractive, and I believed my theory about her, but I maintained a stern expression. Piotr's eyes lit up when he saw me, and I could see true joy in his eyes. Seeing him now, I felt terrible that I believed his father had sent him to spy on me. The man genuinely liked me.

I reached them and extended a handshake.

"You are welcome, your highness," I said, and he shook my hand.

"Thank you for having me, your majesty," he said, and I laughed. Piotr had referred to me as a king from the moment we met.

"Fredrick denied me the crown, so I am just an alpha for now," I corrected him, but he shook his head, disagreeing.

"Fredrick's opinion about you is divided. It won't take much to sway some of Fredrick's people to your side. I know you will be King. It is in your aura," He said, and I raised my eyebrows, indicating I knew he was patronizing me. Still, he shook his head, laughing and swearing he was telling the truth. I wondered if reading auras was his specialty. I tried not to amuse myself any further and killed the thought.

"I am happy to have you in Forest. I hope your stay will be pleasant," I said, and he pulled the red-haired woman close. She went on her knees immediately. It had been a while since I had seen a slave act this way.

"Rise," I said, not knowing her name, and she reluctantly got on her feet. I did not miss that she did not want to kneel but had no choice.

"Her name is Natasha; isn't she a beauty?" Piotr asked me, and I nodded. Then he looked behind me as if searching for something.

"Where is your werewolf mistress?" He asked enthusiastically.

"I learned she is the daughter of the man that murdered your father. You are indeed a hard man," he said, and I cleared my throat uncomfortably.

"Well, you should freshen up, and we can have dinner together. The servants will show Natasha to her room," I said, looking for his trouble, and he shook his head.

"No need; she sleeps in my room. She serves me better when close by. I do not want to wake up and look for her," he said, trying to justify the need to have Natasha sleep in his room, and I chuckled a bit.

Nothing he said made sense, but I allowed it. I understood his predicament, and I knew she would give him hell for making her kneel like that and talking about her as if she was nothing. I really did not want to be in his shoes right now. The look in Natasha's eyes had said it all. "As you wish," I said, and he nodded.

Gezel came towards us and led them up the stairs to their room.

I linked Aliana to get ready for dinner. I did not want to invite my mother so she would not make it awkward. She had a natural hatred for werewolves, and I had forced her to somehow put up with Aliana; I did not want her to have more to talk about, and I wanted to keep Piotr's business his business and no one else's.

While Gezel led them away, I decided to go to my office and sit for a while.

Entering the office, I linked Qusack to join me, and he was more than happy to oblige.

Qusack knocked and did not wait for me to tell him to enter when he stepped in. He looked tired, and I felt like a lazy bum because while he was busy trying to solve my problems, I was sleeping in bed.

It was shameful, but I needed the rest because it gave me some clarity.

"How has your day been?" I asked Qusack, and he sighed and sat across from me.

"Hectic," he replied and relaxed, resting his back against the chair's backrest.

"I went to the werewolf clinic to see Nurse Alison," he said, and I leaned forward, listening attentively.

"She was afraid when I requested to see her. She refused to give up Aliana. She denied attending to her and claimed she did not know what I was talking about until I proved to her that Aliana had indeed given her name and you planned to keep the baby.

My words relieved her, and she promised not to tell anyone about the baby. She even offered to work as Aliana's private nurse to be her midwife and help her through her pregnancy. I did not oblige. I told her I would have to discuss it with you and then get back to her." He said, and I knew that was all the update I would get on Aliana's matter.

I felt it was kind of the woman to volunteer, and knowing what I now know about Newton, I decided to approve her request. As things were, Aliana and our baby would be safer in the hands of werewolves than Lycans.

"Get back to her tomorrow and approve her service in the palace. I want Aliana protected and cared for. Regardless of what is going on, I want my child to be well, and I want her to carry the baby to term," I told Qusack, and he nodded, understanding what it meant to me.

“Now that is out of the way, I want to tell you that Abraham was able to trace Isaac Lukas’ family archives.

According to the documents, Lucas came from Hill, just as your mother had told us, but that wasn’t all.

We found some archives hidden in the abandoned library with a lot of correspondence in them.

There were plenty of letters dating from your grandfather’s time.

I wondered why Isaac’s files would be kept close to the hidden archives.

Knowing this is a secret investigation, Abraham and I must review those documents alone.

It will take a while.

It will amaze you that I found some letters signed by Gabriel and one written by him, demanding that your father let them settle in Woodland. Seeing that letter, I believe what he told us, but we are still sorting through the archives to get more pieces of the puzzle and have a better picture of the events that transpired in the past.

We might find out something valuable when we read it all.

Lucas’ file has the address of his family; his residence in Medow in Hill.

We can go there and ask questions if need be,” He said, and I was stunned by all he had said.

I was yet to compose myself and organise my thoughts when Qusack leaned forward to ask me a personal question.

“Niko, can you tell me why this is important?” he asked me, and I snapped out of my shock to answer him. It did seem irrelevant because my father and Lucas were dead.

“I know it seems unnecessary, but I believe if there was an outside factor that contributed to what happened in Forest, then the people or person would still be alive. They might create another problem for me. I want to believe that everything died the night of the fight, but a tiny part of me believes there is more to the story and that Gabriel’s part is only a piece of the puzzle but not the full picture.” I said, and Qusack nodded, understanding my reasons and dropping the matter.

“Lastly, I had a word with Newton,” he said, and I was attentive.

“I told him we want him to run the infirmary in Timber because we plan to start training warriors, and he requested to send someone else. He said he is your personal Physician and would like to remain that way,” Qusack said.

What I suspected aside, it was normal for him to want to remain and serve me. It made him powerful.

I had already changed my mind about sending him away. I plan to set traps for him in Riverhead so I can catch him.

“We will set a trap for him here,” I said, and Qusack agreed.

Qusack was silent for a bit, and I decided to invite him to have dinner with me and Piotr. I implored him to bring a date. He tried to refuse, but I left him no choice. I even told him he could bring a werewolf. I did not know if he would oblige, but it would be nice to see him with someone.

Qusack was a solo person; it was time he started making an effort in the love department.

“Piotr bringing a date?” He said, referring to the werewolf ‘maid’. We laughed at the joke.

“He said she is his maid and the only one that knows how to attend to his needs,” I said, and we laughed. It is evident that she was his mistress. He reeked of her, and she reeked of him too.

Even Qusack pointed it out, and that made me laugh.

I wondered what Piotr would do when I finally confronted him on the matter. I just hope he trusts me enough to be confident around me.

Qusack and I discussed other things. Abraham had compiled a final list of the things we intended to trade and those we intended to trade with.

Qusack showed me the list, and I liked it, but I planned to make some changes.

“Tell Abraham we will only be trading with Alphas that supported me in the committee and King Aleksander,” I said, and Qusack laughed.

He knew exactly what I was doing.

I planned to make those alphas suffer the consequences of their actions.

I was happy that a gate was being built to stop the unauthorized entrance of people into Forest.

With Snow unable to come here and steal, they will feel the impact of being excluded from the trade.

Fredrick had humiliated me; I planned to cripple the economy of Snow drastically by ensuring they get raw resources from third parties only at third party prices.

After our discussion, I decided it was time to head back to my room and dress for dinner.