

# Forged In The Flames Chapter 71

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

## Chapter 71 Dinner (Nikolas POV)

I returned to the room to meet with Aliana and prepare for dinner with Piotr. To my surprise, she was already dressed, and she looked amazing. She let her hair fall beautifully. I believe Ania must have helped her straighten her curls.

Her hair looked silky and fell gracefully.

She wore soft pink lipstick that made me want to kiss her lips. Her make-up was subtle, almost non-existent. She looked innocent and sexy at the same time.

To finish the look, she had a short floral dress that hugged her and showed some cleavage.

She looked like a Luna and stood gracefully in her transparent heel sandals. Her legs looked sexy in them.

I smiled when I saw her, and she smiled at me, almost blushing. I did not know why Aliana was shy around me sometimes, but it showed I had an effect on her, and I liked it.

"I guess you have raised the bar, Little wolf. I have to look good," I said, sounding like I was under pressure, and she giggled.

"You look perfect with or without your clothes," She teased me and arched my eyebrow.

"I will take you up on that tonight, little wolf," I said, and her eyes widened with surprise while she giggled.

I went to the closet, wore simple blue jeans and a white Henley shirt to compliment Aliana's look, and stepped out.

She was sitting on the couch waiting for me and blushed when she saw me.

"Too sexy for you?" I asked her, and she shook her head, but her eyes had given it away.

"Come on," I said, reaching for her with my hand, and she took it.

We left the room and headed to the dining room.

Unfortunately for us, we bumped into my mother.

Erica wasn't with her this time. I guess she took my questions as a warning, or she might have gone on an errand for my mother.

Aliana bowed her head to greet my mother with respect.

'Good evening Luna,' she said, and I could see the hatred in my mother's eyes even though she tried to mask it with a plastic smile.

"Good evening," she replied with difficulty and looked at me.

"I learned Prince Zielinska is around," she asked, and I composed myself, waiting for what she would say.

"Do you think it is wise walking about with Aliana, knowing what the committee had set as a condition for your crown?" She asked, and I knew it was more to Aliana's benefit than mine.

She wanted Aliana to realise she was hurting my chances of being King by remaining at my side. My mother was sly.

I felt Aliana tense.

I had not discussed the outcome of the meeting with the committee with her, so this would definitely affect her.

"I am an Alpha and not a king. Thanks to you, my legitimacy is in question. Now if you will excuse me," I said, ready to walk away, and she grabbed Aliana's wrist.

I could see it was on impulse. She held on tight and did not want to let go.

"I hope you can live with yourself when you cost him his crown. Ready to finish what your father started and destroy the Kowalski bloodline," She said, and I yanked Aliana's hands away from her.

A mark on her wrist showed how tightly my mother had held on. 2

"Do not deceive yourself, mother. You single-handedly made sure of it by sleeping around. Do not be mad at Aliana simply because Gabriel said no," I said, and I could swear some guards chuckled a bit.

"How dare you Niko? I am still your mother?" She said, and I was the least affected by her words.

“As long as you continue to behave this way, you won’t have it easy with me. Now excuse us, “ I said, ready to move.

“I am the one that should join you to entertain the prince,” She called out while I walked away with Aliana beside me, and I stopped in my tracks.

“He is too young for you, Mother,” I said, teasing her, and I heard her curse under her breath. 3

Her reaction made me chuckle a bit, and I looked at Aliana, who was sad and distant.

My mother’s words had gotten to her.

I stopped walking abruptly and turned towards her. I pulled her closer, lifted her chin and k\*issed her. This was my home, and I could do whatever I liked.

I could worry about the consequences later. Aliana was mine, and everyone needed to know that.

“Do not let her words get to you, little wolf. I want us to have fun tonight.” I linked her.

I broke the k\*iss, and she looked like I had taken her breath away. I smiled at her, and she looked away.

Smiling had become a frequent activity of mine, and it was all thanks to Aliana. My mother was crazy to think I would give her up.

“Shall we?” I asked, and she nodded, looping her arms in mine. Unlike Piotr, I wasn’t ashamed of my choice.

We walked into the dining room, and Piotr stood up with Natasha, who had her hair in a ponytail and was wearing a short red dress and red lipstick. She looked really nice.

“I hope you do not mind,” Piotr told me, but his eyes were on Aliana.

“Good evening, your highness,” Aliana bowed, and he was speechless.

I tugged at her hand to sit beside me, and she obliged.

Piotr sat with Natasha beside him. A maid came to serve the wine. Knowing that Ania and Lisa would be serving us, I relaxed.

I raised my glass, forgetting that Aliana should not be drinking. I saw her request for Juice instead, and the servant reluctantly served the Juice. It was because she felt Aliana was beneath her. I was a bit mad, but Aliana linked me to calm down.

"I had a headache this afternoon; alcohol will mess me up," she said quickly and raised her glass of Juice. I rubbed gently rubbed her thigh, realising my blunder.

I gave a welcome toast, and we drank.

"I like the atmosphere here, Nikolas, and I am glad you agreed to accommodate Natasha," he said, and I shook my head and leaned forward to look at him.

"Let's cut the bullshit, Piotr," I said, and he looked stunned and then offended.

"Look around you. This isn't Hill or Snow. This is Forest. As you can see, my mistress is a werewolf, and I dote on her. I won't have her kneel or treat her like a slave just to keep up appearances.

You might try to hide it, but it is obvious Natasha isn't your maid. I do not care who you chose to date, and no one would hear it from me, but please, if you want this friendship to work, you have to be honest with me and not pretend," I spelt it out, and he was stunned.

"How did you know?" he asked, feeling embarrassed.

"Do you want me to go there? The fact that you two reek of each other and want her sleeping in your room makes it obvious.

By the way, your excuse for bringing her with you was lame. I had known you had a thing for werewolves from my visit to Hill. You spoke highly of their businesses. I also know the ill- treatment of werewolves in Hill is for show," I said and sighed.

"I do not have anything against you. I am glad you understand that there is no divide between us. It is just some greedy, power-hungry domineering people like Fredrick and the committee that are trying to create that divide and exploit the werewolves," I said and raised Aliana's hand to my lips.

"Aliana and I shouldn't care for each other because there is bad blood from the past, but here we are," I said and sighed, then looked at him.

"I know it isn't easy keeping your relationship. Know you can be together and do as you like in Forest. As for Fredrick's spies, I am working on it," I said, and Natasha began to cry.

She picked up a napkin and wiped away her tears. Piotr pulled her close and k\*issed the top of her head.

"We have been together for seven years," He finally confessed, and I was completely shocked. "She is my fated. It is unheard of, but Lycans can be fated to werewolves like

your father was to his mistress. It is just that they do not feel it like we do,” He said, and I heard a crack in his voice.

“We have hidden all these years, meeting in private away from everyone. You do not know how many times we had come close to being caught and what I had to do to save both our skins,” he said with a haunted look.

“Thankyou for making this place a safe haven for us. Know that I will do everything possible to ensure you get the crown, Nikolas. With you as King of Forest, abolishing the wicked unity law will be easy. It will be two of us against Fredrick,” he said with determination.

I wondered what he had to do to save both their lives. There was no point asking because I knew they were terrible.

“Does your mother know?” He asked me curiously, and I nodded.

“It doesn’t matter, really. I conquered Forest. It is my territory; Kowalski or not, I own the place. I can do whatever I damn, please.

As for Fredirck’s spies, I will fish them out,” I said, and he chuckled.

“You’re a Kowalski; forget your uncle; My father told me you have your father’s eyes.

Fredrick just wants to get his hands on Forest by all means. Gabriel had made it hard for him, and now he sees this as an opportunity; all he has to do is discredit you. The guy is s\*cum.

As for the spies, it will be great if you catch the ones from Hill, too. They are one and the same.

I wouldn’t put it past my father’s people to answer to Fredrick. My father has been subservient to the Snow King for so long that Fredrick has become his King, and Hill citizens have it at the back of their minds that they answer to Fredrick above their King. I plan to change that when I become King,” he said with conviction, and I was glad that I had allowed him to come.

“So, how is your sister?” I asked, hoping I would hear something about Miles.

“Stubborn and still seeing the half-breed, Miles Gordon. Everyone thinks he will succeed

Fredrick. I do not like the guy. He is too serious, and he shares his uncles’ views even though he is a halfbreed and his uncle’s views are against his liberty,” Piotr laughed.

I wondered how Miles had been able to function over the years.

“You two look a bit alike, though. The resemblance isn’t striking, but your eyes are a bit similar. I do not like the guy, and now he has made it his duty to visit Hill often because of Lena. Our parents do not want the union, but they are afraid to speak up because they do not want anything to lead to war. You see, Miles leads most of the battles for Fredrick, so pissing him off is as good as incurring the wrath of Fredrick,” He said, and that was a valuable piece of information I was grateful for.

We talked about trivial matters while we waited for Qusack and the meal. I knew Qusack’s tardiness had much to do with the fact that I had insisted he brings someone.

It was sad that, indeed, he wasn’t seeing anyone.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 72**

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### **Chapter 72 Correspondence (Nikolas POV)**

Qusack finally arrived with a dark-haired Lycan called Shirley. She was pretty, but she could not compete with Aliana or Natasha.

She dressed provocatively in skimpy sheer clothing that left little to the imagination.

I guess Qusack had told her who she would be dining with, and she planned to score. I could see her disappointment when she saw Natasha and Aliana.

Everyone in Forest knew they could not compete with Aliana, where I was concerned, so I figured she had come dressed that way to hold on to Qusack or catch the prince’s attention.

Shirley sat down after greeting us, and Qusack sat with her.

He had an apologetic look showing he was sorry for bringing her along, but it wasn’t his fault. I was the one that insisted that he brings a date.

He had found a way to oblige, so I couldn’t complain.

I noticed Shierly was looking at Aliana and Natasha as if they were beneath her, so I put her in her place so she does not ruin our evening.

“Watch yourself at this table. You are simply here because Beta Qusack invited you. Suppose you condescendingly look at Aliana or Natasha. In that case, you will be punished,” I linked her, not wanting anyone to hear or know what I had told her. Because I did not want our evening to be awkward. I saw her tense up and lower her gaze just as she should.

Ania and Lisa brought in the food ready to serve. They dressed nicely, and Aliana smiled at Ania. Seeing they had all straightened their hair, I believe they did their hair and make-up together. The clothes they wore were good-looking. The dresses were mid-length, and they looked nice and elegant. They did not look like servants at all.

“The two of you are serving tonight?” Qusack asked Ania, and she smiled and nodded.

“Yes, Beta,” she said, then moved to serve me the appetiser while Lisa served the prince and Natasha the appetiser. After serving Aliana and me, Ania served Qusack and Shirley.

Shirley wasn't nice to Ania, but Ania managed her complaints gracefully. I wondered why Grant sent her for branding. One day I will find out.

“This isn't a five-star restaurant, Shirley, and you are a guest here,” I warned the girl.

I could see Qusack's unease.

I wondered why he would bring a Lycan. There were always arrogant and bitchy. I do not believe it is in their nature, but the Unity law gives them the right to be blotchy towards lesser breeds.

I believe it is because werewolves and mixed breeds are more attractive because of their fragile feminine features.

Lycan women are attractive too, but they have a strong masculine element that detracts from the gentle feminine look. That was why most people found werewolves and mixed breeds more attractive.

Qusack cautioned her and then apologised.

Shirley did not give us any trouble after that and behaved herself.

We talked about many things, but the women remained silent.

I could tell that Aliana and Natasha would have socialised without Shirley.

Neither women were comfortable being friends with a Lycan.

Understanding the friction in the dining room. I told Qusack that he could excuse himself after dessert or send Shirley home, then return to join us. He was more than happy to oblige, i

Ania and Lisa served a dark chocolate cake that was delicious.

Qusack and Piotr loved it so much that they asked for a second helping.

“Who made this cake? I want to know so the person can make it for me at least once a week,” Qusack said. The cake was that good. I wondered why we never ate dessert like this at the dining. “I did, Beta,” Ania said, beaming at him, and I was impressed. We all were. It was obvious she was happy we liked it.

“How?” Qusack asked, amused, still munching the cake.

Piotr wasn't speaking much. He was stuffing his face with the cake. He was on his third helping, and I knew there would be no leftovers to take to our room, so Aliana could have something should she need food in the middle of the night. “My mother was a baker,” Ania said, and that explained it.

“Well, she was a very gifted baker,” Piotr finally spoke, and we all agreed.

“Ania, you handle dessert henceforth. Make sure you get all the help you need. I do not want you doing it alone. If they give you trouble in the kitchen, report to Qusack. He will handle it. I said and looked at the cake.

“It would be nice to have some sweetness in our lives amidst the chaos of bitterness, envy and vengeance,” I said, and Piotr agreed.

“I know my stay in the Forest will be fun,” Piotr said happily.

There was no need for Qusack to send Shirley away and return because, after dessert, we were all tired, most especially Piotr, who travelled the road the better part of the day. We decided tomorrow would be another day to catch up.

Aliana and I retired to our bedroom after dinner, and we were too tired and full to do anything. We simply stripped, and I cuddled her to sleep.

I woke up at seven the following day and prepared for my daily activity. We had set a lot of things in motion. I could not afford to slow down. I linked Ania and Lisa to split themselves; One should serve the prince while the other should serve Aliana in the room. I planned to eat breakfast in the office while dealing with files and documents.

Just as I thought, piles of letters were waiting for me when I got to the office. Fortunately for me, Qusack had read most of them.

“What are they,” I said, skipping pleasantries and going to sit at my table, and Qusack sat up.

“They are trade requests from Alphas in Hill and Alphas in Snow,” he said, and I sighed, a bit tired of this whole trade matter.



“Well, it means we should speed up our letters of agreement and send them to those we desire to trade with,” I said, uninterested and unwilling to read the letter’s content. The worried look in Abraham and Qusack’s eyes spoke volumes.

“What is the matter?” I asked them, and Qusack sighed.

“They all want to buy slaves from you,” he said, and I was stunned.

“Majority of them are your supporters on the committee. They want you to make an exception and sell some slaves to them even though you said they are scarce in Forest.

Some claim they need slaves to work in factories for their businesses and help their production output,” Qusack said, and I could understand the problem.

If I refuse, I might lose their support next meeting. If I agreed, I would be betraying the werewolves in Forest.

Knowing what I know now, I did not think it was a wise thing to do. The werewolves had suffered enough.

Can’t these people just employ Lycans to do the job? Why must they buy slaves?

I did not need anyone to answer the question for me. I already knew their reasons.

Slaves had no rights. They could be overworked without consequences, which was free labour in the long run. It is any business owner’s dream to have free labour as their workforce.

I did not feel like dealing with the matter immediately.

It wasn’t something to be quick about, so I pushed the papers aside, cleared my desk and faced Qusack and Abraham.

“How is the letter sorting going?” I asked, and Qusack looked at Abraham, who held two old letters.

“We are still working on them, Alpha,” he said, his hands shaking. It was clear I wouldn’t like whatever was in the letters.

“Based on what I have read so far, whoever was keeping those letters was busy compiling evidence against certain people,” Abraham said, and I was attentive.

“Do you want to read it first, or do you want me to tell you what is in it and then read it

afterwards? Either way, Alpha, you have to read these letters,” He said, raising the letters in the air. I could see his hands shaking.

"I implore you to react wisely and not draw conclusions from them. Qusack and I are still investigating the situation, and we are hopeful that we might find something that would make all this a mistake," he said, and I was curious. "Tell me, Abraham. I will read it after," I said. "One is a correspondence between Leon

Kowalski and your mother before she married your father. It is a carbon copy of the original he sent to her.

The other is a letter between Fredrick and your mother while married to your father after Leon's death," He said, and my heart began to beat fast. Fredrick had made some statements the night he had come to see me in the room in Snow. I was afraid I would find worse things about my mother. I braced myself for it.

"Leon wrote to your mother to plead with her to marry his half-brother. He tells her Mathias is to be King instead of him, and he knows

Fredrick would want her for Aleksander because he wants her to be married to a king. He indicates Mathia's mistress is pregnant but tells your mother she won't be an issue. He doesn't state why, but he implores her to get ready to be the queen of Forest because Mathias won't mate with the werewolf." He said and sighed.

"Based on the content of the letter, I am of the impression Leon wanted your mother for your father and ensured it happened. Nothing here states why because he is cautious that the letter can be intercepted. Still, it indicates the union between your parents was masterminded by Leon. The troubling part of the letter is that it is also a love letter to your mother. Stating she would do this if she truly loved him.

He tells her they can be together this way since Fredrick would rather she marries an actual king instead of a prince. He said he would rather she is his brother's wife than Aleksander's wife, as Fredrick had already planned.

It is a sick and twisted request of a desperate man, wanting to be with the woman he loves by all means," he said, and I was in shock.

This also explains the continued affair with Leon after she was married to my father. It had nothing to do with living in Olive's shadow. It was a deliberate decision before marriage.

"And what was her response?" I asked, and he sighed.

"Still combing through the archives. This is a carbon copy of the original letter. She must have received the Original in Snow, so we are bound to find the reply in the archives if the person storing the letters deemed it worthy of storage," He said, and I remained calm.

"The second letter?" I asked, and he nodded.

“Fredrick warned his sister to ensure King Mathais signed the unity law. He threatens to expose her promiscuity to King Mathias if she fails to do so. According to the law, if he exposes her and it is proven, she will be executed for infidelity. He had a stronghold over her,” Abraham said, and I looked at Qusack. My mother was caught in the middle of it.

The fact that she tried to distance herself from it all disgusted me.

Right now, I could not vouch for her. I did not plan to confront her until we had enough evidence.

“This does not mean she worked against your father, Alpha. She might have influenced him to sign the unity law after Leon’s death to get back at the werewolves for killing her lover. She seems more like someone blackmailed by her brother for a while.

We saw what happened at the committee. How afraid she was and the fact she was speechless.

I will implore you to be patient. Let us dig some more,” Abraham said, and I nodded.

Confronting my mother about it would be

useless because I doubted she would tell the truth. One thing she was honest about was that Fredrick wanted her to marry Aleksander.

The fact that she married my father to be with his brother was sickening.

Even if she fell in love with him after, it was still wicked and cruel.

I had a clear picture of my mother by now, and I planned to guard myself where she was concerned.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 73**

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### **Chapter 73 Dealing With The Crazies (Nikolas POV)**

After the meeting, Qusack and Abraham left the office so they could attend to the correspondence. I was hopeful that we would find some answers, something that we could use to help with my coronation.

I wondered how deep the plot was but planned to unravel the story and get to the truth.

My father deserved justice, and for my mother’s sake, I hoped she wasn’t part of it the mutiny.

Someone knocked on my door when I was in deep thought, and I looked to see who it was; Piotr stuck his head in with a big smile.

“I was led here,” he said, and I immediately pushed away my worry and smiled.

“Good morning.’ I greeted him, and he walked in. He looked very relaxed, even more than he did in Hill when we met. Keeping his relationship a secret must have weighed on him heavily. I could only imagine what both of them went through.

Piotr sat on the couch in my office and looked around.

“You are all business Nikolas,” He said, admiring my office. There was nothing special about the place, but Piotr still looked at everything with a smile on his face. It was apparent he had a good night.

“How is Natasha?” I asked him, and he looked at me and nodded.

“Sleeping. A maid brought breakfast, and I told her to wait with her if you do not mind,” he said, and I nodded.

“Well, Natasha shouldn’t hold on to her for long because she is Aliana’s friend,” I said, and he nodded.

“Noted, it is just until she is up,” he said quickly, and I managed a smile, something Aliana had made easy for me.

“It is okay; I am sure Lisa won’t mind hanging out with Natasha,” I added, and he nodded. I figured Lisa would be the one to go to Natasha. “So, what is the itinerary for today? Any plans that include me?” He asked, and I frowned, wondering what he wanted.

He stared at me, looking confused, then decided to elaborate.

“I mean site seeing, a fun engagement, anything to welcome me to Forest?” He said, and it clicked.

“Oh,” I managed.

I had not thought of it at all. I had been caught up in my personal issues that I did not think about how I would entertain Piotr.

I knew it would be wrong to tell him this because he went out of his way when I visited the palace in Peakland. The least I could do was reciprocate.

“Actually, an evening picnic with the ladies after my daily task is over,” I said quickly, and he frowned.

I guess my offer wasn't enough, so a bright idea clicked in my head.

"If you can give me two hours, I will take you around in a Rickshaw," I said, and he smiled.

"Marvellous, just us guys. I like that," he said and remained seated on the couch. I was a bit uncomfortable with his presence, but I controlled myself. The guy was harmless.

"I meant to ask you, Nikolas. How did you get that, Scar? I supposed you had no wolf then, or you wouldn't have scared badly," he said, and I cringed.

I saw it coming. I commended Aliana for her restraint. She had never asked me about it. She doesn't even look at it. It is almost as if it isn't there. We were perfect for each other. Piotr, on the other hand, was feeling noseey this morning.

"A battle scar as a child before I got my wolf," I said, not wanting to go into details. Technically what I had said was the truth, just void of details.

"The goddess truly favoured you, Nikolas. Anything that could claw you like that must have been deadly. Looks like a wild animal," he added, and he wasn't far from the truth. A feral wolf was a wild animal. Soulless.

It was a miracle that my mother was alright. Piotr got up after a few minutes of silence.

"Well, I will leave you to your work and get back to mine upstairs," he said and winked. I was relieved.

"Please do not get drowned in work and forget our hang out. I do not mind seeing Riverhead. I heard it was the most beautiful place during the time of King Mathias," He said, and I chuckled. "Not anymore, but we are working to get there," I said, and he nodded, understanding my angle.

He left the room, and I sighed with relief. It was hard concentrating on the correspondence on my desk with Piotrs around.

Qusack wasn't exaggerating when he said they were requests for slaves. It was amazing to see the choice of words that were used to describe werewolves. Goods, servants, commodities, weres and these were used in the most derogative way. It was cruel.

I read through the letters and knew it wouldn't be wise to reply immediately. I had expressly told them that I did not have slaves to sell, yet they still thought I should be able to spare some.

Had I been a king, none of these alphas would dare it.

Seeing how it looked, if I did not find a way to have Fredrick agree to my coronation, I might go to war because I could not stand being controlled. Even though the letters had not implied it, it seemed they felt I owed them, slaves, for their support.

I felt a headache coming through.

I needed to calm down. My destiny had been f\*uc\*ked before conception. My mother was an adultress who married her lover's brother so they could be together.

The same guy was rumoured to have plotted against my father and lost his life in the process.

My father died after being deceived into going to war with his loyal servants, who had to defend themselves to preserve their lives.

Then my mother lied to me, and I fought an unjust war and killed unjustly for nine years to get revenge that wasn't meant to be. Now that I want to fix the damages done and settle down with my fated, my uncle has decided to make himself a stumbling block all because of his greed.

I was doomed from the start.

I felt a headache encroaching, and I rubbed my eyebrows to try to ease the pain. This was becoming too much, and I had little or no help at all.

I was still thinking about what to do when my mother entered my office.

She didn't bother to knock. She just strolled in as if she owned the place. There were times I believed she wasn't fully recovered, and this was one of those. Knowing she was on thin ice with me, the confidence she exuded was baffling.

I sighed with frustration because this wasn't the time for this bullshit, but my mother knew how to make a bad situation worse by just showing up.

I had the urge to ask her to leave, but I controlled my temper and decided to be polite. Whether I liked it or not, she was still my mother and deserved some respect.

"Good morning Niko," She said, smiling and came to sit on the chair opposite my desk.

The sofa would have been lovely; it was far and did not invade my personal space, but that was what she was all about. Invading people's private spaces and getting involved in affairs that did not concern her.

"Good morning, Mother," I said, and she smiled at me.

“I have something important to tell you,” she said, resting her back against the chair’s backrest. I dreaded what she had to say because whatever could put a mischievous grin on her face meant it was terrible news for someone else.

“What is it, mother?” I said, sounding bored, and she sighed.

“Believe me or not, but I know how badly you want this whole crown thing over with. I have decided to liaise with my brother and find out what he wants so we can expedite this issue,” she said, and I looked at her.

After hearing what Qusack and Abraham learned about her, I doubted I wanted a situation where my mother would discuss me with her brother. Would she have my back? She was too selfish to put anyone above herself.

“That wouldn’t be necessary, Mother. I am working on it already,” I said, and she stopped smiling.

“I insist. It is the least I can do. I have to ensure you get your birthright, Niko,” She said.

The look in her eyes showed she won’t back down, so I just nodded and picked up a pen to mark letters that I planned to respond to respond to immediately. i

My mother was silent for a bit, and even though my eyes weren’t on her, I could feel her eyes on me. I was very uncomfortable.

“You might hate what I am about to tell you, and this isn’t an I-told-you-so moment, but you have to promise to hear me out,” she said, and I put down the pen and looked at her, showing her she had my full attention.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 74**

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### **Chapter 74 Dealing With The Crazies Part 2 (Nikolas POV)**

I stared at my mother, waiting for her to say what she wanted to say.

I knew it might have something to do with Aliana because I could see her calculating her approach, but I decided I would not interrupt her so she could finish.

The encroaching headache did not help matters either. However, holding out a bit longer was possible as long as she did not push me over the edge. I was standing too close and could fall off at any moment.

“Son, I am sorry for everything you have gone through. Believe me or not, I want to see you excel,” She said, and I got impatient.

“Please get to the point. I have so much to do, and I still have to take the prince sightseeing,” I said to her, sounding more impatient than I intended.

My tone had hurt her feelings. I could see it, so I exhaled to calm down.

“I am sorry, Mother,” I managed to apologise, and she nodded with misty eyes. Her tears did nothing to me, but there was no need to rub it in.

“That girl isn’t good for you, Niko. She will cost you everything. You wouldn’t know what I just found out,” She said, and I wanted to shut her up, but I chose to hear it all first.

“What did you find out about Aliana now, Mother?” I asked her, and she sighed.

“I know you have said you will settle down with a Lycan when the time comes, but it seems this girl does not plan to walk away when the time is due. She wants to remain in your life permanently. I mean like a leech,” She said, and I was getting to my limits with her because of her choice of words, but I still chose to remain calm.

“I do not plan to release her, either, so get straight to the point,” I said, sounding bored. Her countenance changed, but she tried to mask her anger.

I did not need to pretend with her anymore. She had failed at the one task I needed her for, so her opinion did not matter anymore.

“There is a rumour that she might be pregnant. I know she is on birth control. Doctor Newton confirmed it. I think she hasn’t been taking her meds. I think she is doing this deliberately. You need to have her tested to be sure because if it is true, then getting that crown would be a thing of the past. Fredrick will come after you, Niko. I am sure she knows and wants to get revenge for what you did to her father,” my mother said, and I wondered where my mother had heard the rumour from.

“Who told you this?” I asked her, and she was reluctant to respond.

“Does it matter, dear,” She said, and I banged my hand on the table before I could get a grip of myself.

“Of course, it matters, mother. It matters a lot,” I said through gritted teeth, and she nodded quickly, getting scared.

“Erica heard people talking about it, so I reached out to Dr Newton this morning, and he said it wasn’t possible because she was on birth control, but if I can talk to you so he can run an examination on her, we would know.

I told him to go ahead, but he refused, saying that is your call to make. That is why I am here. I think we need to know so we can stop this madness before it gets out of hand. If it turns out negative, then we can stop the rumour with the facts,” she said, and Bane



began to growl. She actually believed she was making sense and doing the right thing. My mother was living inside her head because she would know I was getting angry if she was sensitive.

I planned to deal with Erica mercilessly. I remained silent while my mother waited for a response.

Soon I controlled myself and leaned forward to speak to her.

“If you do not learn to mind your business, I will send you to Snow, where you belong,” I told her, and she was in shock.

She had no idea how much anger I had pent up, and now I had to deal with this nonsense.

“Meet me in the office,” I linked Erica while my mother was still recovering from what I had told her. I meant it, really. Knowing now that Erica was going about snooping on her behalf was sickening.

“Niko, why will you say that to me? I am just trying to protect your interest. I know you are fond of that girl, but...” She said, and I lost it.

“I am not fond of Aliana, mother; I love her, so please stop this nonsense. I do not care about how anyone feels about my choices. We might not be able to be together because of the unity law, but I love her still. If you truly love me, Mother, you will stop looking for ways to be rid of her. You will stop trying to hurt her at every given opportunity. I love her, mother. Nothing in my life has ever made sense like it does with Aliana. You need to stop this nonsense,” I told her because I was tired of the lies and pretence.

She was in complete shock. Utterly speechless, and I did not care. She had it coming.

I had a lot to deal with, and amidst the pyramid of problems I had, all my mother cared about was getting rid of Aliana.

I looked at her and sighed.

“Niko, you can’t love her; Fredrick will attack us,” She said, almost on the verge of tears.

“I can love whoever I damn, please. I might not be allowed to be with her, but I can love her. I need you to stop looking for ways to be rid of Aliana. She has done nothing to you. She wasn’t even conceived at the time of the uprising. She is innocent, so please stop. I do not want to hear anything about Aliana from you again. If you do not like her, you can do me a favour and keep your opinions to yourself and keep your distance,” I said, and she wiped away her tears.

Erick walked in, looking nervous.

My mother turned to look at her and was surprised to see her in the office.

“Leave Erica out of this, Niko,” my mother pleaded silently, but she was in the middle of it. “Good morning, Alpha?” Erica said, sounding nervous, and I did not bother to respond to her greetings.

“You told my mother you heard rumours about Aliana being pregnant. Where did you hear this?” I asked her, and she looked at my mother, afraid.

“She can’t save you from me, Erica, so it is best you tell me the truth now”, I warned Erica.

“A half-breed friend that works at the Werewolf Clinic said she suspected that Aliana was there for a pregnancy test,” she said, and I sighed.

“And then you decided to pedal the news,” I said, and she shook her head quickly.

“I only reported to Luna, Alpha. I did not tell anyone.” She said, and I linked Qusack to join me in my office. I planned to make an example of Erica and her halfbreed friend.

“Your friend works at the werewolf clinic?” I asked, leaning back on my chair, and she nodded quickly. I could smell her fear and nervousness.

“What is her name?” I asked her.

“Kristine,” She said on the verge of tears.

“When did you start making friends with half- breeds?” I asked her, and she was nervous.

“I find it odd that you have a half-breed friend, Erica, knowing how horrible you are to them,” I asked, and he shook her head.

“We are just acquaintances,” she said, and I chuckled.

“Or she is just your informant.” I corrected her, knowing she indeed got the information from someone in the clinic.

“What do you give her in exchange for the information?” I asked her, and she looked at my mother.

I knew it wasn’t as easy as it looked.

"I knew hanging with my mother would get you into trouble. Gezel was smart enough to walk away, but you remained. What did my mother promise you, Erica, and what have you been giving this Kristine woman in exchange for information on Aliana?" I asked, and she shook her head.

"She isn't my friend, Alpha. Luna asked me to watch Aliana when you were travelling to Snow. That day I followed her and found that she had visited the clinic. I managed to ask Kristine to monitor her and report her activities at the clinic to me. I paid her with two pieces of bronze coins," she said quickly, and I looked at my mother, who did not seem a bit worried.

"I needed to be sure she isn't planning anything harmful while you are away," My mother said, trying to justify her actions, and I reserved my words.

"What did my mother promise you in exchange for this level of loyalty?" I asked Erica, and she could not speak.

"If you do not volunteer the answer, I will have Qusack force it out of you, and we both know he can be merciless like me. Now, mind you, I will know if you are lying," I warned her, and her lips quivered, 1

Tears rolled down her cheeks, and she kept looking at my mother.

Her eyes pleaded with my mother to bail her out, but my mother had her own skin to worry about, so she just ignored the girl.

It was amazing how quickly my mother could abandon someone loyal to her against all odds.

It made me start carving a picture of what might have really transpired in the past. It was clear she wasn't loyal. I wondered how deep her deception ran.

Qusack walked in at that moment, and Erica began to cry.

"Qusack, Erica had been spying and pedaling lies. I want her dealt with mercilessly," I told Qusack, and Erica began to wail.

"This is unnecessary, Niko. Stop acting like a madman. Erica is a Lycan, for goddess' sake. Remember the allegations levelled against you at the committee," she said, and I laughed.

"Do I look like I care? My territory, my rules, and Erica has broken my rules," I said coldly, and Erica began to cry.

I could see her confidence begin to wither. It was slowly dawning on her that my mother could not help her.

Why did she have to let it get this far?

I must commend her for her loyalty. Rarely do Lycans exhibit such a level of commitment. I knew there must have been a desirable incentive to make her do this.

“Your mother told me if I could find anything damning about Aliana that she would get rid of her and ensure you marry me,” Erica blurted out in tears.

I did not know when I started laughing.

Even Qusack could not help himself.

I laughed so hard because it was amusing. I did not expect Erica to be stupid, but she clearly was. “Mother,” I said, looking at my mother. She could not maintain eye contact with me and looked away, ashamed of herself.

Realising that she had been played, Erica began to beg and plead that I forgive her.

I could not believe that Erica was hoping I would marry her. My mother’s method was low.

“Have her dealt with and fish out Kristine, a half -breed that works in the werewolf clinic.

Patients’ businesses in the clinic are highly confidential; Kristine does not seem to agree with the rule,” I said, and Qusack figured out what had happened.

He dragged Erica away to deal with her.

This was me doing damage control, so no one would pedal that news in future.

Once they were out, I focused my attention on my mother. My smile was gone entirely, and I stared at her coldly.

“This should be the last time you will try this, Mother, or I will send you out of Forest. I owe you nothing. I have preserved your life and cared for you through thick and thin; I will not allow you to ruin mine because of your sentiments. If you do not like how I run my business, you can leave, but let this be the last time I would warn you to stay out of my way.

I have too much to deal with that I cannot afford to have you as a problem. Am I clear?” I asked her, and she was silent.

I did not allow her to recover when I asked her to leave my office.

Once she left, I composed myself and thought of how to deal with Newton. Qusack was having him followed we decided to feed him false information and watch him until he

slipped off. He might have murdered the Lycan in the woods, but that did not prove he was a spy. Once he is caught red-handed, I can deal with him appropriately.

I rounded up what I was doing in the office, then linked Aliana to inform her that I planned on showing Piotr Riverhead; I also permitted her to hang out with Natasha and prepare for an unplanned picnic we will have in the evening.

I left my office and headed up the stairs towards Piotr's room. While I walked, I prayed that all this would end soon and I could have the life I wanted and welcome my children into a world without hate and prejudice.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 75**

**Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman**

### **Chapter 75 Unplanned Picnic (Aliana POV)**

I was caught completely off guard when Nikolas unexpectedly informed me about the impromptu picnic.

I wasn't feeling well and had hoped to sleep the entire day.

Despite not wanting to object, I knew it was for the benefit of Piotr and Natasha.

I could only hope that I would start feeling better soon.

Having finished our meal, Ania and I decided to check on Natasha and show her around the area. It wouldn't be nice if she was cooped up in the room all day until evening.

I quickly got dressed and headed out.

Unfortunately, I bumped into Isabelle on my way, and her puffy eyes indicated that she had been crying.

Judging by the direction she was coming from, it was clear she had just left Nikolas's office.

I dreaded finding out what had transpired between them. Their relationship had been rocky, and I didn't need any special abilities to know that I was somehow involved.

"Good morning, Luna," Ania and I greeted her, and she stopped walking, sniffing.

I wished she would just continue on her way, but since we had greeted her, I couldn't expect anything else.

Walking past her without acknowledging her would have been disrespectful, and she would have something to report to her son.

Either way, it seemed like trouble was inevitable from the moment I encountered her in the hallway.

“I know what you’re doing, Aliana, and you won’t win. You think you’ve won and taken my son from me, but I won’t let you. I brought him into this world, and he will choose me. I promise you,” she said angrily, shedding tears. I had no clue what she was talking about, but I allowed her to ramble on. I really had nothing to say to her, and her tantrums were getting old.

“You think you can seduce your way to freedom. You believe that being good in bed and pretending to love my son will elevate your status. Think again, Aliana. You can never be anything more than a werewolf whore, and last time I checked, your kind were slaves and will remain so forever. All you’re good for is f\*ucking,” she said, but her words had no effect on me. Clearly, she was upset and venting. It was okay.

She stopped crying and looked at me with pleading eyes.

The woman was utterly unpredictable.

“You’re hurting his chances, Aliana. You and that baby you’re carrying,” she said, and I frowned at her.

I chose to act clueless because I knew Nikolas hadn’t told her about the baby. She was fishing for information, and I wasn’t about to volunteer any.

“What baby?” I asked her, and she looked concerned, i “You’re not pregnant?” she asked, and I sighed.

“I honestly don’t understand what you’re talking about, Luna,” I said, and there was relief in her eyes.

She didn’t say anything further and just walked away. It was as if that was all she wanted to know, and she was satisfied with her findings.

Ania pinched me gently, causing me to flinch.

“Who do you think told her?” she linked me, and I started walking towards Piotr’s room.

“I don’t know, but I know it wasn’t Alpha. I’m sure she heard a rumour and was trying to confirm it,” I linked her back, and Ania sighed.

“Honestly, that was close,” she said, and I increased my pace, not wanting to run into the likes of Isabelle again.

I knocked on Piotr's door, and Lisa answered.

I entered the room, and the prince was there with his mate, enjoying their meal.

Natasha looked cosy in his arms, and Piotr smiled when he saw me.

I respectfully bowed my head to greet him and greeted Natasha as well.

"Alpha asked me to show Natasha around, but I see you're busy," I said, and Piotr shook his head.

He told me they had just finished eating and that Natasha would love to hang out with me.

He also mentioned that it would be nice since Nikolas would soon be taking him sightseeing.

Natasha went to the closet to change into something comfortable, and we headed out.

I wasn't particularly strong, but I knew I had to manage. After encountering Isabelle, I knew it would be foolish to show any weakness or signs of pregnancy. I had to stay strong.

We hailed a rickshaw to take us to the market square.

We planned to visit there before going sightseeing.

Piotr had given Natasha plenty of money, so I knew she would buy many things. I didn't have any money on me because I never asked Nikolas for any. I didn't really need it since I never bought anything, but I regretted not taking money from the dresser in the room. I made a mental note to do so next time.

As we reached the market, the way people showed me respect, both Lycans and werewolves, amazed Natasha.

"You're very lucky, Aliana. Piotr and I can't do this in Hill for fear that the Snow King's spies will find out and cause trouble," she said, and I felt sorry for her.

While I might think life was tough in Forest, werewolves in Forest had a better life than those in other parts.

We shopped and then went to the small amusement park that Nikolas had built for everyone.

Seeing everything and witnessing how rapidly

Riverhead was changing, I knew Nikolas would make a great king. He was developing the Forest at a fast pace.

After a while, I started feeling nauseous and weak, so I decided it was time to head home. I was hoping to catch a nap before the picnic so that I could be at my best.

I fell asleep the moment I laid in bed and didn't wake up until Nikolas roused me.

"Had fun?" he said, hovering over me as I opened my eyes.

It took me a moment to process everything, but soon I did and managed to sit up. I nodded slowly, and he pulled me into his arms.

"Did you have fun today?" he asked, and I nodded. "I did," I said, and he smiled.

It was then that I chose to tell him about my encounter with his mother. He wasn't pleased at all and was about to leave the bed when I stopped him.

Nikolas had shielded me so much, and I needed to gauge the severity of the situation because if news of our baby got out, I needed to know how he would handle it.

"What will you do if the news gets out? Your mother is just one person. How many people would we have to silence?" I asked, and he sighed, running his fingers through his hair. He was frustrated.

He had come to the room to relax before the picnic, and I had brought up a highly frustrating topic.

"I don't know, Aliana. I know Frederick would seize the opportunity to take over the Forest. I don't have the strength to push back. He has an army, and I'm yet to train mine," he confessed, and I understood his predicament. I placed my hand over his and sighed. "You said you wanted me to be vocal, so please allow me to say what I want to say," I told him, and he looked at me with concern.

"You can say anything you want as long as it has nothing to do with terminating our baby," he warned, and I nodded because what I wanted to tell him was far from that.

"With or without the pregnancy, your uncle will still find a way to take Forest or make you bow to his will. We have to be ready. My father spent years pushing back, and I'm sure if you can trust him even a little, he would know how to resist," I told him, and he shook his head.

"Gabriel is unwell, and I don't want a war. I don't want any more deaths. I'm trying to find a peaceful way to claim the crown, and I plan to do it, Aliana. Trust me, I plan to find a solution very soon," he said, and with those words, he closed off our conversation.



“I trust you, Nikolas, and I know you’ll do what’s best for us. Just know that you’ll always have my love and support, no matter what,” I said, and I meant it. He looked at me and kissed the top of my head.

“I know, little wolf, I know,” he said. With that, we lay in bed, with me in his arms, and rested.

The picnic was held in the palace garden, secluded at the back near the woods, away from prying eyes.

The secrecy was for Piotr’s benefit.

Nikolas didn’t want anyone seeing him with Natasha and spreading rumours.

Piotr was overjoyed about the picnic, and he held onto Natasha throughout the event.

We talked about our sightseeing experience and the fun we had, and Natasha was so animated while recounting her adventures. Piotr watched her as if mesmerized as if he had never seen so much life in her before. The Unity Law had taken its toll, and I hoped that one day, both Nikolas and Piotr would succeed in abolishing it so we could love each other fearlessly.

Piotr spent two weeks with us, and finally, it was time for them to leave. Natasha didn’t want to go, but she also didn’t want to be apart from her mate.

It was a heart-wrenching sight.

She started crying at dinner the night before they left, but Piotr promised to visit often. Still, it didn’t console her.

I could understand her struggle. How could she go back to slavery and secrecy after tasting freedom?

I felt sorry for her and even more sorry for the Snow slaves because if the Hill slaves dreaded their territory so much, I wondered what the Snow slaves must be going through. Natasha made Piotr promise that they would come often, and while I watched her cling to that hope, I felt sorry for her.

Frederick had championed a foolish law, and King Mathias had ruined lives by agreeing to it. As for King Aleksander, he was a pathetic excuse for a monarch. I kept my opinions to myself and looked towards the future with the hope that Nikolas and Piotr would rectify the problems their fathers had created.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 76**

**Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman**

## Chapter 76 A Tough Call (Nikolas POV)

Since Piotr visited, three weeks passed, and I had somehow missed him. While he was around, we talked about many problems our world faced, and I could see that we were reasoning along the same lines. It would be great for us to realise our dreams, and I hope it will happen soon.

Abraham and Qusack had finished their investigation and would finally give me the reports. Some of which they warned was based on speculation because they could only work with the letters they found.

I was eager to discover what was happening, so I hurried out of my room in the morning and headed to my office. Things were moving fast, and I hoped they could move faster because time was going for Aliana and me. Soon her pregnancy would be visible, and I would need to find a way to keep it secret. Getting the crown did not seem feasible anytime soon, and I hoped I could do something to make it happen quickly so we could move on with our lives.

Qusack had set a trap for Doctor Newton, and we were yet to get a confirmation of his treachery. We had found a way to inform the Doctor that I planned to marry a Lycan to get the crown. Qusack discussed it with Abraham while the Doctor checked his vitals. It was a very huge joke. Although we wanted to set a trap, we did not want to set one that would cost us. Saying I was planning to get married for the show to get the crown was good enough. It was a dubious act that could indeed get me the crown. One informant would need to report to their master. The story was planted over a week ago, yet we had no reaction or response. The Doctor was watched closely; the only letters he seemed to have sent through the post office were medication requests. Even though we were yet to see results, we could not cancel the possibility that he was an informant. We just had to wait. I hoped we would not need to wait too long for our sake.

I waited and arrived in the office, and the men were there. Qusack was a bit worried, and I knew he did not have good news. We had been scarce around each other since Piotr left. While they investigated what happened in the balance by reading correspondence, I had travelled between Timber and Riverhead to see Grant and Ingham's progress on the troops.

I went to sit at my desk, bracing myself for what would be revealed to me.

"Good morning, Alpha," Abraham greeted me, and I nodded and wanted him to get straight to the point. I was eager to learn what they had discovered.

Abraham sighed and started.

"First, I will say Miles wasn't lying about Leon. He did plot with someone to be King. We are yet to find out who that person is. Still, some references in the letter have forced me to ask a friend in the history library in the Snow to secretly get me a register. Apparently,

he know what family Asci Cauls is or if it is even a name, but I plan to find out. It could be a code name, but the register will help me cross out people before looking at other options,” He said, then sighed.

“All we discovered was that most people on your father’s council were corrupt. We also saw the signed decree your father sent to Frederick agreeing to the slave trade. Still, when we cross-checked the signature on the parchment and other decrees your father had signed, we found that the t and the s were similar but not the same. Meaning the slave decree was a forgery,” he said, pausing for me to take it all in. “And what does that signify?” I asked him, and he sighed.

“If your father’s signature on the decree was a forgery, then the Unity Law does not stand. The downside is that it will take much convincing, nearly impossible for us to prove. With everyone dancing to Frederick’s tune, it will be impossible to achieve,” he said.

I already knew that before he said it. Their investigation was solely to inform and not to prove. “Lastly, we found some letters sent by Gabriel and the story he told you checked out, but there was a slight issue. Mathias’ signature indicating he had received and viewed the letters was the same as the fake one on the decree. It meant he did not receive or respond to these letters. Basically, someone in the palace was receiving letters on his behalf and responding to them. We are yet to know who it is, but I know finding Asci Cauls would expose something that would lead us to the culprit or culprits,” He said, and I understood his angle.

“We found some letters from your mother to her brother demanding her share of her father’s wealth because King Mathias had cut her off. I do not know why, but according to her in the letter, he had cut her off and was threatening to send her away.

She indicated she was pregnant, and the baby was indeed Mathias, but he had found something and cut her off. She demanded her share of her father’s wealth and threatened to expose Frederick if he refused to help her.

That might also be why he did not accommodate her when Gabriel sent her there.

There is something between the siblings that only two of them know of. We are still digging and trying to find out what it is. Hopefully, it won’t be anything serious,” He said, and I doubt his hope would be realised.

With my mother, I expect to be disappointed, Frederick had hinted they had issues, but I was more interested in who was signing decrees and letters on my father’s behalf.

If my father had never signed those things, Gabriel and my father were played.

I needed to apologise to Gabriel and restore the man’s honour. He was loyal to my father even in death. If I could punish myself for what I did to the man and tried to do to

his daughter, I would do it, but I couldn't. The best I could do is liberate them and ensure they are free and his family's honour is restored.

We were debating on the next course of action when we learned of the arrival of a werewolf messenger from Hill. The man had come to deliver a letter.

It did not go through the post office this time; it was delivered by a werewolf from the Hill. The letter was sent by Piotr, and it was addressed to me.

The moment it was delivered, the messenger told me he would have to remain because he had escaped some Snow hunters on his way and did not want to be caught and interrogated when he returned.

Qusack wondered why Piotr would decide to bypass the post office.

I told them to find accommodation for the messenger while Qusack Abraham and I attended to the letter.

I knew it would be important and hoped nothing terrible happened. I was also apprehensive because Aliana's pregnancy was progressing, and she would soon begin to show. If I did nothing about the situation, I might have to send her away to hide her somewhere until I got the crown.

I was worried and afraid.

Afraid that Frederick might find out about Aliana and it would lead to war. I was afraid of losing her. It was awful.

I opened the letter that Piotr sent, and it read. "Dear Nikolas,

I hope you are well. I am grateful for your hospitality towards me the last time I visited.

I meant what I said about being friends.

I could not send this through the post office because I found out recently that Frederick has letter interceptors in the post offices of our regions.

All our letters are read by these people before mailing them to us. This is why he seems to know what we are planning and can counter our moves.

I have decided to boycott the post office and communicate with you directly.

Due to the loyalty issues in Hill, I had to depend on a werewolf to deliver the letter.

Once again, I apologise if this letter comes to you as a shocker.

The committee had a meeting last week, and my father and I were in attendance. They did not invite you on purpose.

I was asked to be silent when I asked why Forest wasn't represented. Apparently, the alphas claimed you have blatantly refused to answer their letter and denied their request about the slave trade. They want to find you guilty of breaking the Unity law and take Forest from you by force due to your refusal to sell slaves.

My father was able to stay their hands so they do not move against you, but With Frederick championing the cause, we could not expect anything good to come out of it. I am writing you this letter to warn you of what is coming and to propose a solution.

Frederick also claimed you plan to deceive the committee by marrying a lycan to get the crown. He states that the committee should watch out for your scam and insist you agree to the trade regardless of your union with the unfortunate lycan you plan to marry.

You were the topic of discussion, and it seemed like they wanted to find you guilty of a crime and forcefully take Forest from you. Most of the greedy Alphas of Snow were championing this, while Alphas on our side were divided on the matter, but I doubt they will be divided for long.

I will advise you to sacrifice some of your werewolves for the crown. Agree to trade with Frederick in exchange for your coronation and see if he agrees. If he agrees, be prepared to honour the transaction so he can honour his end. Make sure he signs the agreement before you honour it. Once you get the crown, you can decide to abolish the law in Forest. Mind you, he might come with heat after then, but you will have more leverage and freedom than you do now.

This letter might sound bizarre, but I know that Frederick is planning something, and he is likely to succeed at it. Be warned, and do not hesitate to call on me for help. My father might be a coward, but I lead his army. I am willing to fight if it comes to it. I hope you take the warning seriously and do something about it.

Yours Sincerely

Piotr"

It read, and I was in shock.

I handed the letter to Qusack, and he read it and then handed it to Abraham. We were all speechless.

Other than we had just confirmed that Newton was a spy, it also indicated what I was up against.

“This is a serious problem, Alpha; we have to find a way to engage these people so they would not feel threatened by our refusal to sell slaves and attack,” Abraham said, sounding worried.

I knew he was right, but this was an impossible task. Who would I sell? I doubt I could live with myself, knowing I sold people for a crown. I still had Aliana’s mother to take from Snow. Everything was a mess, and it was driving me crazy.

“So what do you think we should do ?” Qusack asked me, and I had no clue I needed help. The clock was ticking, and I did not know what to do.

I looked at Qusack and made a painful, risky decision. It was going to come to this anyway.

“I will discuss it with Gabriel and allow the werewolves to choose,” I said, and Qusack frowned. I sighed to elaborate.

“They will choose if they want me to sell some of them to deceive Frederick for the crown or declare myself as king and go to war,” I said, and Qusack was in shock.

‘Either way, I need them to follow me to battle not as slaves but as my subjects fighting for this Kingdom. Let us face it, Qusack. Frederick would never allow me to get the crown, and he will move against me eventually. If Piotr is willing to help, all we have to do is buy a little more time and prepare to go to war,” I said and sighed, realising that I should have taken this option from the onset instead of playing politics. I wasn’t a politician. I was a savage.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 77**

**Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman**

**Chapter 77 Getting A New Team Mate (Nikolas POV)**

“Are you sure about this?” Qusack asked me. I could see the worry in his eyes. War was a considerable task to embark on.

A war wasn’t the same as a conquest.

Taking Forest was a conquest; we chipped away bit by bit. Had I known that it was unnecessary and

Gabriel would have handed it over to me quickly, I wouldn’t have bothered and wasted the number of lives I did. The more I learned the truth, the more guilt plagued my conscience.

War was something completely different. It would be fought at once. There will be no time to retreat and recuperate. The possibility of not surviving was high. The chance of failure was high. It wasn't something to be toyed with, but my uncle left me no choice.

Piotr's letter made me understand that Fredrick will always find something to use against me. He would always come up with something to use and gain support from his alphas and some of Hill's alphas to stop me from getting my crown, and knowing he would determine whether or not I would get the crown, I knew it was best to go to war because his answer would always be no, and Aleksander would never have the courage to stand up to him.

I looked at Qusack and then Abraham.

"We really have no choice. The man would never let me have the crown. He would never allow it. He will come up with excuses and milk Forest dry. Now it is slaves they want; what if they decided they do not want to trade and want the resources in Forest for free? I am not a king, so why should I determine what happens? I have no say.

In Fredricks's heart, he already owns the Forest. That is why he did not deem it necessary to request my permission for his hunters to hunt in my woods. That is why he refused to reply to my letters until I took action. He does not see me as an equal. I do not know who this Miles Gordon guy is, but I think he plans to make that guy King of Forest by establishing that I am not my father's child, so he can take over Forest.

There is just so much power a half-breed can wield. If indeed I want the crown, I will have to go to war," I explained to my Beta and Delta, and Qusack nodded. I could see understanding dawn in his eyes, and I realised he saw my angle.

"Will the werewolves be willing to fight for you?" Abraham asked, and Qusack chuckled.

"It is more their war than ours. It is for their future and their freedom. They have no choice. It is either they fight or get sold. It is as simple as that," Qusack said, explaining the reality of the situation.

"As long as that is what you want, we will do all we can to ensure we come out victorious," Abraham said, and I smiled.

"Now, the first course of action is to pick that snitch doctor up and drill him for answers. We need to know all the spies in our midst, who they report to and the information that they have," Qusack said, and we agreed.

Questioning the doctor will not happen in my office, so I decided that Qusack Abraham and I visit Gabriel first to set everything in motion before dealing with the doctor. As for my mother, I planned to keep her in the dark about the situation. Erica was locked up, so I was sure she would have no loyalist to help her snoop around. She seemed increasingly suspicious, and the less she knew, the better. Once everything was in



motion, I planned to lock her up. It would be hard for me because she is my mother, but I must emerge victorious. I cannot allow her rage towards Gabriel to ruin my plans.

“Are you in your house?” I linked Gabriel, and he answered immediately.

“Yes, your Highness,” He replied with the utmost respect, which just wrenched my heart the more.

I was misguided and ended up wronging the only friend my father had. Gabriel also deserved to know that my father did not sign any decree to enslave the werewolves, and he wasn't the one running affairs after Leon died. Gabriel needed to know that my father never stopped caring.

I got off my chair and told my officers to join me to visit Gabriel.

“I might not come in early today, Little wolf. Do not miss me much,” I linked Aliana, but there was no response, so I figured she was sleeping. I opted to Link Ania instead.

“Tell Aliana that I will be late today. You and Lisa should keep her company. I would also like that chocolate cake you made last time with coconut cream pie,” I linked Ania.

“Yes, alpha, I will make it. Aliana just fell asleep after breakfast. She was a bit tired. I will pass on the message when she wakes up,” Ania replied, and I closed the connection.

We arrived at Gabriel's house, and Qusack knocked on the door. Gabriel answered it and greeted us respectfully.

I was surprised to see him looking healthy. He wasn't dependent on the oxygen tank anymore. I began to wonder what Dr Newton was doing to him. We entered the living room and sat on the available chairs. I could smell Onion soup. 1

“Sorry, I was about to eat,” Gabriel said, heading towards his kitchen.

“It is okay,” I said and realised I was hungry.

“Do you have enough for two?” I asked him, and he looked stunned.

“Yes, Aliana made a large batch, so all I have to do is just make garlic bread and stick it in the oven with cheese. It won't take too long.” He said, and I was surprised that Aliana cooked it.

“Include us,” Qusack said, and Abraham headed to the kitchen to help Gabriel.

“So, how is your health?” I asked.



"I am fine now. Apparently, I just needed rest," He said, and I looked in his direction. I could sense his uneasiness which meant he was hiding something from me.

"You know that I know you aren't being honest,

Gabriel," I said to him, and he looked a bit worried. Abraham took over cutting the bread.

"I do not want to create trouble. I am okay now. That is all that matters," Gabriel said, and I got off the chair to join them in the kitchen.

"Trust me, you won't be creating trouble if what you have to say has to do with Newton," I said, and his eyes widened.

"So, you figured it out?" he asked, and I nodded.

"We set a trap, and he fell right into it," I said, and Gabriel had a bit of anger in his eyes.

"The bastard was poisoning me. I do not know what I did to him. I do not know what he has to benefit from rendering me useless," Gabriel said, sounding hurt and angry simultaneously.

"That is why I have come to see you, Gabriel," I said and cleared my throat. What I was about to say was hard, but it was necessary. I remembered how I acted towards him when I took over the pack. How I humiliated him, and I was ashamed of myself. The man did not deserve any of it. I hoped he would be forgiving.

"I want to apologise for how I treated your people, you and your daughter. My intentions weren't good, and I believed I was in the right to seek revenge, but I was wrong, and I regret it. I am sorry," I said, and he was utterly shocked.

"I want you to know that I do not have ill intentions towards Aliana," I said to him, and he looked at me, shocked.

"I plan to do right by her," I promised him, and his eyes welled up with tears. He sighed with relief, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"That is also why we have come here. We know what will happen when I take certain steps. I have decided to declare myself as King and abolish the Unity Law in Forest," I said, and he looked at me wide-eyed.

"I do not know what happened in Forest Thirty years ago, but I know my father did not sign the unity or slave trade law. I have evidence in the archives that shows someone was intercepting letters and signing decrees on his behalf.

I do not know who this person is, but I intend to find out.

Based on our investigations, My father went into seclusion after Leon's death. I do not know why, but he wasn't directly involved with running things. I also found a carbon copy of Letters Leon sent to Asci Cauls, planning to take over Forest so they can champion certain things.

Giles wasn't lying, and he did a noble thing. It is just sad how things went for him," I said, and Gabriel broke down at the mention of Giles's name.

"I had never truly believed it myself. I acted based on trust, knowing that Giles would never lie. Knowing now that he was telling the truth and got executed for trying to save the King breaks my heart. Leon always thought he was the rightful heir because he was your father's older brother, but his mother was a mistress. He would have been King if your father did not exist. I guess he was trying to make that happen by all means," Gabriel said and sat on the chair in the kitchen.

He wiped his tears and looked at me.

"I hope you know what will happen when you make this decision?" he asked me matter-of-factly, and I nodded.

"It will mean war," I said, and he sighed.

"Very well, what will you have me do?" he said, knowing I had come to seek his help.

"I need you on my team as my adviser. I must comb Forest of spies and informants and seek alliances with others. Piotr is on my side and will bring his army to my aide, but I will need more than that. I will need werewolves," I said, and he looked at me to study the expression on my face.

"If you have decided to fight for our liberation, I will help you and ensure you win. I will help you because the crown is rightfully yours, which your father would have wanted. I will help you because I will lose my daughter if anything happens to you. After all, she loves you greatly. I will help you because you have chosen to fight for my people's liberation. I will help you because this is what is expected of me," He said, and I did not know convincing him would be this easy, but it was. I wanted to tell him that Gwendolyn was in Snow, but I felt it was best I did it in private when I could control the situation better.

We ate and discussed the Correspondence in the archives with Gabriel. According to Gabriel, the record Keeper was a half-breed. I also learned he got killed a week before the uprising.

I did not need to guess why they would eliminate the record Keeper, but I wondered who this Asci Cauls was. It didn't sound like a name at all.

"I will like to read the letters that mention Asci Cauls. I might figure out who he is by reading the context. Did you ask your mother about Asci?" Gabriel asked, and Qusack almost laughed. I could tell why.

"The woman lies too much. I doubt she will tell me anything useful. She is all about getting rid of Aliana and getting me a Lycan mate," I said, and Gabriel chuckled.

"Isabelle is yet to change even after all these years. I wouldn't blame her, though; her father was like that. He raised his children to hate our kind. Fredrik did not want Isabelle to marry Mathais because Mathais' mother was a halfbreed. He believed she was somehow tainted," He said, laughing, and he had given me a piece of information I never had.

He paused to look at me and realised that he had shocked me with his words.

"Your mother never told you?" He asked, and I shook my head.

"Your grandmother was a halfbreed. Being a halfbreed in Forest wasn't a big deal. It was a welcomed thing, and then Fredrick tried to spoil our territory's synergy. That was why Mathias never signed the law and kept Fredrick's influence out of Forest. We were somehow his people even though he was a Lycan. That was why we were in the ranks. Everything went south when Leon died," He said, and I frowned.

"That was why Leon felt entitled to the crown because he believed Mathias was tainted. But there was no such law in Forest. Mathais's father did not trade slaves, but we were treated as second-class citizens. Mathais elevated our status when he became King. He loved Olive very much. I still do not understand why she died suddenly," He said, and I growled.

"I am sure Leon organised it, stole her baby, and sent him to Fredrick since they are friends. Fredrick claims the boy is the rightful heir, and I am a bastard," I said, and Gabriel exclaimed. He was in shock that he stood up.

"How can Leon be so wicked? Then who was buried with Olive?" Gabriel said, and I had no answer for it. I dreaded thinking of what happened. I dreaded thinking that maybe Leon had murdered a baby in Miles's stead just to cover up his tracks.

"Thinking of it all, Leon was the one that told Mathias it would be wrong if he saw her corpse that it would affect his memory of her. He made it seem like he was protecting Mathais. He was a horrible sibling to your father. I wished Mathias knew and cut him off. He would have still been alive, and Forest would have never gone through what we went through," Gabriel said, sounding very sad.

"I hope you do not mind Isreal working with me. He is good with the investigations," he said, and I nodded. "You can form a team if you like. I am glad to have you on board," I said, and he nodded.

“I will like to work with Isreal. I know of his investigative skills,” Abraham chipped in, and I looked at him and arched an eyebrow.

“The guy is good,” He confessed, and we all laughed. Gabriel joined us in laughter.

It was surprising to see how lightly he was taking the impending war. I hoped for all our sake we win. I decided I would tell him about Gwen when everything was set. I did not want him making plans from a desperate perspective. I decided I would wait a bit.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 78**

**Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman**

### **Chapter 78 Preparations (Nikolas POV)**

The onion soup was delicious, and I could not believe Aliana was a good cook. I would find time to have kitchen adventures with her. We deserved an everyday life, and I was aiming for it.

We left Gabriel’s house and headed to the safe house at the back of the palace. We used it to interrogate criminals or people we suspected of wrongdoing. I had never used it before but planned to use it today. I needed all the information I could get from Newton to know who he was in league with.

I sent for Doctor Newton and Qusack, and Abraham went to get him. They told him he needed to check on me. He had no clue what the safe house was used for, so he wouldn’t be on alert. A chair with silver chains was ready so we could; bind him and torture him.

I was angry, and I felt manipulated. I wondered what the asshole was thinking when he chose to join up, and I had a feeling he had something to do with the disappearance of my Dr Adams. Because the only way he could have gotten the job is if Adams disappeared. I could not wait to drill him for answers.

Qusack ushered him in, and he had come with his bag. He was indeed prepared to check me. The moment he stepped it, realisation dawned on his face. There wasn’t really much to hide. There were silver chains, Chairs and a table. It was pretty obvious what was about to happen.

The bastard tried to turn around and leave, but Abraham was behind him and had locked the door. “I think you should have a seat, Newton,” I said calmly, and he became scared. I guess he figured that fighting would be unwise because he was outnumbered and outmatched. He sat down, looking frightened. And once he was seated, Qusack secured him with the silver chains. Once that was done, The fear was more pronounced.

“Newton,” I said calmly, and he was attentive.

“How many of you are working for Fredrick?” I asked, and his eyes widened.

He tried to pretend he had no idea what I was talking about.

“Wrong move, Newton,” Qusack said, and the Dr still looked clueless, so Qusack punched him in the face breaking his nose in the process.

“I am not the patient type, and neither am I diplomatic. We either do this the easy way or the hard way, and trust me, the hard way would be more fun for us,” I said to him calmly, and he sobbed.

“You were the only one who learned I was planning to marry a Lycan to get the crown. How did Fredrick find out?” I asked him, and he shook his head.

“Someone else must have told him,” He said.

“Who? Qusack or Abraham? Because those are the only ones that knew of my plans,” I said, and he shook his head.

“I told your mother; I told her last week,” he said, and I frowned at him.

“And why will you do that?” I asked him, and he bowed his head.

“She is always asking for information,” He said.

“So you are her informant?” I asked him, and he nodded.

It was easier to say he was my mother’s informant than say he was working for Fredrick.

“If you say so, then perhaps my mother told her brother of my plans. I still do not appreciate people that volunteer information that isn’t theirs to give, Newton. I do not appreciate it at all,” I said, and Qusack punched him again so he could understand that his answer wouldn’t let him off the hook.

“I have evidence and eyewitnesses that saw you killing a Lycan in the woods. My mother was feral then, so do not say you were working for her. I also know you have been poisoning Gabriel. So I will ask you again. Who are the people you are working with? How many of you are spying for Fredrick in Forest?” I asked, and he tried to lie, but when Qusack raised his hands to punch him, he yelled for mercy.

“We are seventeen,” He said, and I was attentive.

“Ten are Hill spies put in place by Isaac Lucas of Peakland, and the remaining seven work for King Fredrick. We met the Peakland spies here, and

Fredrick asked us to work with them. Our charge is to report everything you do. Before you took over Forest, The Peakland spies were dormant. After the uprising, they were trapped in Forest because Gabriel would not allow communication with the outside world. They married werewolves to seem less threatening and have half breed children. Lisa is a daughter to one of them,” He said, and I did not know how to feel. Learning about Lisa was hard, but I composed myself and seemed uninterested in it.

“So, where is Isaac Lucas?” I asked, even though I knew he had died in battle with my father.

Newton was quiet for a while, as if speaking was difficult.

“I think he ran away during the battle and had been secretly communicating with his men. Lisa’s father would be the best to give you pointers in that regard. My duty was to ensure your mother did not regain her sanity. I was also asked to watch your activities and wait for King Fredrick to give me the go-ahead to finish you off. He did not want to kill you initially because you were achieving what he could not. Gabriel had made taking Forest impossible until you came along. After you took over, he asked me to finish you off, but you were inaccessible,” He said, and I could see that he was trying to say everything at once. Qusack’s punch must have been very painful. “What about the Lycans and werewolves you murdered in the forest?” I asked because I remember a series of murders during that time.

“They saw me giving information to Snow and Hill hunters. I did not kill them, just that one Lycan because he tried to fight and expose me. I had no choice,” He said, and Abraham cut in.

“So what changed?” Abraham asked.

“Forest Post office was working thanks to your reform, so we were instructed to start sending the letters through the post office,” He said. I now understood why Gabriel kept Forest in a time capsule; nothing was coming in or going out. It was to protect the region and incapacitate the enemies from within and without. I had broken down the barriers and created an opening for them without even knowing it.

“I want the names of everyone and their function. I want to know who they are working for and how long they have been spying on us.” I said, and the man nodded quickly.

“By the way, Where is Adam?” I said, going with my guess, and he shook his head.

“I do not know who Adam is,” he said, and there was some sincerity in his eyes.

“He was my doctor,” I said, and realisation dawned on his face.

“Fredrick must have had him abducted and killed before sending me to join your team,” he said, and his explanation was plausible. I was already on my conquest to reclaim Forest around that time, so it was possible that Fredrick would try to infiltrate my team to keep an eye on me.

“The spies on my cabinet?” I asked him as if I knew there were spies, and he shook his head.

“The only Spy we have on your Cabinet is Epsilon Jafet. He is useless because he never has useful information. The only information he gave us was when you demoted Ingham and when you demoted and humiliated your mother. Fredrick has tried to help him go up the ranks here, but we know you run a closed system,” he said, and I was shocked to learn of Jafet.

To think of it, Jafet was originally from Snow, a notorious condemned criminal who ran into the woods to escape death. He miraculously found my camp and sought my help.

Initially, I was wary, but I let him join once his story checked out.

Now I knew it was a ploy to get him in the ranks.

I was uncomfortable with him, so he was never part of my first four. Though overqualified, I just couldn't place him there, and he never got promoted from his position. He made a lot of effort and showed a lot of promise in battle and strategy, but I could never promote him. He should be Delta right now after I had demoted Ingham because he had the strength and agility for battle, but I had chosen Abraham instead. I did not know if it were luck, but I was glad because if that bastard was as close to me as Abraham was, I would have been finished.

“Secure the prisoner and bring in everyone he mentions on that list. Close down the post office and restrict movements. Call for a meeting; Grant and Ingham must be in attendance. It is time to start strategising,” I linked Abraham and Qusack and left the safe room.

I decided to head upstairs; I wanted Lisa away from Aliana as quickly as possible. She knew too much, and I did not know whose team she was on. I wouldn't have let her close to my mate if I had known about her father. I needed to do damage control fast. I cannot go to war if I have enemies in my home.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 79**

**Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman**

**Chapter 79 Cakes, Pies and Lisa (Aliana POV)**



The day trudged along at a snail's pace, and the heaviness of my sleep-filled morning lingered on. As I emerged from my slumber, I found Ania and Lisa engrossed in a lively game of cards at the coffee table, their laughter filling the room. Though I overheard Ania mention Erica's name, it failed to register in my groggy mind. Determined to shake off the sluggishness, I finally mustered the strength to get out of bed. Making my way towards the bathroom, I was greeted by Ania's cheerful voice.

"Good to see you up and about," she exclaimed, and I couldn't help but giggle in response.

"Refreshed," I replied, meeting her gaze, and she winked playfully.

"Alpha mentioned craving chocolate cake and coconut cream pie. Are you up for a kitchen adventure?" Ania asked, and I nodded eagerly.

"It's bound to be a marvellous experience," Lisa chimed in, laughing along.

"Let me freshen up, and then we can begin," I suggested, and both of them agreed wholeheartedly.

In a hurry, I took a quick shower and stepped out of the bathroom. Picking out something comfortable from the closet, I opted for a shirt and shorts, wanting to avoid any clumsiness while working in the kitchen. Although tempted to wear Nikolas's clothes, I decided against it at the last moment. Revealing sensitive information to potential spies was not a risk worth taking; my own attire would have to suffice for now.

Exiting the closet, I found the ladies ready to leave. Together, we left the room, embarking on our journey towards the kitchen. I silently prayed that we wouldn't encounter Isabelle along the way, and to my relief, my prayer was answered. We managed to navigate through the mansion without bumping into that woman. Stepping into the kitchen, a wave of relief washed over me, only to be short-lived as I laid eyes on Shirley, Qusack's date from our dinner with Prince Piotr and Natasha. Suppressing the urge to roll my eyes, I greeted her with a smile.

"Aliana," she said, trying to sound friendly, and I responded politely.

"What is the mistress doing in the kitchen? You really shouldn't be here, you know," she commented, and I couldn't discern if her words were meant to offend me or not. Nevertheless, I chose to shrug it off and replied calmly.

"Well, some of us still have work to do," I stated, causing her smile to fade.

"I find it rather unfair. You should be resting and have maids at your beck and call. Alpha is being unjust," she remarked, and I realised she was attempting to instigate trouble. Not that she could succeed, but in her mind, she believed it was possible.



"Why don't you take it up with him? I'd rather stay where I am, thank you," I retorted, cutting her off before she could say more.

"The conversation is becoming uncomfortable, Shirley. Let's not continue," I asserted, and she fell silent, getting the message. I hoped she would leave me alone, but she lingered in the kitchen, hovering around us.

"Tell me, Aliana, is Beta always so preoccupied or is he intentionally avoiding me? Since he escorted me home, I haven't heard from him. I'm becoming anxious, you see. I don't know if I offended him that night," she confessed, sounding genuinely concerned. I could understand her turmoil. If Qusack had snubbed her, it would naturally unsettle her, especially if she was unaware of her wrongdoing.

"Why don't you reach out to him?" I suggested, and she shook her head.

"A man should always make the first move," she replied, her tone dripping with arrogance. Her reaction reminded me why we all felt uneasy around her during dinner. She exuded excessive pride in her own allure.

"Well, Shirley, you might be waiting a long time," I remarked, breaking away from the conversation. Picking up a baking pan, I placed it on the kitchen island. That was when I noticed Ania seemed slightly annoyed, and I wondered what was bothering her.

"Are you alright?" I telepathically linked with Ania, and she nodded while continuing to sift the flour and cocoa powder into a mixing bowl.

I decided to let the matter go, as I knew Shirley had treated Ania poorly during dinner. I thought it was only natural for Ania not to want her presence around. "She's finally gone," I linked my friend, and she nodded in relief.

We took our time baking the chocolate cake, carefully preparing the frosting, and then moved on to making the coconut cream pie. Observing the assortment of desserts we were creating, I couldn't help but speculate that Nikolas must be in the mood for something sweet. It brought a small smile to my face. "Where are you?" Nikolas's voice echoed in my mind as we finished up in the kitchen.

"I'm in the kitchen," I responded through our telepathic connection.

"You should be resting, Little Wolf. Don't overexert yourself," he admonished, and I struggled to suppress a laugh.

"I need exercise, you know," I reminded him, sensing an underlying unease in his words.

"Are you with your maids?" he inquired. It had been a while since he referred to Ania and Lisa as maids, so I knew something was definitely amiss.

“Yes, I am,” I replied.

“I’m in the room. Kindly have them join you,” he ordered and I was perplexed by Nikolas’s unusual

As we wrapped up our kitchen activities, we decided to bring the desserts back to the room. Leaving them unattended would invite others to help themselves, and after investing so much time and effort into the preparations, we couldn’t risk that.

Entering the room, I was the first to step inside. We could all sense Nikolas’s sombre mood, and Ania and Lisa seemed ready to retreat after setting the table. Placing the pie down, I gazed at Nikolas, whose face betrayed no emotion. Instantly, I knew something was wrong. Joining him on the couch, he managed to offer me a smile, but his gaze turned to Lisa.

“Ania, close the door, and both of you stay,” he commanded abruptly. We all felt a surge of fear, and it wasn’t for my own sake—I was terrified for Lisa. Nikolas scrutinised her intensely, causing tears to well up in her eyes as she realised he was angry with her. Desperately, she looked at me, silently pleading for my intervention.

“Don’t drag Aliana into your mess, Lisa,” Nikolas snapped, his voice seething with anger.

“I want to know everything you’ve told your father about me and Aliana. I need to know every detail,” he demanded, his tone unwavering. Lisa, now on her knees, wept and confessed.

“I don’t speak to my father, Alpha. He left my mother before I was born, and she refuses to have any contact with him. I didn’t share anything about Aliana or you with anyone. I’m not a gossip,” she managed to say through her tears. I knew her words were true, as she had previously mentioned her father’s abandonment and her distaste for Lycans.

Nikolas’s rage dissipated, replaced by a frown.

“Do you know where your father is?” he inquired, and she nodded.

“He’s here in Riverhead. After you took over Forest, he relocated from Timber to Riverhead in an attempt to reconnect with my mother. However, she has steadfastly rejected him. I have no relationship with him, Alpha,” she explained, her voice filled with honesty. Just then, several guards entered our room and proceeded to arrest Lisa. Tears streaming down her face, she glanced at Nikolas.

“She told you the truth,” I interjected, perplexed as to why he would continue to humiliate her in this manner.

“I need to be sure,” he replied coldly, his resolve unyielding. It was clear that I wouldn’t be able to sway his decision.

“Take her to Beta Qusack for questioning,” he ordered the guards, and they led Lisa away. Ania was left in tears, her eyes filled with worry, likely fearing that she could be next.

“Her father is a spy who worked against my father and is now working against me. I need to ensure she isn’t feeding him information. I have too much at stake now,” he explained, his words final. I couldn’t bring myself to argue or plead Lisa’s case.

Ania was dismissed, and the atmosphere in the room grew heavy. Nikolas remained resolute, and I couldn’t shake off the feeling of helplessness. An hour passed, and he decided to leave the room, seemingly unsettled by the silence. But I couldn’t pretend that everything was alright, knowing Lisa’s plight.

“They’ve let me go, Aliana,” I heard Lisa’s voice resound in my mind thirty minutes after Nikolas left the room, and relief washed over me.

“I am not allowed to go home until my father is captured,” she added. Deep down, I knew that

Nikolas was the one who instructed her to contact me with the update. I hoped, for both our sakes, that nothing like this would happen again.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 80**

**Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman**

### **Chapter 80 Another Letter (Nikolas POV)**

Aliana’s heartache weighed heavily on me, but I was determined to root out any lurking spies in our midst, no matter the cost.

Lisa, dear and pure, presented a challenge, for treating her as I did tug at my heartstrings.

However, it was an unavoidable necessity. I hoped Aliana would find it in her heart to forgive me, for our future held paramount importance. She needed to understand that everything I undertook at present was for her and her people, who were also my own. I yearned for her not to make it an issue.

Qusack interrogated Lisa, and to my relief, her accounts checked out. Truly, her father had abandoned her mother before she came into this world, leaving no trace of a relationship.

The news brought solace, as I knew Aliana cherished her friendship. Tearing them apart would have been a sorrowful act. I expressed gratitude for the update and instructed Qusack to release Lisa. Moreover, I asked him to inform Aliana of her friend's freedom, so that her distress might subside.

Understanding the arduous task of seeking Aliana's forgiveness, I decided to acquire some flowers before returning to my chambers. Fully aware of her anger towards me, I planned to offer them as a token of appeasement. I engaged a florist to carefully select a bouquet of roses and have them delivered to my quarters within the palace.

As I made my way back to my room, Abraham reached out to inform me of a letter we had just received from the committee. Swiftly altering my course, I headed straight for my office. I wondered what urgent matter they wished to discuss. Knowing a meeting was held privately without me, made me wary of the letter's content.

Entering my office, I found Abraham waiting for me. Qusack was absent, undoubtedly dealing with other pressing matters.

"Good evening, Alpha," Abraham greeted me, to which I nodded in acknowledgement.

The letter lay untouched on my desk. Normally, Qusack would open and read the correspondence, but with his absence, Abraham had left it for me to peruse.

Sitting down in my chair, I let out a weary sigh. Abraham noticed my fatigue and inquired, "Rough day?"

I nodded in response, picking up the letter and examining it. Its contents carried a weight of discontent.

"Aliana is upset about what happened with Lisa," I confessed, studying the words on the page.

"She needs to brace herself and be strong. There are no sentiments in leadership. We are fortunate that Lisa proved not to be a spy. Imagine if she had been

working alongside her father, Fredrick and our enemies would have gained the upper hand," Abraham expressed.

"I believe she will understand once I take the time to explain," I relayed, looking at Abraham.

Ironically, I had never spoken of my intentions towards Aliana to Abraham, nor had I revealed the depths of my feelings for her. Yet, somehow, he seemed to have perceived it. Whom was I fooling? My affection for her was undoubtedly apparent.

Opening the letter, I read its contents:

“Dear Alpha Nikolas Kowalski,

We write this letter in good conscience, hoping you read it with understanding. We have been made aware of certain issues concerning your recent activities and the blatant disregard for the Unity Law.

Some alphas have accused you of disrespect and refusing to respond to their requests.

Rules govern us, and disregarding them would be ill- advised.

Despite not yet being king, you and the other alphas are equalled.

It is highly disrespectful to disregard your equals as you have. Believing this to be a mere misunderstanding, and assuming no ill intent on your part, I have decided that you shall host the next committee meeting in Forest on the 13th. This will allow us to observe the state of the region and explore avenues for its rapid development.

Please remember that this is a friendly letter, and we sincerely hope for your success.

Alpha Olsen Sadowski”

Suppressing the urge to crumple the letter in my fist, I acknowledged the gravity of the situation.

It was not a request but an order. They wanted me to host the meeting so they could infiltrate Forest and spy on me.

Furthermore, they conveniently omitted to mention the Snow meeting to which I was not invited, effectively isolating me from their activities.

I resolved to seek counsel from Gabriel on how to handle this matter. While I couldn't prevent them from coming, I could thwart their nefarious plans within our borders.

Abraham, exhausted as he was, and I engaged in a thorough discussion about the letter. He assured me he would inform Gabriel of the situation, seeking his advice. I also instructed him to relay the message to Qusack.

Returning to my chambers, I found Aliana reclining on the couch, sipping juice. The presence of the flowers in the room reminded me of where we had left off. Curiosity tempted me to steal a glimpse, but she surprised me with a radiant smile as if nothing had transpired.

“I adored the flowers,” she remarked swiftly, leaving me astounded by her sudden change in mood. I had anticipated her initial anger, yet I was mistaken.

Rising from the couch, she approached me, her robe slightly ajar, revealing a glimpse of the lace lingerie I had gifted her from Peakland. I wondered when she would wear the rest of them. Instantly, my face lit up, and I used my hands to open her robe further, revelling in the sight before me. She was resplendent. "Black suits you, Little Wolf," I whispered, my lips grazing her earlobe, eliciting a delightful giggle and moan. I had anticipated resistance, but it seemed there was no friction between us. Still, I understood the necessity of a proper apology.

Drawing her closer, I nibbled at her neck, feeling a rush of exhilaration.

"I apologise for what transpired with Lisa, Little Wolf," I confessed, and she gently pulled away, her eyes meeting mine.

"It was necessary. She explained everything to me. There's no need to apologise for striving to keep us safe. I, too, apologise for my initial attitude," she expressed, and relief washed over me as we reached an understanding. Nonetheless, I felt the need to offer a more heartfelt apology.

Scooping her up in my arms, I carried her to bed, carefully removing her robe and laying her down on the sheets. She looked breathtaking. I went to work, for each time I made love to Aliana, it was an experience unlike any other.

I gently caressed her voluptuous curves, my fingertips tracing the contours of her tender bosom, evoking a passionate sigh from her lips. The intoxicating scent of her desire filled the air, enveloping us in a haze of anticipation. In that moment, she belonged to me completely, her body aflame with readiness.

With tender care, I unfastened the delicate clasp of her bra, unveiling her supple breasts as my hands explored their silken terrain. As I drew her nipple into my mouth, one by one, a symphony of pleasure escaped her throat, a sweet melody that reached the depths of my soul. Her plea for consummation tantalised my senses, her hand stretching towards my waistband in an ardent invitation.

Unable to resist her allure, I succumbed to the passion that coursed through my veins, surrendering myself to the depths of her being. Our bodies merged, intertwining with an intensity that spoke volumes of our love. With each movement, I sought to convey the depth of my devotion, illustrating to her the sheer magnitude of her significance in my life.

As our ardor intensified, we cascaded into waves of ecstasy, finally collapsing upon the bed, our spent bodies intertwined. Though physically weary, my heart soared, buoyed by the knowledge that no matter what challenges may arise, she would forever remain by my side. With newfound courage, I embraced the future, secure in the enduring bond we shared.

Afterwards, lying together in bed, spent and content, I decided it was time to disclose what lay ahead, allowing her to prepare herself.

“There may be a war on the horizon,” I began, and in an instant, she exclaimed, sitting up straight in bed. I joined her, wrapping my arms around her and holding her close.

“I have discussed it with your father, and he is willing to assist. The truth is, Fredrick, would never allow me to ascend the throne. If I continue to play politics with that bastard, I risk losing everything, including my life. Besides, I desire our child to be born into freedom,” I confessed, tenderly placing my hand upon her abdomen, where a faint bulge indicated new life.

“Recently, I discovered that my father never signed the Unity Law decree or the decree about the slave trade. Someone intercepted the letters and forged his signature on those decrees. I suspect his right-hand man, whom I’ve just learned may still be alive. I also discovered that Lisa’s father and others work for him. That’s why I took those precautions. And you were right about Dr Newton—he is a spy working for

Fredrick. It’s all a tangled mess, Aliana. I need you to be strong for me. I promised your father that I would do right by you, and I have no choice but to fulfil that promise because you mean everything to me, Aliana. Please know that I intend to win this battle and claim the crown through force,” I revealed.

“I have decided to declare myself as the Forest King and await Fredrick’s response. They plan to hold a

committee meeting in Forest. I know it is an opportunity for them to communicate with their spies and assess my strength. Although I cannot deny them entry, I plan to reduce the werewolf population in Forest, creating the illusion that I do not possess a significant number of werewolves here. With Hill and Snow’s spies apprehended, there will be no one left to inform them otherwise,” I informed her, observing the worry in her eyes as her fingers gently traced patterns on my cheek. Her eyes glistened with tears. “I’ve always known it might come to this. Please be wise and stay safe. Know that you have my unwavering support in whatever you decide, and I will stand by your side until the very end,” she assured me, bolstering my confidence with her unwavering loyalty. All that remained now was to set our plans into motion.