

# Forged In The Flames Chapter 81

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

## Chapter 81 The Snake In Forest (Nikolas POV)

The morning arrived, signalling the time to put my plans into action. I needed to evacuate the werewolf population in Riverhead and move them to Woodland, where they would be safe and hidden. Only a few individuals would remain behind to continue working on projects.

I had sent for Grant and Ingham to join me, as it was crucial to prepare everyone for the upcoming events. I knew that the meeting with the committee wouldn't bring any positive outcomes, but I was willing to comply to avoid raising suspicion until I was fully prepared.

When I entered my office, I found Gabriel and Israel waiting for me. Qusack and Abraham were also present, and they all stood up to greet me. I answered their greetings and took my usual seat behind the desk.

I looked at them to examine their mood before proceeding. Gabriel and Abraham did not look like they had enough sleep so I figured they were up working together.

I would have to tell Abraham not to overwork Gabriel because of his health. Although the doctor had given the man a clean bill of health, it wasn't wise to overwork him again.

Pushing my thoughts aside, I decided to table the matter at hand.

"I want to relocate the majority of the werewolf population to Woodland," I stated, and Qusack seemed confused while Gabriel wasn't surprised. He already knew my intentions. I understood why my father had chosen him as his second-in-command; he was quick to reason.

"You want to make it seem like the werewolf population in Forest is smaller. Are we expecting visitors?" Gabriel asked, aware that would be the only reason I would want to create such an illusion. Abraham seemed pleased about something, and I asked him what was going on.

"I told you he was awesome," Abraham responded, referring to Gabriel's insights. I sighed and refocused my attention on Gabriel. "Please have a seat. Let me brief you on what's happening," I said, and Gabriel complied. His humility was admirable, especially for an Alpha who rarely obeyed orders easily. I didn't command him; I simply asked, and he obliged. Aliana's stubbornness must have come from her mother, as Gabriel was quite different.

“The alpha committees have been pressuring me to participate in the slave trade, but I have refused. I’ve been using the excuse that the werewolf population in Forest is small, and I cannot spare any slaves. However, this response hasn’t been well-received by many of them. They recently held a private meeting without inviting me, hosted by King Frederick, where they expressed their displeasure with my refusal and lack of compliance. Fortunately, I was informed about this meeting by a trusted friend. Now they have decided to hold a committee meeting in Forest on the thirteenth, just a few days from now. I don’t want them to sense my rebellion until we’re fully prepared,” I explained, and Gabriel nodded in understanding.

“So, you want to make the werewolf population appear smaller to reinforce your reasons for not participating in the slave trade,” Gabriel summarized, and I agreed with his assessment. “Will the kings be present at the meeting, or only the alphas?” he inquired, but I didn’t have that information.

“The letter didn’t specify,” I replied, and Gabriel sighed.

“You must be cautious. If Fredrick himself or his representative attends, it won’t be for the meeting alone; they’ll likely be here to gather information about our territory. Fredrick has had his eyes on Forest for a long time. He will do anything to acquire it. Snow, despite its rich

iron ore and coal lands, has fallen on hard times. Frederick needs our resources to revive the Snow economy and control other lands, and he won’t let anything hinder him,” Gabriel warned. Intrigued, I leaned forward and asked him for his suggestions.

“So, what would you suggest I do?” I asked.

“Reply to the letter, allowing each party to bring a maximum of one person. Blame it on the lack of staff and limited food storage. Let them know that you can’t accommodate more than one guest per party, considering the current circumstances. There are a total of forty-three individuals expected. Then position your men in the shadows to keep an eye on them. Each man will monitor two guests, and they must be Lycans to maintain communication range. In case there’s an issue or something suspicious, they will alert you. Above all, don’t get too friendly with Fredrick or let your guard down around him.

Avoid eating or drinking while he’s nearby. I know his tactics, and he might attempt something malicious while in Forest. As long as it’s not his territory, he can’t be held accountable,” Gabriel advised, providing me with a plan for handling the guests.

“Qusack, fetch me a pen and paper for the reply,” I instructed my Beta, and he immediately got to work. He brought the necessary materials, including sealing wax and a stamp. I put the pen on the paper and started writing.

“Esteemed Olsen Sadowski,

I am delighted to receive news of the committee's decision to hold this month's meeting in Forest. I take great pleasure in extending a warm invitation to each of you in the magnificent setting of the Forest. However, I humbly request that each alpha kindly bring only one guest, if necessary. This request stems from the fact that we currently have limited staff and inadequate food supplies due to the scarcity of slaves in Forest.

I hope that this communication doesn't offend the esteemed committee but serves as evidence of my sincere desire to comply with the present circumstances. I eagerly await your visit with great anticipation.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,

Prince Nikolas Kowalski"

I closed the letter with my royal title to convey that I wasn't deterred by Fredrick's nonsense. Once the ink had dried, I handed the letter to Gabriel for him to read, and he nodded in approval.

"Your penmanship is exquisite," Gabriel said and I knew he meant no harm by it. He grazed his hands through the writing in complete awe of my skills.

It was normal for him to feel that way, Afterall I grew up in the wilderness.

"I took it upon myself to improve. There was no way I planned to be a king and succeed while depending heavily on scholars. Ignorance isn't bliss in matters of leadership, it is foolishness that could effortlessly birth failure," I said repeating my mother's words. He looked at me and smiled.

"Those were King Mathia's popular words. He said it too many times that it became etched in our memories," Gabriel said reminiscing.

Gabriel smiled, recalling the popular words of my father, which I had adopted as well. My mother never mentioned that it was my father's saying. In fact, she rarely shared any information with me, always choosing her words carefully. Her mental state had always been questionable, and it was evident that her transformation didn't happen overnight.

"My mother used to tell me those words while we were in the woods," I mentioned, and Gabriel's face registered a hint of sadness.

He somehow blamed himself for my upbringing, but I had come to accept it as destiny, considering all the evidence we had uncovered. I couldn't blame him at all; he was caught in the midst of a hatred that extended far beyond him.

"It's not your fault," I assured him through our link, and he looked at me, battling his emotions.

"If I had known he wouldn't grant her asylum, I wouldn't have asked her to leave," he confessed, and I nodded to let him know that it was okay. It had all worked together for good. It had made me a strong, independent man and allowed me to see things from a different perspective. It was a blessing in disguise.

"The letter is perfect. I'll send it now," Qusack said, folding the letter and placing it in an envelope. He melted the wax and stamped it with my seal to authenticate the letter and ensure its security. Since it was a normal letter without any threats, it was safe to go through the regular postal service.

Qusack excused himself to deliver the letter to the post office, which was conveniently located near the palace. Abraham spoke up once Qusack had left. His emotions seemed to be a mix of excitement and concern.

"After everything that happened yesterday, Gabriel, Israel, and I took the opportunity to go through some correspondence. Gabriel found something important that will shock you," Abraham revealed, and I raised an eyebrow, expressing my impatience with the suspense and urging him to continue.

"In addition to the damning correspondence we found between your mother and her brother three weeks before the uprising, we also discovered letters exchanged between Asci Cauls and King Fredrick," he disclosed, capturing my full attention. It didn't surprise me that my mother was involved in this mess. The signs had been there all along, and we didn't need to search hard to find them.

"Asci Cauls wrote to Fredrick from Forest?" I asked, and Abraham nodded.

"That's what caught our attention. The names were all coded, but Gabriel managed to decipher them," he explained.

"Tell me," I urged him, my impatience evident. Abraham nudged Gabriel to speak up.

"Asci Cauls is an anagram for Isaac Lucas," Gabriel revealed, and I was shocked. I had suspected that treacherous individual when I questioned Newton, but I never expected him to be so close to home. He was a snake. Why did Aleksander recommend such a person to work as my father's right hand? Who appointed him? Did they not conduct any background checks? Weren't there loyal Lycans in Forest that my father could trust? My father's decision to hire an outsider still baffled me.

"I can't believe Aleksander would recommend a snake to work for his friend. I can't believe he was involved," I exclaimed, expressing my shock and disbelief. Gabriel quickly shook his head.

“Relax, Your Highness. Let me explain everything in detail,” he said, trying to calm me down. Rage was building inside me because, for a moment, I trusted the Hill King.

“The seal on Isaac Lucas’s recommendation letter is a fake. It’s a good replica, but it didn’t come from the Hill King. If Mathias had attended to the letter, he would have noticed, but your mother handled it and approved the recommendation.

She signed her own name and your father’s on the document.

While her signature was accurate, your father’s signature was inconsistent with his actual one.

That’s how we figured out that she had signed it. The forger replicated her signature correctly but failed to replicate your father’s correctly.

It wasn’t a convincing attempt.

It’s astonishing how they managed to pass it off.

At first, I believed Isabelle’s involvement was due to ignorance, but the other evidence we found was incriminating. Once Isaac Lucas started working for your father, the correspondence was written using anagrams for the names. That’s what caught the attention of the record keeper. I believe Isaac Lucas sensed that the half-breed record keeper was onto him, so he killed him. We’ll never know the exact details since there are no documents to confirm it, but one thing is certain: the record keeper was onto them, so they had to eliminate him,” Gabriel explained, and I sighed. Abraham presented me with some letters, and I knew it was going to be a long morning.

He handed me the first letter.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 82**

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**Chapter 82 Deceit Uncovered (Nikolas POV)**

I prepared myself for what was written in the letter I held in my hand. I was scared that I would discover something terrible and would have to take action against my mother.

The letter began with a formal greeting to someone named Cerf Dirk. It expressed the hope that the recipient was in good health and peace. The writer mentioned a troubling situation involving a person named Aa Smith, who had become intrusive and suspicious of their actions. They requested a temporary halt to their plans until the situation calmed down. “Dear Cerf Dirk, 2

I sincerely hope this correspondence finds you in a state of well-being and tranquillity. It is with a heavy heart that I address the current situation that has unfolded involving Aa Smith, a person who has become increasingly intrusive and suspicious of our endeavours. In light of these circumstances, I beseech you to temporarily suspend your plans until this turbulent storm settles.

Regrettably, Aa Smith's disapproval extends not only to our associate, Asci Cauls but also to our collective actions. Just yesterday, they uttered words that conveyed their desire to sever all ties. I fervently hope that their stance will change in the near future, bringing forth reconciliation and understanding. The spectre of conflict looming over this region weighs heavily upon me, and I implore you to respect our heartfelt plea for respite.

Please be aware that this will be the final message you receive from our hand. Aa Smith, having emerged from their period of solitude, will henceforth wield full authority and control. I humbly entreat you to withdraw your

involvement, guided by the knowledge that Aa Smith will never compromise the well-being of their constituents. At this juncture, I gracefully withdraw from this endeavour, acknowledging that while I have done my utmost, I refuse to sacrifice that which is most precious to me to further the cause.

May you find solace and prosperity in your future endeavours.

With utmost sincerity,

Abel Isle,"

It seemed that Aa Smith's disapproval extended not only to their associate, Asci Cauls, but also to their collective actions. The writer expressed a desire for reconciliation and understanding in the future, hoping that Aa Smith's stance would change. They mentioned the heavy burden of conflict in their region and asked for respect and respite.

The writer informed the recipient that this would be their final letter. Aa Smith, having finished their period of mourning, would now have full authority and control. They requested the recipient to withdraw their involvement, trusting that Aa Smith would prioritise the well-being of their constituents. The writer gracefully withdrew from their endeavor, acknowledging that they wouldn't sacrifice what was most precious to them for their cause.

The letter was signed with utmost sincerity by Abel Isle.

Although the writer ensured they avoided using specific pronouns to avoid giving away gender, I understood its contents.

I looked at Gabriel, seeking clarification.

He decoded the names mentioned in the letter, explaining that Aa Smith referred to Mathias, Abel Isle referred to Isabelle, and Asci Cauls referred to Isaac Lucas.

I stared at the letter, wishing I could confront my mother with its contents. However, I knew it was impossible to approach her using the anagram as evidence. She would find a way to escape it, and there was no guarantee she would tell the truth. It was her nature to avoid accountability.

“I can’t believe she would do this,” I said, placing the letter down.

“It’s true, Alpha. Your mother knew what Fredrick was planning and pleaded with him to stop, knowing it could lead to a fight. I suspect those three individuals were involved in the past events. Your mother intercepted Gabriel’s letters and ensured none reached the king.

Gabriel couldn’t see the king because he was in mourning. The damage they caused in just six months was immeasurable,” Abraham explained, handing me another letter.

“What your mother didn’t know was that her brother had no intention of playing fair. While she believed that all Fredrick wanted was for Mathias to agree to the slave trade, he had bigger, undisclosed plans. Only he and Isaac Lucas knew of these plans, and they didn’t involve her or her well-being.

The second letter is a correspondence between Asci Claus and Cerf Dirk,” he pointed out, referring to the letter he had given me. I saw the pain on Gabriel’s face, realising the extent of the damage that had been caused.

I read the letter in my hand, fearing what it would reveal. Once something is known, it cannot be unknown.

The letter began with a greeting to Cerf Dirk and conveyed gratifying news about their plans yielding the desired outcome.

“Dear Cerf Dirk,

I am pleased to convey the gratifying news that our plans have yielded the desired outcome. The population of interest has undergone a significant reduction, attributable to the scarcity of funds and resources that have exerted a profound impact on their numbers and overall resilience. Consequently, the conditions are now ripe for an imminent Navinsio.

However, I find it imperative to bring to your attention the hesitations exhibited by Abel

Isles, which have unfortunately impeded the progress of my work. Although the exact cause of their apprehension remains ambiguous, it is undeniably interfering with the seamless execution of our objectives. Regrettably, it appears necessary to take

measures to silence both Abel Isles and Aa Smith, thereby removing any potential obstacles that might impede the advancement of our plans.

I eagerly anticipate your prompt response, as it is crucial for me to receive your guidance and approval to proceed expeditiously.

Yours Faithfully,

Asci Cauls”

After reading the letter I figured Navinsio meant Invasion.

However, the writer felt it was necessary to address the hesitations expressed by Abel Isles, which had hindered the progress of their work. Although the exact cause of Abel Isles’ apprehension remained unclear, it undeniably interfered with the seamless execution of their objectives. Regrettably, it seemed essential to silence both Abel Isles and Aa Smith to eliminate potential obstacles that could impede their plans.

The contents of the letter shocked me.

Isaac Luis had planned to kill my mother.

Fredrick had never been interested in the Unity law; he had only wanted to manipulate my father and Gabriel and seize control of Forest.

“So, they instigated the uprising?” I questioned, and Gabriel reluctantly acknowledged that I was correct.

“We fell into their trap, Mathias and I,” he admitted, his voice heavy with the weight of guilt. It was a miracle that he had managed to remain strong all these years. He was undoubtedly a resilient man.

“Do you know who wrote the response sent to the werewolves?” I asked, but Abraham shook his head.

“The Record Keeper was already murdered by then. Considering everything we’ve learned, it’s evident that Asci Cauls sent that response, not Isabelle. At that time, Isabelle was trying to save her marriage and had distanced herself from the plan,” Abraham concluded, reaching a logical conclusion.

“I now understand why the king refused to grant her asylum,” Gabriel added, his tone filled with regret.

“It wasn’t just because she asked for her share of her father’s property; he was angry and disappointed. He must have expected her to remain so that Forest would be vulnerable to invasion.



But how could she, when she was outnumbered?

The werewolves and half-breed Lycans were more. Even the Lycans among us had no choice but to surrender. Isabelle couldn't rule successfully in her husband's place. Everyone wanted a piece of her, seeking retribution for their suffering and losses. Many lives were lost during those months. I had to send her away to protect both of you," Gabriel explained remorsefully.

Now we knew how deeply involved Fredrick was in all of this. The downside was that none of this evidence was admissible, and with the entire committee under his control, it wouldn't matter.

If I had known all of this earlier, I would have targeted Snow instead of Forest. I would have slowly eroded his kingdom until I took it over. Now, I had to go on the defensive and offensive to achieve my goals because Fredrick still desired Forest.

It seemed his obsession was not solely about resources; he wanted to replicate his ancestor's conquest of Snow by conquering Forest from the werewolves and half-breeds. Just like his sister, he was a sick man.

"We have our work cut out for us," I declared, and we all fell silent. It was clear that the path ahead would be challenging. Something that initially seemed simple had led us down a complex rabbit hole.

At that moment, Qusack returned, and Abraham and Israel briefed him on everything we had learned. They handed him the letters, and as he read through them, I could see the rage building in his eyes. I also noticed something different about Qusack, but I kept it to myself—a faint lipstick stain on his collar. Judging by the scent, I could guess whose it was. I decided to remain silent and wait for him to open up about it.

After the meeting, Gabriel and Isreal left to gather the werewolf population and relocate them to a safe place in the Woodlands. We needed to ensure there weren't many werewolves in Forest when our adversaries arrived. This would buy us time to build our military strength and prepare for what lay ahead. I considered confronting my mother about what I had learned, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. I didn't want to lose my temper with her. She had deeply disappointed both my father and me and had aided his enemy in plotting his murder. It was a lot to process. I doubted I would allow her to remain in Forest after all this. She represented everything that was wrong in our world.

The only good thing she had done, albeit unintentionally, was giving birth to me. I knew her sole purpose was to instill hatred in me so I would enact her revenge. She had achieved her goal, to some extent, and I would carry that regret for the rest of my life.

I had directed my anger at the wrong people. I had arrived in Forest consumed by rage and vengeance, when in truth, I should have directed that energy towards Snow, for

taking everything from me and destroying my home. It was a regret I would have to live with.

After the meeting, I decided to return upstairs to take Aliana for a walk. It had been a while since we strolled in the garden and the woods. Now that I knew what needed to be done, the spies were locked up, and there was no need to pretend anymore.

I entered my room and, as usual, found Aliana on the couch, engrossed in a book. She always had her nose buried in them. I often wondered what she read, occasionally catching glimpses of crime mysteries and romances on the covers. I was glad she had a way to keep herself occupied. If my mother had been like her, my father would still be alive. Instead, she was busy scheming, keeping secrets, and championing a cause that wasn't even hers to begin with.

Aliana looked surprised to see me, and a smile formed on her face. She put down her book and came towards me.

"Early," she said as I wrapped my arms around her, holding her close. I breathed in her scent and then leaned in to kiss her neck.

"I couldn't stay away," I managed to say, and she chuckled.

Breaking the embrace, I glanced around, wondering where Ania and Lisa were.

"What about your friends?" I asked, and Aliana shrugged.

"Lisa went to the kitchen to prepare dinner, while Ania went somewhere. But I think she's in the kitchen now," Aliana replied. I smiled.

I did not need to wonder where Ania was, I just hoped whatever she had going with Qusack would blossom and they wouldn't have to hide anymore.

"How are you feeling today?" I asked, and she nodded, smiling at me.

"I'm feeling great," she replied. "That's wonderful to hear. I want us to take a stroll in the garden and hunt in the forest. Do you think you're up for it?" I asked, and she beamed at me. "Raven will be thrilled!" she exclaimed. Her eyes sparkled with life, and I could see the joy radiating from her.

Aliana had a way of making simple things feel grand. She found joy in everything and made my troubles disappear.

It wasn't just the mate bond; it was her personality that brought peace and tranquillity to our relationship.

She was perfect for me, and I couldn't believe that I had once contemplated hurting her. A tinge of shame washed over me, and I didn't want to relive the memories of tormenting myself and denying the gift of happiness bestowed upon me by the goddess.

She headed to the closet to change, and soon we were ready to go. With our hands intertwined, I led her out of the room, ready to embrace the day and momentarily forget about our troubles.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 83**

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### **Chapter 83 Summit (Nikolas POV)**

The day of the meeting was finally upon us. Gabriel and Isreal had done an excellent job evacuating the werewolves and sending them to Woodland.

We had Lycans fill in for them in their duties, leaving just a few to demonstrate the level of the scarcity we were experiencing in the Labour market.

The palace was big enough to accommodate the guests for one night, and Gabriel had supervised cleaning the dormant wings to ensure room and boarding for all.

Although I intended for them to leave after the meeting, Gabriel had advised me otherwise, considering the distance they would have to travel to get home. It was only humane that I provided them with accommodation for the night. I suspected it would be a long night because I did not plan to sleep with them around.

We stationed military, both newly trained and professionals, around the palace to protect and guard our interests should our guests decide to be disrespectful and throw my hospitality back in our faces.

The biggest challenge was getting the right mix of women for entertainment.

I did not trust the Lycans, who could be easily swayed and divulge information. It could hurt our plans. I decided to settle for Halfbreeds. They had just as much to lose as the werewolves, and they would not work against me because Forest was heaven compared to the other part.

Ania had promised to help source for good dancers, and I left her to it. Since it was no longer a secret that I had a werewolf mistress, I ensured Aliana had the appropriate attire should they request to meet her. One thing was sure; I would not let anyone disrespect her.

We were still unsure if Fredrick would come himself or if he would send a representative; likewise, Aleksander, we would just have to be ready to be surprised.

Whether they were present or not, it won't change much.

The werewolf Omegas did an excellent job with the palace, which looked beautiful.

Though old, it did not look rundown. It looked like an expensive antique that was priceless.

The woods, stairs, chairs, tables and floors were polished. Everything looked neat and in good condition. It still had the dark antique feel but was expensive and intimidating.

I was proud of the place.

Most of the projects were close to completion. It might not be as developed as the other regions, but it did not look like it suffered much.

Riverhead looked like it was on its way to becoming a mega city. I was proud of the work and hoped we would complete it as a kingdom, not a territory.

I would lie if I said I wasn't nervous about the meeting. I was worried. I could not anticipate how the events would turn out.

I did not know if I would be the winner or loser.

Honestly, it didn't matter, but it was necessary to buy time. I wanted to be ready before I declared myself as King.

I did not want them to suspect my intentions and attack me when I least expected it when my army was not ready.

I wanted to be prepared because it was a battle that would be fought once, and there could only be one winner.

I stood at the entrance to admire the place; Ania linked me to inform me the hall was ready, and they had arranged the snacks and drinks for entertainment.

Unlike Fredrick, I planned to be a good host.

Give people something to nibble on while we discuss serious matters. Aliana and Ania were in charge of the menu, and I knew they would do an excellent Job. Aliana was my Luna; after all, it was best she started getting used to these things.

Gabriel walked to me, dressed in a clean shirt and khaki trousers. He looked neat and put together; although he won't be a part of the event, it was good to see him dressed appropriately.

"Your Highness," he stated, and I was attentive.

"Since they have decided that you host the meeting, they know that you are royalty because only kings can host meetings. Because of that, we have staged three seats to preside over the meeting; You will sit on one as the event host," he said with a wicked grin.

I figured that would happen because Abraham had mentioned something like that. Although I knew shifting the meeting to Forest wasn't to honour my status as royalty but to spy on me, I would use it to the fullest of my advantage.

I thanked Gabriel for the information and watched him walk away.

I left the entrance and entered my office. No one was there, so I closed the door and sat on my chair. Taking a deep breath, I closed my eyes and tried to listen to the people's conversations at the gate. I could only listen to mind links: Most people knew that by now, so they were careful when linking each other, especially Aliana. I am still yet to figure out how she knew of my abilities.

I listened hard and did not get anything, so I reached out to the head of the guards at the gate. "Malcolm, what is the situation?" I asked, wanting to know if guests had started arriving because I was expecting people from Snow to have arrived by now.

"Kelvin said they had just crossed the outpost in a convoy. All from Snow, so they should arrive at the gate in fifteen minutes," He replied, and I closed the communication.

I focused and chose to link everyone in Riverhead at once.

"The visitors are on their way in. I want everyone to remain in character and keep decorum. It is a meeting, not a war," I linked everyone and broke the connection.

"What should I do?" I heard Aliana's voice in my head.

"Be calm, little wolf; you and your friends can go to the room. I will come and get you if needed," I said.

"Okay," She replied, trusting me completely, and I closed the connection. There was no way I was going to give her up. Not even for the crown.

The guest started arriving, and Qusack took it upon himself to welcome them. According to tradition, I must wait until all the guests are seated before entering the hall.

I decided to remain in my office.

Ania and Lisa had to leave Aliana alone to join the halfbreeds in serving the snacks and drinks while they waited for the meeting to start.

I was informed When King Aleksander arrived, and I knew Fredrick would come himself.

Some of the Alphas took the liberty to use the plus one invitation and brought either mates or mistresses who were ushered to the rooms assigned to the Alpha they were attached to.

I learned that Piotr was Aleksander's plus one, and I wondered who would be Fredrick's plus one.

I hoped for my sake that it wasn't Gwendolyn. I wouldn't put it past Fredrick to pull off a stunt like that just to destabilise me.

Thinking about the things he could do, I knew I would have to keep Gabriel far away from the guy so he does not get him worked up by telling him he was screwing his mate and had claimed.

It was sad because the only thing that could free Gwendolyn was Fredrick's death, something I hoped to deliver on a platter.

"Gabriel, I will appreciate it if you stay clear of the palace. I do not want you to have any interactions with the bastard. I hope that is fine," I told him, and he obeyed me.

With Gabriel away from the palace, I doubted Fredrick would go to see him.

Gabriel was insignificant, and since I had confirmed I did not know who Gwen was, he might not try to use that.

Thirty minutes later, I learned Fredrick had arrived with Miles Gordon. Honestly, I did not see that coming. I did not expect that he would show up with Miles in Forest. I wondered what my uncle was playing at. Unfortunately for him, I was ready, and my mind was already made up.

It was finally time for me to join the meeting. Just as Fredrick had entered grandly in Snow, Grant announced my presence.

"His Highness, Alpha Nikolas Kowalski," He said, and the grand double French door was opened wide for me to walk down the aisle between the rows of seats where the floor members sat that led to the three chairs.

The alphas all stood up to pay their respects, some willing, others did it out of necessity, and I walked majestically down the aisle.

The three chairs were already occupied, and a man that looked like my father's portrait was sitting on the third chair meant for me.

I held his gaze, and he stood up immediately, moving away from the chair. His actions did not please my uncle, and it was evident on his face.

I had used my compulsion on him. In those few seconds, Bane had conquered his wolf in the battle of dominance.

Undoubtedly, he was my brother, but I wouldn't let sentiments blind me. I might not resemble my father like this man, but I knew I was a Kowalski.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 84**

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### **Chapter 84 Summit 2 (Nikolas POV)**

I got to the steps leading to the platform where the chairs were. I stood and looked up at the two kings.

The Alphas sat down.

It was now my turn to pay respect to the Kings that were present. I bowed to King Fredrick and Aleksander, climbed up the platform, and took my seat.

Abraham and Qusack sat on the floor with the other alphas, representing Forest. One day Alphas in Forest will occupy some of the seats, too, and it won't just be my officers and me.

"Have you met the real heir?" King Fredrick said, and I looked at Miles.

"I am thrilled to meet the son of my father's mistress. If that is what you claim, but according to records, Olive was buried with her child," I said and looked at Abraham to bring the records. He nodded, letting me know he could get it if requested.

There was a look of dissatisfaction on Fredrick's face.

"Unless you can prove beyond reasonable doubt that this isn't a fabrication and Miles Gordon is the son of King Mathias, I say we drop it and move to more pressing matters," I said, and everyone was silent, I

I looked at Miles to study him. He stood tall and regal; he was handsome, and unlike me, he had no visible scars, but something was broken about him. I did not want to imagine what it was like for him growing up in Snow at the mercy of my evil uncle.

I did not know how to reach out to him, but unfortunately, he was on the wrong team, so I will treat him as an enemy for now.

“Well, everyone can see the resemblance between Miles and Mathais,” Fredrick said, laughing, and King Aleksander interrupted him. “Well, as everyone can see, Nikolas has his eyes, and his mother was Mathias’s wife. There is also no record of Mathais disowning or rejecting her baby. You chose to dismiss all that and still tried to disqualify Nikolas,” Aleksander said, and Fredrick growled.

“You are the King of Snow, and I am King of Hill; we wield equal strength on this council. You do not get to pick and choose which law to obey and which to bend. Since you have decided to disqualify your nephew because of the stupid grudge between you and your sister, you have also disqualified the Halfbreed.

It also troubles me how you got your hands on Mathia’s son if that is what he is. Because I know, Mathias never liked you.

If you choose to pursue this path, you will be digging a hole you won’t be able to cover up, Fredrick. Now, skip the whole nonsense and move to the following action.

The thing that brought us here. Our trade deal and assessing the Prince to see if he has kept up his side of the bargain,” Aleksander said forcefully, and I was impressed by his bravery. 2

I looked at Piotr with a question in my eyes, wondering what had come over the Hill King that made him grow ball overnight.

Piotr shrugged and smiled, but I knew there was more to it than that, and I hoped he would share it with me soon.

Miles went to sit next to Piotr on the floor, and I couldn’t help but let my eye wander to him.

I could not believe I had a sibling. This wasn’t the kind of atmosphere I would have wanted our meeting to be, but unfortunately, it was. I would just have to wait and see how things go.

“So, let us discuss the matter that brought us here,” Alpha Olsen said, and we were attentive.

“First, I will start by thanking his highness, Prince Nikolas, for granting us an audience and agreeing to host us under short notice.

We were not expecting the warm welcome we received in Forest, but we are grateful that you are not the type to bear a grudge.



We also want to use this opportunity to apologize to you for how things went in Snow during our last meeting.

Some harsh truths were divulged, and we hope it has not changed your opinion about our community,” He said, and I just smiled, knowing he had lied because that wasn’t the last meeting; it was just the meeting I was fortunate to attend.

“Indeed, we have seen all the construction works going on and also noticed the tireless efforts exerted to bring this place to life. One thing that baffles me is that we had reports that the werewolf population was much, but it seems there are more werewolves in Peakland than in Riverhead. Please tell us why that is,” he said and sat.

I had already rehearsed my reply, so it wasn’t a difficult question.

“Taking Forest wasn’t easy. I had to chip away bit by bit. Conquering it, pack by pack, territory by territory, until I had isolated Riverhead and boxed them in.

They expended a lot of their military and citizens to push back, and in the process, they lost a chunk of their population. Some have also died due to insufficient care, so I am building the werewolf hospital. I can’t have a mega city without slaves to help me build it,” I said, and the word ‘slave’ sounded off, but it was necessary.

All of them laughed, and they seemed satisfied with my response.

“So why did the informants lie?” Olsen said, looking at King Fredrick.

“Who are these informants?” I asked, and Olsen laughed.

“We can’t divulge their names to you, your highness. We can only refer to them. They won’t be informants if they are known to you, now, would they?” He said, and I acted to feel uneasy about it.

Unfortunately, fifteen of them were dead and rotting in the ground, while I had two locked up underground, chained in silver. I had absolutely nothing to worry about, i

I was only keeping those two for information and intel. Once I was satisfied with what they had to offer, they, too, would join their comrades in the beyond if there was anything other than darkness after death.

“I believe our informants must have misled you, your majesty, for reasons best known to them,” Olsen said, and Fredrik shook his head.

“Riverhead is just one part of Forest. There are other places to check. Send your scouts to check,” Fredrick said, but I had that covered already, so I wasn’t worried.

Woodland wasn't within range, and none of the scouts would have the time to search that far. Woodland also seemed underdeveloped. They would not bother to venture into its woods.

"Feel free to send scouts around. I am tired of saying the same thing. Maybe it will be best if you see it for yourself. I can delegate an officer to be the designated driver for that escapade," I said confidently, and everything in my demeanour showed that I meant it.

"There will be no need for that, Your Highness. Let us discuss the matter that has brought us here." He said, and I braced myself for the next thing.

"We learned you plan to marry a Lycan to fool this committee into giving you a crown. Let's say you settle down with a Lycan. What will happen to your werewolf mistress that you dote on?" He asked me.

"I am allowed to keep a werewolf mistress mated or not. After all, King Fredrick has a beautiful werewolf Mistress in Snow. No one is questioning him about her. He even claimed her, so why can't I keep my spoils?" I asked them, and they began to laugh.

"So, it is a revenge thing for you?" he asked, and I chose not to answer.

"She is mine, and I am not sharing or throwing her away. It isn't against the unity law for a king to have a Mistress. I have fulfilled all the obligations given to me except the slave trade, of which you can see I do not have stock, so it is time for the committee to decide if they will give me my crown. I need to know my fate," I said confidently.

"Well, some of us are yet to enter a trade deal with you; it seems you only approved to trade with alphas that voted in your favour," Olsen said, and I laughed and leaned forward.

"I will ask you a question, and you will be honest with me," I said, and he nodded, listening attentively.

"If you are at war, will you feed your enemies and give them the power to fight you?" I asked, and his eyes widened with realization.

"I came to you as a lost prince trying to restore my family name. I toiled for fifteen years, gathering an army and taking back what was stolen from me, only for this committee to play politics and deny me my birthright.

My mother was humiliated, and my uncle tried to paint me as a bastard. Even now that we all know I am Mathais's son, none of you dare to own up and speak the truth. That the crown should be given to me, and you expect me to be kind.

Just as you have treated me, I have done the same.

I choose to share what I have with those that wish me well. I am not trying to sway anyone, just stating my reasons as honestly as possible,” I said calmly, and Piotr laughed evilly. Miles almost chuckled, but he controlled himself. It was clear they were not in agreement.

“We are not the ones to decide; the ball is in Fredrick’s court. As long as he isn’t in agreement, we can’t give you the crown, and none of us wants to risk a war with the King to give you the crown,” I heard Olsen’s voice in my head.

He shouldn’t be able to do that because we do not belong to the same pack unless this was his unique ability. Linking people that he wasn’t connected to. I looked at him, and he maintained eye contact briefly before sitting down.

“Well, as for the crown, I am still not convinced.

You need to do a lot more than a snack and drink to convince me to agree to give you the crown.

Your prince status is not verified either. The only reason you are getting this much respect is that you are hosting the event,” Fredrick said, sounding bored, and Aleksander cut it.

“His Prince status is verified. It is not yours to give. He is already a prince by birth. As I stated, no record says that Mathias disowned his son. As you have proven, he might have wanted to separate from the mother, but he did not disown his son. So, Nikolas is a Prince.

As for Miles, even though he looks like Mathais, there is no record of Mathais having a son by that name. So, unfortunately, you can’t force your way this time, Fredrick. It is time you start respecting boundaries. Forest has a leader now, and you have to accept it. You might not want to confirm his coronation, but that would not take away what he truly is. He is a prince,”

Aleksander said, sounding very angry, and Fredrick laughed.

“Do not get worked up over Isabelle’s son, my dear friend. We will discuss this later when you are calm. Even if he is a prince, he still can’t wield the authority of the King. We have to crown him, and I do not trust his intentions, and because of that, my answer is no. We should move on to other things,” Fredrick said, and with that little conversation, I realised that Fredrick’s hold on Aleksander was wearing.

I might just get lucky when I choose to declare myself King. But I knew I would have to be careful. I will only get one shot at it.

The rest of the meeting went smoothly, and they discussed matters that troubled them. They discussed the visitors that had visited Snow from the sea. Although they had returned, they were worried that they might bring trouble.

Some alphas joked that there was nothing of value to take from Snow, and though many people laughed, it got to Fredrick.

I could see why he wanted Forest badly.

They had ruined the snow lands and wanted to take over Forest too. Too bad I won't be letting him.

After the meeting, there was entertainment. I ensured only Halfbreeds attended to the guest, and when it was time to retire, they were led to their rooms. I knew I could not rest until they were all off my land.

While I was ready to retire, Fredrick sent for me, and I went to see him in his room.

I entered the room, and he was with Miles. It was clear he had summoned Miles there too.

Fredrick's back was towards me. I guess I wasn't worth looking at.

"Glad you are here, boy," He said, and I knew he meant it in a demeaning manner, but I did not let it bother me at all.

"Miles will be staying with you a while. I want him to get to know his little brother. Whether you like it or not, he is Mathias's," he said to me, and I wanted to disagree, but then I held my tongue.

I would use the opportunity to get to know Miles and understand the workings of his mind. "How long will he be staying here?" I asked, and Fredrick shrugged.

"As long as he wants," He said, and I laughed. "There is no way you will just dump your general in Forest without a mischievous plan. Besides, I doubt he will want to stay because Lena does not stay here," I said, and I got the first reaction from Mile.

He looked at me with pleading eyes. At the same time, Fredrick turned to look at me, finally deciding to talk to me face to face.

"Lena? Who is Lena?" He asked, and realisation dawned in his eyes.

"Aleksander's Lena! That is why you go to Hill often!" he asked and started laughing.

"You need to be wise, Miles; women are nothing but trouble. Do not get caught in their web, or they will suck you dry and move on to the next prey," he said, and I was

tempted to ask him who broke his heart but refrained last minute. “Would that be all,” I asked, and he dismissed Miles, leaving me standing in his room. When Miles had gone, he looked at me with a sinister expression.

“I do not know what you are playing on,

Nikolas, but know this; I will never let you get the crown.

I will never give my approval. The committee will never move against me. Until you bow to my will, you will be nothing but royalty by name only,” he said, and I wasn’t surprised because I had already figured that out.

“Did it ever occur to you that I might be content where I am? As you can see, I am fixing the place, and we have something going on for us here. Being a prince the rest of my life isn’t so bad,” I said, and he laughed.

“You won’t be so smug if I ask to bed your whore because only another king can refuse that request. You are lucky that I am not a paedophile, or I would have had fun tonight, and there is nothing you can do about it,” He said, and those words got to me. Although I tried to mask it, it got to me, and he knew. Only then did he dismiss me.

I left the room holding my rage, wanting to punch something.

Bane was going crazy imagining what would have happened if put in a situation.

I tried to calm myself down and headed to my room. There was no point losing my cool over something that would never happen. I will never let him.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 85**

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

### **Chapter 85 Anxiety (Aliana POV)**

The days leading up to the summit were nerve- racking. I did not know what to expect. Even though Nikolas seemed confident and at ease most of the time, I knew deep down he was worrying.

All the alphas of Hill and Snow would be in Riverhead, and there was a possibility that the kings would be here too.

I was worried about what it would mean for Nikolas. He had my scent, and the entire settlement had the scent of werewolves.

I suspected they chose the meeting location in the Forest to spy on Nikolas, and I didn’t like that. I asked my father about their plans, but he kept it a secret. Our conversation

was strange, and all he said was that I was lucky. I didn't understand why, and he still hadn't explained.

Despite my father's beliefs, the uncertainty of the summit kept me on edge.

Time passed slowly, and it eventually became nighttime. Lisa and Ania had to leave me to attend to the guests. I worried about them. Now that the Half-breeds were no longer branded, would they attract attention? I cared deeply for my friends and wanted them to be happy. They were both beautiful women whom any man would desire. I just wished they could find mates from Riverhead who would treat them with respect and live close to us. I wondered how Nikolas would react if some of his guests took an interest in the Half-breeds. Would he comply to gain the crown, or would he stand his ground? Numerous questions raced through my mind, and I was extremely nervous.

As I waited alone in the room, I heard a hesitant knock on the door. I realised it must be someone unfamiliar with Nikolas's room. I got up to see who it was, and to my surprise, it was Gezel.

"I am sorry to bother you, Aliana, but I knew you would be alone since your friends were attending to the guests. Do you mind if I speak with you and maybe keep you company? I swear I mean no harm," She said, and I thought about it.

It would be wise to say no and slam the door in her face, but she had been kind and minded her business most of the time, so I decided to let her in.

There was really nothing she could do to me. She entered the room and sat on one of the chairs farther away from the ones we usually sit on. I guess she was being cautious, and she was scared of Nikolas.

"Why aren't you with your friends?" I asked, aware that the three of them used to spend time together.

"Erica and I stopped being friends a long time ago. I am glad I did not continue that friendship because she made bad decisions that got her into serious trouble. Beta Qusack has her locked up in a dungeon; I doubt he will let her back in. Lacy has been moved to work in Timber; she is no longer with us." She said, and I nodded.

"So, it is just you?" I asked her, and she nodded. "Must be awfully lonely, especially at the garden parties," I said, knowing the three of them loved it there.

"It used to be fun, but not anymore. I've been using my free time to reflect on my mistakes and work on self-improvement. I've taken up sewing as a hobby and might open a small fashion shop soon. Nothing extravagant like those in other regions, but it's a start," she shared, and I smiled at her. It was evident that she meant no harm, so I relaxed.

“Aliana, I need to tell you something,” she said. I was attentive, giving her the go-ahead to tell me what she wanted to say.

“Please speak,” I urged her, and she relaxed.

“You need to be careful. I do not know if you can give Alpha the heads up, but Luna Isabelle is planning something horrible. She was the cause of Erica’s predicament. Making her spy on everyone, most especially you, on her behalf.

Then she heard from a hospital worker that you are pregnant, and she tried to use it to confront Alpha, but it backfired. Now she is trying to see her brother. He is in the building.

Please try and find a way to ensure she does not see him.

I like how things are in Forest. There is no tension, but it seems the woman has an incessant need to be better than others.

She might cost him terribly in the attempt to help her son,” She told me, and I could not believe how far this woman would go.

I did not need to think twice when I linked

Qusack about what Gezel had told me. Telling Nikolas would have destabilised him, and I did not want him off balance while dealing with the likes of Fredrick and the alphas, so Qusack will do.

I relayed the information to Beta Qusack, and he assured me that he would take care of the situation. I didn’t know how he would do it, but I was relieved that precautionary measures would be taken.

Gezel spent time with me talking about fashion, fabrics and prints, and soon she decided to retire. I would be lying if I said her time wasn’t worth it. At that moment, I wasn’t worried. As soon as she left, the anxiety crept back in, and I was nervous again.

“Still awake, little wolf?” he asked me. I got out of bed and approached him. He pulled me close, embraced me, and k\*issed my neck.

“You shouldn’t worry too much,” he whispered in my ear.

“I couldn’t help it,” I replied, resting my head against his chest. “Waiting alone was difficult, knowing that so many people had come to spy on you. Anything could have happened,” I confessed, and he gently caressed my back.

“Well, nothing happened,” he reassured me, and I broke the embrace.

Knowing he wanted to shower, I helped him unbutton his shirt. As I did, he looked at me, causing me to blush and become a bit shy.

I knew my cheeks were turning red because he gently stroked them, studying my face. I couldn't meet his gaze because he would see the desire he had ignited, and this wasn't the right time for that.

After unbuttoning his shirt, he took it off, and I couldn't resist t\*ouching his chest.

I traced my hand down to his abdomen, feeling the contours of his muscles. I had always found the tattoos on his body fascinating, and I took my time to admire them.

He lifted my chin, urging me to look at him. He passionately k\*issed me, and at that moment, all my anxiety disappeared. I could only focus on what we were doing.

He k\*issed me and carried me to the bed.

Breaking the k\*iss, he gazed at me, enveloping me in his arms. I looked at him above me, sensing his desire. I reached out and pulled him closer. He k\*issed me again, then moved his k\*isses to my neck. He nibbled gently, almost as if he was about to claim me. The thought alone made me feel a\*roused.

"Nikolas," I m\*oaned, longing to bear his mark but knowing we would have to wait a little longer.

I ran my f\*ingers through his hair as he continued his ministrations with his l\*ips and tongue. He travelled from my neck to my b\*reasts and down to my belly button.

"You're so ready," he groaned, and I responded with a m\*oan. He moved back up to meet my eyes.

"You know I'll never share," he declared, and I didn't know where that came from. I was too overwhelmed to speak, so I simply nodded.

He moved back down and removed my panties. I knew they were soaked by now. He inserted his f\*inger inside me, and I felt the urge to grind against it while he satisfied my hunger and need for him.

Without warning, he s\*uc\*ked my clit into his m\*outh and skillfully stimulated it with his tongue. He licked and s\*uc\*ked on it, creating intense pleasure. M\*oans and, eventually, cries escaped my l\*ips. My senses were heightened, allowing me to feel every sensation intensely. "Nikolas," I m\*oaned as he brought me closer to climax. I tightly grabbed his hair, feeling a wave of e\*cstasy building up within me. The pleasure was overwhelming, and my body struggled to handle it. I felt him grip my h\*ips, holding me steady as he continued to please me. The pleasure consumed me as I reached my peak. I trembled and tugged at his hair, trying to manage the overwhelming sensation.



He kept his f\*ingers inside me, providing support and prolonging my pleasure. Eventually, I began to shake, and he entered me. He thrust with vigour and precision, hitting all the right spots. My vision blurred, and my mind could no longer comprehend my surroundings. The pleasure was the only thing I could feel, see, and think about.

Nikolas turned me onto my hands and knees and took me from behind. He thrust into me repeatedly, the sound of our bodies colliding filling the room. He pulled me into a forty-five-degree angle, continuing his relentless rhythm. He kneaded my b\*reasts and played with my n\*ipples. The fire of passion burned fiercely between us, and I revelled in it.

“Don’t hold back your m\*oans, little wolf. Let them hear,” he urged me, knowing I had been restraining myself.

“Mine,” he declared, thrusting into me relentlessly. I had already climaxed twice, and now I felt the third orgasm building within me. “Ah!” A loud m\*oan of release escaped my l\*ips as he increased his speed, thrusting deeply and rapidly. My intense release continued wave after wave of pleasure. My ears rang, and bright spots danced in my vision. My body lost control, but I welcomed it. He maintained his pace until finally stilling, releasing himself inside me.

He groaned and grunted with satisfaction.

Slowly, he withdrew, and I collapsed on the bed, lying face down like a limp doll. Nikolas held me and cuddled me, gently stroking my hair. He k\*issed my shoulder, then my neck, and pulled me into a protective spooning position. I felt safe and grateful.

I woke up in the morning to find Nikolas dressed and preparing to leave. It was an unusual hour to be awake and ready for the day, considering he had only come in at midnight. Understanding that it was due to the presence of the guests, I didn’t question him about it. He walked over to me and k\*issed me.

“I just want to bid my guests farewell. They have started to leave,” he explained, and I nodded, aware that he had done the same when he visited Hill and Snow. He had left early to ensure he returned home on time.

He gently k\*issed my cheek, easing any worries that must have been visible on my face.

“It will all be over soon, little wolf. I promise. We won’t have to hide away in my bedroom and pretend anymore,” he assured me. I smiled, letting him know that his words had comforted me. He left the room in high spirits, and I went back to sleep.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 86**

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

## Chapter 86 After the Summit (Nikolas)

Everyone except Piotr and Miles left between five and six in the morning. Piotr chose to stay, while Miles stayed at Fredrick's insistence, much to my annoyance. Fredrick's words disgusted me, but I didn't show it. I didn't want to give him the satisfaction of knowing he had affected me. After everyone left, I went to my office to take care of some unfinished tasks.

I was well aware that my Uncle had left Miles behind to spy on me and report back to him. He didn't even try to hide his intentions, but it didn't bother me. I was relaxed about it because I knew I was prepared for war.

Soon after I sat down, Piotr came to my office. He greeted me in his usual cheerful manner and sat on the couch. I laughed, not wanting to admit that I had missed him.

"You can pretend all you want, but I know you missed me," he said, making himself comfortable on the couch.

"What's the plan?" he asked, and I furrowed my brow, wondering what he was referring to.

"I mean, Riverhead is empty. You must be planning something," he continued. I shook my head, unwilling to share my plans with him. Instead, I changed the subject and asked about his father.

"What happened yesterday? Your father opposed Fredrick," I inquired. Piotr laughed in response.

"My father is tired of Fredrick's nonsense and can see through his desperate attempts. Even some Hill alphas didn't appreciate that he was willing to discredit you for a half-breed," Piotr explained. I nodded, realizing that Fredrick had made a mistake by involving Miles in the situation.

"Anyway," Piotr leaned forward, "There are two ways for you to claim the crown. Either Fredrick approves your coronation or you declare yourself King and go to war against anyone who opposes you. We both know

Fredrick will never give his approval," he said, leaning closer.

"So, when are we going to war?" he asked with a smile, seemingly content with the idea of battle.

"You might be surprised at my calmness, but liberation has never been easy to achieve. It takes a lot of blood, sweat and tears to achieve, all of which you have already spent and still are. I would lie if I said I want this to drag on, but the ball is in your court. You

either wait for the bastard and hope he approves your coronation, or name yourself King and wait for him to oppose,” he said and stood up.

“I’ll leave you with that thought and head back to my room for a delicious meal. Just know that you have my support no matter what,” he assured me, sensing my discomfort.

“Perhaps we can go horse riding later,” he suggested, and I nodded. He clearly intended to have some fun in Forest before returning to Hill.

Qusack joined me after Piotr left to inform me about my mother’s behaviour and why she had been confined to her room all night until everyone had left. It turns out she was trying to contact Fredrick through a note. I wondered what she hoped to achieve with that message.

Qusack handed me the note, and I recognised the handwriting immediately. It was the same as Abel Isle, confirming her alias without a doubt.

“Fredrick, you need to stop this nonsense and stop antagonising my son. He has done nothing to you. Your issue is with me for not fulfilling my obligations to the family and taking over Forest. There is no need to take it out on my son. I promise you he will not give you trouble...”

The letter was unfinished because she was interrupted, and I didn’t care about its contents.

What concerned me was that my mother was sending letters to my enemies, knowing the potential consequences. I looked at Qusack and sighed.

“I want her completely locked away in her room, restrained with silver bracelets. I want her closely monitored and guarded by werewolves and half-breeds,” I declared.

Qusack was taken aback by my words, but it was a difficult decision that had to be made. I couldn’t handle her tantrums and the situation simultaneously.

“Very well, I will assign Gabriel to do it,” he said. I was aware of my mother’s infatuation with Gabriel, and it tempted me to object, but I decided to allow it. Perhaps it would provide her with closure for the rejection and help her move on, so she would stop targeting Aliana at every opportunity.

“That’s fine,” I conceded, and Qusack nodded.

“By the way, I’m considering telling Gabriel about Gwen,” I revealed, and he listened attentively.

“Throughout the party, I couldn’t find peace. I feared that Fredrick would request to see him and expose the truth about his wife to mock him. It would have been disastrous. It’s best for Gabriel to process his shock and anger away from Fredrick and the battle. So, I plan to tell him this evening after we’re done with the day,” I explained, and Qusack understood. Then, I decided to tease him a little.

“I noticed you didn’t allow Ania to serve the other alphas. Is there a reason?” I asked, and he averted his gaze. I could tell he was possessive of her, though he probably thought I hadn’t noticed. Ania was stunning, and many alphas had their eyes on her. However, they all came with companions, so it would be impossible to ask for her company.

“You know, if there’s something between the two of you, I wouldn’t mind,” I reassured him, and he shook his head.

“She isn’t interested. She said I rejected her when they brought her to me simply because she couldn’t play chess. She told me she still doesn’t know how to play chess, and she only plays card games now,” he explained, and I realised that Ania had been deeply affected by what happened to her when she was brought to our camp.

They had brought those women to me, but I wasn’t interested, and it had nothing to do with them being half-breeds; I was concentrated on my conquest. I was so close to taking Forest that I could not let myself slip. The same had affected Qusack, and now that he was ready to relax and settle, it had come back to bite him in the a\*ss.

“If I had known it would turn out this way, I would have kept her, Niko,” he confessed, and I sighed.

“I took Aliana from her father to bring disgrace upon them both. I had planned to end Gabriel’s bloodline and render his daughter useless. But look at me now, going to war for her sake,” I admitted, and Qu sack smiled.

“I already knew that part,” he replied, and we shared a laugh.

“I’m sure she’ll come around. I think she likes you and is just hurt by the rejection. Just don’t give up. Be yourself and develop an interest in card games. Chess is long and boring anyway,” I advised, and we laughed together.

“What should we do about your brother?” he asked, mentioning a sensitive topic that I wasn’t ready to discuss. His question wiped the smile off my face, and I let out a sigh.

“To be honest, Qusack, I have no idea. I don’t know how to handle him. He’s a mystery to me. I can’t comprehend why he chooses to stay with a man who isn’t his relative,” I replied, and Qusack stood up from the couch.

“Well, I suppose you’ll find out when he sees you. He’s been insisting on speaking with you ever since your Uncle left,” he said, and I was surprised that Miles wanted to talk to me. I suspected it was because I had somehow dragged Lena into my feud with Fredrick. I wasn’t afraid of the guy, so it was fine.

“Warning: he’s in charge of most of Fredrick’s army. He leads battles for your Uncle, and he’s never been defeated. Be cautious when you have a conversation with him. He’s not as mild-mannered as he appears,” Qusack cautioned, and I nodded. I already had that information, but I appreciated Qusack’s effort to dig deeper. “I would like him to meet with Gabriel after I see him, So hold off on my mother,” I said, and he nodded in agreement.

A few moments later, Lisa arrived at my office carrying a tray of breakfast. She told me that Aliana had sent her. When I checked with

Aliana, she confirmed it. I didn’t realise how famished I was until I started eating. However, the food she brought was too much.

“I’ll come back for the dishes,” Lisa said, leaving my office. Just then, Miles entered, and suddenly, the atmosphere became tense.

I set aside my food and observed him closely.

He walked up to my desk and sat down on the chair across from me without waiting for an invitation. The man had audacity. He exuded confidence and dominance. If I weren’t powerful myself, he would have intimidated me, but there was no point in that; I had already won that contest during the meeting. I knew it wasn’t intentional, so I did not take offence, nor did I let it show that it bothered me.

“If this has anything to do with Lena, know that I had no idea Fredrick was unaware of your relationship with her,” I spoke hurriedly. I didn’t care much for Miles, but I knew I had hurt him the previous night.

“Good morning, Nikolas,” he replied, ignoring my words, so I chose to forget about it and nodded in response.

“So, what do you want?” I asked defensively. He chuckled lightly.

“We both know why King Fredrick left me behind,” he informed me, and I maintained a neutral expression.

“To be honest, Nikolas, I’m shocked that your Uncle would betray you like this. But I’m not surprised, because he doesn’t care about anyone. He executed his Luna for infidelity when I was just four years old. He has had a total of eight Lunas, but now he only keeps mistresses. One of them has been around for five years, even though she’s a werewolf. I don’t understand his attraction to her. He even claimed her and is

possessive of her, just like you are possessive of your mistress,” he said, and though his words shocked me, I didn’t let it show.

“Anyway, the point I’m trying to make is that I don’t feel safe with Fredrick. I’ll only be safe as long as I’m useful to him. I love Lena deeply, so I’ll try to be of use for as long as I can. But with Fredrick, you never know,” he explained, and I examined him closely.

“I want you to promise me that if Fredrick falls, you won’t come after me just because we share the same father,” he requested, and I furrowed my brows at him. Had he already predicted Fredrick’s demise?

“Don’t be surprised, little brother,” he said, and I had to calm down my inner wolf from growling.

“I’m well aware of your strength, and I know you must have strong reasons for avoiding war. But Fredrick seems to be pushing everything in that direction. His clash with King Aleksander yesterday has shifted the power dynamics.

Fredrick is no longer the revered King he once was. Hill will no longer submit to him.

Aleksander and Piotr have made sure of that, and the council has recognised and acknowledged your rightful status. So now

Fredrick only holds one-third of our territory, sharing the rest with you and King Aleksander, who appears to be leaning in your favour. Your friendship with Piotr also indicates that Forest is aligned with Hill. I just want you to understand that I bear no ill intentions towards you and have no desire to become the King of the Forest. I simply wish for my kind and the werewolves to be free from oppression and abolish the Unity Law that our father helped establish,” he expressed sincerely, and his words held undeniable earnestness.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 87**

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

**Chapter 87 Family and Bonds (Nikolas POV)**

I glanced at Miles for a moment, trying to detect any signs of deception, but he seemed genuinely honest. I could sense a hidden pain in his eyes, and I didn’t dare imagine what his childhood must have been like.

“How was it growing up in Snow?” I asked him, motioning for him to join me at the table by pushing my food tray to the center so we could share the meal.

“Thank you,” he replied, reaching for an extra fork.

“I was surprised to see the half-breeds and werewolves here without brands or collars. They seemed well taken care of and confident. They don’t have the slave mentality that is common in other places, nor do they face segregation. It was clear from the way they interacted and served everyone, even the guests. The event was beautifully organised for a kingdom without a queen. It’s the best one I’ve attended,” he remarked. I thanked him and remained silent, waiting for his response to my question.

“It wasn’t easy, Nikolas. I lived like a slave in a cell until I got my wolf. Fredrick wanted to know if I would become an alpha. Fortunately, my wolf was an Alpha. I was told continuously that my parents didn’t want me from the time I was a child until my teenage years. They said my father rejected me because he considered me worthless.

I was told that he ordered my execution along with my twin sister and mother because my mother defied him by becoming pregnant and giving birth to us.

When they found her, she had already given birth to twins.

His brother Leon arrived just as the soldiers were killing my mother and twin sister. He fought them off to rescue me and entrusted me to his friend for care.

Fredrick didn’t want half-breeds in his kingdom, but since Leon was his friend, he had no choice.

I was told to be grateful for what I had and always prove myself useful. I fought my way through my childhood and teenage years. By the time I acquired my wolf, I was already a skilled warrior,” he explained, sighing.

“Deep down, I still felt like a lost boy, wondering why my mother went against her master and had me, bringing me into a world that despised my kind. The unity law that King

Mathias signed was the epitome of his evil. I don’t expect you to fully understand my struggle since he was your father too, but...” he began, and I interrupted.

“I never knew him. The werewolves revolted and forced my mother to return to Snow to be with her brother. They spared her life because she was pregnant with me and because they realised that someone other than our father was pulling the strings.

The Alpha werewolf who spared her was our father’s closest friend and beta. Our father took his own life when he realised he had been deceived and everything was a lie.

My mother was spared and sent to Snow, but Fredrick rejected her for not taking over Forest. I grew up in the wilderness. That’s why I’m called the rogue prince,” I revealed, and he looked at the scar near my eye.

“Did you get that scar there?” he asked, and I nodded, tracing my eye.

“A feral wolf did this to me when I was just ten years old,” I explained, and he gasped.

“You were brave. Where was your mother? Why didn’t she shift and fight the wolf?” he inquired, but before I could answer, he realised the truth from my silence.

“That’s terrible. I admire your loyalty, love, and bravery,” he expressed, and I thanked him for his kind words.

“I was shocked by the things Fredrick told you about our father. I have evidence that proves he was wrong,” I said, and Miles paid close attention. I could see a glimmer of hope in his eyes.

He desperately wanted the things he had heard to be false, yearning for a different truth and I was willing to give it.

“Father loved your mother deeply. She was his destined mate,” I informed him, and he was in disbelief.

“Is that possible?” he asked, and I nodded with certainty, knowing it to be true because that was the case for Aliana and me.

“Father had no issues with werewolves or half- breeds. In fact, he had a half-breed ancestor himself. And above all, he never signed the unity law.

His signature was forged after his brother’s death.

Leon, his brother, conspired against him and sought to seize power with the help of Fredrick. But the werewolf officers discovered the plot and put an end to it.

As for your mother, she was beloved, and Mathias would have given up everything for her sake.

Leon advised her to remain a mistress claiming our father was willing to face the consequences for her sake.

It seemed like he was looking out for his younger brother, but I later found out it was because he had plans to plant my mother as queen instead, so he could manipulate things. Unfortunately for him, things did not work as he had anticipated.

Your mother remained our father’s mistress, and he never took a queen while she was alive. He loved her deeply.

There are werewolves in the settlement who could testify to their love.

It was said that she died while giving birth. It devastated Mathias.



Leon convinced him not to tarnish his memory of her by burying her himself. Now I understand why.

I must say, you were fortunate to be spared. You were meant to be a last resort, a trump card, in case everything went wrong.

Leon arranged for our father to marry my mother, Fredrick's sister. Despite never knowing your mother, my mother resented her because she lived in her shadow. If Father had known about your existence, he would have moved heaven and earth for your sake," I shared, leaving him stunned.

"The evil perpetrated by Fredrick, Leon, and Isaac Lucas is unforgivable. Fredrick wants to seize control of the Forest and make it his territory. That's why he refuses to accept my coronation. The Forest is just a source of wealth to him, and he won't stop until one of us is gone. I have given him time to reconsider, and I am willing to wait patiently for him to see reason," I declared, choosing not to reveal my true intentions. I only shared what I wanted him to relay to my uncle if he chose to tell him of our conversations.

"That's a bad idea, Nikolas. He won't change his mind. That man is stubborn. Let's join forces and bring him down," he proposed, and I sighed. "I don't want to do anything that would cost lives. You're the only sibling I have, Miles. We've just met, and I don't want to say hello and goodbye at the same time. I hope it doesn't come to that. But one thing is certain, if

Fredrick brings war to my doorstep, I will fight him. However, if he doesn't, I will wait patiently and continue doing what I can for my people and live my life," I asserted, and he nodded, understanding my stance.

"I would like to have a brotherly relationship with you. You're the only family I've got," he expressed, and I smiled at him.

"I would like that as well. We were both lost princes who grew up in harsh and deprived conditions, feeling cheated and abandoned.

There's no reason for us to hate or envy each other. I'm sure our father would have wanted us to have a healthy and trusting relationship. I'm open to it, with no deceit," I said, and he smiled back at me, almost disbelieving that I would agree to such a relationship.

"I am honoured and grateful," he replied, finishing the last piece of bacon. He seemed more relaxed now than when we first met. I realised he wasn't weak; he was simply sensible, and he would be a formidable opponent. There was a certain dominance about him, similar to mine, but I controlled myself, not revealing that I could sense his presence. "I will ask Alpha Gabriel, our father's former Beta before the uprising, to show you around the place. He can tell you more about your mother, her relationship with our father, her family, and also take you to her grave, as well as your twin sister's. All the

memories are preserved. I will also look through the archives for any pictures of her. I hope you enjoy your time here,” I offered, and he beamed at me. His smile was that of an eager little boy, excited to explore wonders.

“I’m grateful for your hospitality. And I swear on my wolf that I will never betray you. This gift of knowledge that you’re about to give me is greatly welcomed and appreciated,” he pledged, and I contacted Gabriel and Israel to come to my office.

Fifteen minutes later, they arrived, indicating that they weren’t in the building. The moment Gabriel saw Miles, he instantly knew. Miles bore a striking resemblance to our father, albeit with softer features.

“That’s Olive’s son,” I informed Gabriel, and tears welled up in his eyes as he bowed to the lost prince. Israel looked at Miles with awe. Both men couldn’t contain their joy.

“Leon is a wretch for what he did. Mathias mourned his entire life,” Gabriel declared, anger evident in his voice, confirming what I had told Miles.

“I want you to teach Miles about our father, his mother, their relationship, their love, her people, and also inform him about the treachery of Leon, Fredrick, and Isaac Lucas,” I instructed, and Gabriel nodded.

“Yes, Your Highness. It will be an honour,” he replied, and Israel and Gabriel took a seat on the couch in my office.

Miles seemed eager, but we needed to finish the food Aliana had sent me first.

We engaged in light conversation, and Miles shared stories about Fredrick’s frustration upon retiring last night.

He could even imitate Fredrick voice and mannerisms, which made us all laugh.

Beneath Mile’s complex facade and fearsome reputation, Miles was an amazingly playful guy. I could understand why Lena fell for him. I only hoped their relationship would survive the challenges ahead because I wouldn’t back down until I achieved justice for my father and get the throne.

After Lisa came to collect the empty plates,

Miles and Gabriel left to embark on their history tour.

I decided to return to my room to rest. There was much to do, but I needed a moment to catch my breath. I also had to prepare myself for horse riding with Piotr and, later, the conversation with Gabriel about Gwen.

I knew it would be difficult for him, but the truth remained that he wouldn't be able to reunite with her until Fredrick was defeated.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 88**

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

### **Chapter 88 The Rest Of The day (Nikolas POV)**

The moment I returned to my room, Piotr sent someone to remind me of our horse-riding adventure. Aliana preferred to stay indoors, so I agreed to go. However, I didn't want her to be alone, so I asked Ania and Lisa to keep her company.

I hoped that Qusack would resolve his issues with Ania. She was an amazing person, and it would be wonderful to see them together. We met at the stables, and Piotr seemed unusually excited.

As we rode side by side, I finally asked Piotr about the reason for his excitement.

"What's the occasion?" I inquired.

Piotr's response was filled with emotion and enthusiasm.

"I always wished for the day when Frederick would be put in his place. And that's exactly what happened yesterday. It was the first time Frederick couldn't control the committee. It was the first time I saw my father stand up for something and not remain silent. Many significant events took place yesterday. Let me tell you, my dear friend, the universe is on your side," he said, and I understood his sentiments.

Growing up, Piotr witnessed everyone bowing down to the tyrant, but Frederick was finally held accountable yesterday. This explained Fredrick's anger, and it all made sense, considering what Miles had told me.

Curious about Piotr's thoughts on Miles, I asked him about it.

"What do you think of Miles?" I inquired, wanting to understand Piotr's perspective.

Piotr paused and replied, "Besides being an introvert and a formidable fighter who serves as Frederick's General, I don't have much to say. Honestly, I don't understand what Lena sees in him. She refuses to end the relationship and even threatened to run away if we tried to interfere. It's serious," he confessed.

Piotr's response didn't provide much clarity because Miles did indeed hint at those aspects of his character. Seeking further insight, I asked Piotr, "Do you think he can be trusted? Is it possible for him to turn against Fredrick?" Piotr stopped abruptly and inquired,

“Why do you ask?”

I decided to share my conversation with Miles, leaving Piotr speechless with every detail I revealed.

“It makes a lot of sense why he would want to rebel against Fredrick. But I don’t understand why he would confide in you. After all, you two just met, Nikolas. Isn’t it too soon?” Piotr questioned, raising a valid point. However, I couldn’t deny the sincerity I felt while speaking to Miles. I knew he meant every word.

“I don’t think he’s deceptive. In fact, I believe he has longed to be free from Fredrick for a while, but he has nowhere to go and no one to turn to. You mentioned it yourself, Fredrick controlled everything until yesterday. I think the reason you’re so joyful is the same reason he opened up to me.

He was certain that Fredrick’s downfall was imminent. I didn’t reveal anything to him. You didn’t see him with Fredrick as I did. He’s a captive longing for liberation.

Now that Fredrick realises he can’t use him to secure the Throne of Forest, things might not go well for him. The moment he becomes useless, his life is in danger,” I explained, and Piotr gradually understood my point.

“Well, he is your brother, and that must count for something. Just be cautious,” Piotr warned, concluding our discussion.

“Are you planning to declare yourself King and wait for Fredrick to attack?” Piotr asked, unknowingly touching upon my plans. However, I couldn’t disclose anything yet. I sensed his eagerness for war, but I didn’t want to confirm anything until I was fully prepared. “Let’s give it time, Piotr. I promise you’ll be the first to know when it happens, and I hope you and your father will attend my coronation,” I assured him, and he winked at me.

“Anything to rebel against that tyrant. Anything for you, my friend,” he declared, riding ahead with his horse, challenging me to catch up.

We had a great time, and Piotr thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful scenery. He admired the natural beauty, fresh air, and the sense of freedom in Forest.

There was no tension, no barriers, no need to be cautious, no social rules, or class divisions. The people in Forest were united as one community. Piotr appreciated these aspects of the place and wished Natasha had come along with him. I could relate to that feeling, as I wouldn’t want to be separated from Aliana for long.

I knew Piotr wouldn’t stay for long unless he found a way to convince Natasha to join him. However, it wouldn’t be wise for her to come since the hunters in the area were searching for slaves.

Upon returning to the palace, we had lunch. Aliana had gone for a walk with her friends, so I didn't want to interrupt their time together.

Piotr and I had lunch together, accompanied by Qusack and Abraham. It was a pleasant gathering, but I was particularly relieved to hear that Miles and Gabriel were away on a tour. I knew that when Miles eventually discovered the truth, I wouldn't have to doubt his loyalty anymore. Piotr left to explore the sights with Abraham, leaving Qusack and me alone.

As soon as Piotr departed, Qusack provided me with an update on our troops and their progress. Ingham and Grant were doing an excellent job training them.

However, with the impending war, the training became more intense.

To ensure we had enough weapons for our soldiers, we cleverly imported them and disassembled them to learn how to produce them on a large scale. I was aware that Fredrick might try to prevent us from buying weapons since Snow was the main market. But I had no intention of spending my money on weapons from him. The samples I bought were sufficient for our werewolf engineers to study and replicate. They were diligently working in the armoury, and I had complete faith in their abilities.

The werewolves were now more motivated than ever before. Instead of relying on fear to control them, they were genuinely devoted to our cause.

I felt privileged to have them as part of my team.

We spent a significant amount of time in my office, trying to navigate various matters. I wrote numerous letters expressing gratitude and sent them to different influential leaders present at the meeting.

Frederick's attempt to spy on me had inadvertently made it easier for me to claim my rightful royal status. If I were to crown myself now, it wouldn't be an act of defiance but rather a natural progression. Those who opposed me would do so by choice, not out of necessity. Acknowledging my royal status allowed me to ascend the throne.

By the time we finished our work around seven in the evening, I was exhausted. I learned that Miles had returned, and Abraham had taken him to the archives to explore his mother's pictures and read the correspondence between her and our father.

I had no prior knowledge of these items, but I didn't blame Abraham for not informing me. I had specified my areas of interest, and my father's relationship with his destined partner wasn't one of them.

Gabriel came to my office, claiming that Qusack had sent him, and it suddenly dawned on me. I knew I had to tell Gabriel the truth.

“How was the tour?” I asked him eagerly, rising from my seat so we could walk outside together. I wanted to ensure that no one could overhear or accidentally listen in on our conversation.

“Mile was overwhelmed with emotions at the gravesite. He met his mother’s cousins and other relatives who shared pictures and stories about his father and Olive.

It was a deeply emotional experience for him. The gravesite shattered him completely. It was evident that he carried a tremendous amount of pain, a lingering resentment of not being wanted.

Discovering that he had been stolen helped him confront his inner demons. The trip had a profound impact on his soul. I was grateful he was given the opportunity, your highness. I don’t believe he will betray you,” he confessed, and I nodded. I held onto that hope as well, but only time would reveal the truth.

“I asked you to come here for a stroll because I have something important to share with you,” I finally told him when we reached the open space before the woods.

There was no one nearby, ensuring that it was just the two of us.

I stopped walking and locked my gaze with his.

Gabriel appeared attentive, exuding confidence and preparedness to face whatever I was about to reveal. However, I knew that his bravery and strength wouldn’t be enough for what I was about to disclose.

“I want to tell you something, but I need you to promise me that you’ll remain composed. I need you to promise that you’ll be rational and follow my plan. I’ve already devised a plan to resolve the issue, but I believe it would be unfair if I kept it from you and you found out from someone else,” I said, and he looked at me, curious.

“Is there something wrong with Aliana?” he asked, his face wrinkling with concern. I shook my head in response.

His frown deepened, and he regarded me with curiosity.

“I’ve never had the opportunity to meet your mate, so I don’t know what she looks like,” I explained, and his expression changed.

“If you had any involvement in her death, it’s better you don’t confess to me, your Highness,” he said urgently, and I shook my head. I suspected that was what he was thinking based on the questions I had asked when I saw her picture that day. I assured him it wasn’t true, but I could tell he didn’t believe me.

“Not at all. I don’t harm women and children, only those who try to fight me,” I said, trying to calm him down.

He relaxed a bit and remained silent, giving me the chance to explain.

“When I attended the committee meeting in the Snow...” I began, unsure of how to proceed. But I knew it was now, or never, so I gathered my courage and continued.

“A woman who resembled her served me food in my room. I didn’t know who she was, so I didn’t pay much attention until I later found out that she was Gwendolyn,” I revealed, and his face showed shock. I could see it clearly. His breathing quickened, and his eyes flickered between yellow and brown. My words awakened his inner wolf.

“Gwendolyn isn’t dead. The reason you felt that pain was because...” I couldn’t finish my sentence before he did.

“A Lycan Alpha forcefully claimed her,” he said, tears streaming down his face, and I nodded.

“Fredrick took her as his mistress. She’s been his captive all this time,” I explained, reaching out to touch his shoulder, but he moved away.

Everything happened so quickly. Gabriel transformed, tearing his clothes, and sprinted into the forest, howling.

I could sense the torment in his voice, and I started to regret telling him.

Yet, I knew it was necessary before we entered into battle.

I didn’t want Fredrick to catch us off guard and weaken Gabriel. It was a necessary truth, but had I handled it wisely?

Knowing he wasn’t himself, I undressed, shifted into my wolf form, and ventured into the woods to find him.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 89**

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

### **Chapter 89 Gabriel’s Pain (Nikolas POV)**

Bane followed deep into the woods, tracing Gabriel by his scent. I was worried I did not know his wolf had much strength until I saw the bruised tree barks and broken branches he left in his wake as he pushed through the forest.

Maybe I should have held my tongue and not told him anything. But how could I when I knew Fredrick could use it to his advantage?

“We have to compel him to stop,” Bane said, realising we might have to keep running like this all night. I had to go home. I had a battle to prepare for and things to do. This was not good.

I could understand Gabriel’s pain, but he had to save it for the battlefield. I ran a bit when I still did not have his wolf in sight. I stopped in the woods, and Bane tried to feel for Gabriel.

It took a while, but we finally connected with the angry alpha wolf.

I felt his rage; it was intense; it burned with hatred, anger, resentment and a need for vengeance.

It was the emotions of a wolf ready to do damage.

I would say that it had a thirst for its enemy’s blood. Gabriel had crossed a bridge, one I knew he really crossed. This had pushed him over the edge.

As much as I knew compulsion was disrespectful, from alpha to alpha, it was necessary because I wanted him to be in his senses.

Gathering my strength, I sent my energy with the firm command, “Stop!” I felt him halt.

Not wanting to lose him, I hurriedly followed his scent until I could see his wolf.

He was frozen on the spot, teeth bare, growling at me like a rabid wolf ready to attack its enemy. I knew it was necessary to exert my dominance, so I howled at the moon and looked at this wolf.

I howled again and looked at him, wanting him to obey.

By the third time, Gabriel’s wolf howled, making a soul-ripping painful sound that expressed the pain level in his heart, spirit and soul.

He howled and howled and then rested on the ground. I watched him shift back to his human form, and Gabriel began to sob.

He was folded on the ground fetus style. And while he wept, he repeated the exact words over and over again.

“Why... why... Why me?” he repeated those words and wept bitterly.



He must have bottled up a lot in his gentle soul, and the news I gave him had taken him to his breaking point. Had I known this would be the outcome, I would have found more skilful ways of telling him.

“It is not your fault Gabriel,” I linked him, and he continued to weep.

“The goddess must have cursed me,” he said, still crying.

“First, it was Giles, then Mathias; I had to mourn Gwendolyn too. I mourned her. I buried her. I believed she was dead. We had a service for her; we said goodbye. I hoped to see her in the next life. Aliana was all I had, and I had accepted it only to find out that just as my daughter was taken from me, so was my wife,” he said in tears.

The last part hurt me really bad because he was telling the truth. I had forcefully taken his daughter from him to punish him for a crime I thought he had committed. I disgraced him and disgraced her, making sure she had no honour and, in truth, they had not wronged me.

I had acted like Fredrick.

Was I sick like my mother and her brother? Had their blood corrupted me and affected me mentally?

Gabriel’s words pierced deep, even though I knew he did not mean any harm, but it pierced deep.

I let him weep there.

I wasn’t controlling him anymore, so he could run again if he wanted to, but he chose to remain.

“How was she when you saw her. Is he treating her well? Is she suffering?” He asked, and I did not have an absolute answer to that because I had only seen her once, and that was when she served my food.

“He made her serve me food. She looked well- kept. The only thing that showed that she was a slave was the brand at the back of her neck and her collar,” I linked him, and he wept.

“Gwen will never agree to be a slave; she must have held on because she was hopeful.” He said and sat up and looked at my wolf.

“We have to kill that bastard. We have to end him,” He said, and I nodded.

“That is the plan,” I linked to him.

"I just wanted you to know Gwen is alive. Once we kill him, she will be free from their forced bond. I need you to be wise and set your emotions aside, Gabriel. Do you think you can do that?" I linked with him, and he looked at me for a while before nodding.

"I will follow you, Nikolas. I will follow you into battle. You have proven to be a leader, and your intentions are good. I want to see you succeed and correct all the wrongs that those people caused. I will follow you because even if you do not agree, I take you as my son. The son I never had," he said, and his words touched my soul.

I could indeed agree because he had spared my mother for my sake. He held the pack together for my sake. He was the father of my fated and now my adviser, leading me in the right direction. He was a father figure, and I was blessed to have him.

"Always," I linked him back and howled at the moon.

Gabriel shifted to his wolf, Jack, and we returned to the palace.

There was a new confidence and determination about him. He suddenly had a purpose, and I could feel it.

A sudden need to live, to survive and to win.

He must have loved Gwendolyn so much because she had awakened something new inside him, which would help with the war.

When I knew we were approaching the palace, I asked him for a favour.

"Gabriel, I would like you to help secure my mother in a place where she would not have contact with anyone. I also want her wolf bound with silver. Do you think you have the mental capacity to do that?" I linked him, and he howled, which signalled a yes.

"Thank you so much. It will be nice to do it tonight before she causes trouble for us," I linked him.

"I will advise we do it in the morning, so I can figure out the best place to keep her and how best to ensure she is secured and safe from others," he linked me, and I could understand his reasons. They were valid, too, so I agreed. "Have you told Aliana about her mother?" He finally asked.

"No, I wanted to tell you first. I plan to tell her soon." I confessed.

"She will be overjoyed. If anyone believes in you completely, it's Aliana. You can never go wrong in her eyes, your highness. I am glad the feeling is mutual between you two, or it would have been a heart wrecking, unrequited love," he confessed. I would have laughed if I were in my human form, but Bane was limited in that regard. The best I could do was howl.

We finally arrived where we had shifted and ran into the woods. My clothes were still on the floor, so I returned to my human form and wore my shorts. Holding the rest of my clothes in my hands. Gabriel remained in wolf form because he had shredded his clothes during his sudden transformation.

He howled, and I ran my f\*inger on his head.

“Good night Gabriel, you need the rest,” I said, and he howled and moved along, heading towards the gate that would lead to the inner compound where his home was.

As I watched him move. I was glad to see that he was relaxed. We had dealt with a problematic situation and emerged better for it.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 90**

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

### **Chapter 90 Unhealthy Emotions (Gabriel)**

What Nikolas told me tore at my soul. I could not believe it. The pain was excruciating. I said goodbye to Gwen and tried to live with the fact that I would never see her again, and then I found out suddenly that she was alive. That an enemy had taken her and was using her. I could only imagine the emotional and mental torture she was going through.

I could not help myself.

Jack and I reacted to the news the only way we could.

Going wild was necessary to let out all the frustration and stress I had bottled up, and I finally felt the need to let it all out.

I needed my emotions to escape and leave me so I could focus.

I honestly thought Nikolas had something to do with her death because of how he reacted when he saw her picture.

I had judged him wrongly and was ashamed of myself for it.

The man had done so much. There was no doubt he loved Aliana. If I did not know better, I would

think they were fated because he cared for my daughter and followed her indulging her every whim like his father once did with Olive.

Everything Nikolas did remind me of Mathias. He might not have a striking resemblance to the King like Miles does, but he was his son by heart. Everything about him showed he was Mathia's son.

Nikolas was nothing like his mother, and I thanked the Goddess. Something that I thought was a curse had become a blessing.

Hope was what got me back to my senses. The hope was that Gwen was alive and we would get her back. I have come to trust Nikolas because he always kept his word; he kept every promise he made except one; he did not make Aliana's life miserable.

My daughter has been the happiest since they got together, and I was grateful to him for it. I thanked Goddess for the gift she bestowed to the two of them, and I pray it will flourish.

Heading back to my home in wolf form, I returned with the hope that I would soon have Gwendolne in my arms again.

I did not care what Fredrick might have done to her; I was just grateful that she was living and breathing, and there was hope of getting her back.

I entered my house naked and went to sit on the couch.

Picking up her photo, I looked at it and traced the picture with my f\*ingers.

Her smile was radiant, and I longed to see that smile again.

I prayed that Snow had not ruined her, and if that was the case, I vowed to do everything I could to put a smile on her face again. She was everything to me, and I loved her dearly.

"You will be home soon, darling. Very soon. I promise you. I will drive a sword into the monster's heart. I will make sure his death is painful," I said, looking at her image and smiling radiantly.

I set the picture back on the side table and went to shower.

Tomorrow was going to be a challenging day.

I had avoided seeing Isabelle since I found out she was the one. I did not know what her reaction would be when I saw her, but after learning all she did, I did not feel guilty that she lived in the forest.

I had made peace with myself on that matter, and there was nothing she would tell me that would make me feel guilty again.

Nikolas must have a good reason to want to lock her away. Seeing how he executed traitors. I knew he must be finding it hard to realise what Isabelle was. I knew she would be dead by now if she wasn't his mother. She was privileged that her son loved her. I hoped she would not be stupid enough to test the love.

I went to bed looking optimistic about tomorrow.

Isreal linked me in the morning, and I told him I would see him later. I needed to handle Isabelle's matter alone.

I decided I would lock her in the isolated underground bunker room. She will be very comfortable there, and no one can reach her.

The walls of the room are made of silver, so it will serve as a deterrent for those who plan to go there, and it will also ensure that she remains there with no hope of trying to escape.

The facility made it possible for her to receive her meals without getting in contact with anyone.

I planned to Assign a werewolf Kappa to give her food.

Werewolves would never team up with a Lycan because they know who will be on the losing side of the partnership. I also knew that was why Nikolas settled for Halfbreed and Werewolf to serve and interact with his guests from outside. For werewolves and halfbreeds, nothing and nowhere is better than Forest.

I got dressed and was ready to leave.

"Good morning, Father," I always heard Aliana's voice in my head. She was always greeting me and checking on me. She was the reason why I did not give up after I believed that Gwen was no more; I wondered if Nikolas had told her. I planned to be silent and wait for her to bring it up before speaking.

"How are you feeling today?" She asked.

"Great, trying to run some errands for Nikolas. Mind you, they are not tedious tasks. I do not want you going to complain to your boyfriend," I teased her, knowing she would have chuckled if we were having a face-to-face conversation. "Okay, let me know when you are free so I can spend time with you. Nikolas is very busy these days, and sleeping in my room isn't easy. I also have something to tell you," She said, and I told her it was okay.

Whatever she had to tell me wasn't about her mother because if Nikolas had informed her, he would have told her I already knew, and she would have linked me. I hoped he would eventually find the courage to tell her about Gwen. It took a lot for him to tell me.

I entered the palace and instructed the Kappa to prepare the underground bunker cell for Isabelle, and they set out to perform the task. I also requested galvanised bracelets that would not burn her skin.

It took an hour for everything to be ready; within that hour, I checked out the library.

A kappa met me there to inform me that they had done all I had asked and handed me the bracelets. I left the library, went up the stairs, and headed towards Isabelle's room.

I could easily spot which was hers because it was heavily guarded. Asking to be granted permission, the guards parted ways, and I opened the door and let myself in.

The room was dark when I walked in. It was clear that Nikolas had locked her up for a day or two. I could not tell, but it was dark, and the windows needed to be opened.

Isabelle wasn't in the room, but the sounds from the bathroom let me know she was in there.

I moved to open the windows to air the room. Then I went to sit on the chair to wait for her.

I heard the door knob turn and knew she was coming out.

"Tell my son not to bother sending food or...." She started coming out and stopped.

I looked at her where she stood, and she was utterly shocked. I stood up immediately.

"Gabriel," she said, letting out a breathy whisper, and I just stared at her.

"What are you doing here?" She asked, recovering from the shock, and I cleared my throat to speak, but she did not let me start when she cut in.

"Do not tell me you are here to apologies." She said, and I shook my head.

"Actually, I am not," I said, and she was shocked.

"How can you say that? You killed Mathias, took Forest and gave me no choice but to live in the woods. I was pregnant, Gabriel," she said, her eyes misty. I could see the rush of emotions on her face. She was reliving her truth.

"I sent you to go be with your brother," I said, and she wept.

"He chased us away, and I couldn't come here. Why? You had taken everything. The least you could have done was take me too for the sake of,..." She said, bringing up the same request she made that night.

“You know why I said no. You had an unhealthy crush on me. You were Mathais’s wife, and you were carrying his child.

Were your desires worth destroying your son’s future? What would have happened to your son if I had said yes out of duty?” I asked her, and she wiped away her tears.

“He would have had a home. A father figure and a normal life. We wouldn’t have grown up in the wild, and when the time came, I knew you would have helped him become king,” she said, and I disagreed.

“I doubt there would have been any werewolves left by that time, Isabelle. I knew what you, your brother, Leon and Isaac Lucas were planning,” I said, and she was dumbfounded.

“Did you think it would remain hidden forever or killing the record keeper would somehow absolve you of your sins? Your actions caused Mathais’ death. I thought you loved him,” I said.

She shook her head, tears streaming continuously, and sat on her bed because her knees gave out from the shock and pain.

“I loved him more than I had ever loved anyone. I was infatuated with Leon, but I loved Mathais. He wouldn’t give me a chance, so I lashed out, but I had nothing to do with his death. I had stopped helping Fredrick before I got pregnant. I had removed myself....” She said, and I shut her up.

“If that were true, you would have come clean and told Mathias the truth. It would have saved his life and saved your son all this trouble,” I told her, and she wept.

“I couldn’t. I wasn’t brave enough. It was bad he found out about my affairs and cast me aside. What do you think he would have done if I had confessed? He would have killed me, Gabriel. He did not love me.” She said, and I shook my head. “He did not need to marry you, yet he did. He just did not love you the way you wanted.

Mathias loved you, but you wanted to erase Olive from his life. You could not get that, so you lashed out. Your jealousy and cowardice got him killed and gave your brother the upper hand. You really messed things up, and to think you are still doing it to your son makes me sick, Isabelle,” I said, and she growled at me.

“I am trying to save him from getting enthralled by your daughter. It is Mathias and Olive playing all over again, and even though I wasn’t in Mathias’s life then, I cannot let it happen. Nikolas can’t be king with her, but he won’t let her go because they are fated. He refuses to let her...” she said, and she had lost me with that word. I could not believe what I had heard.

“So, antagonizing my daughter and spying on her is the best way to go? If you know how fated mates bond work, you should know he will always choose her. Why do you like to play games you will lose?”

You had gone feral, Isabelle, but the Goddess gave you a second chance and made you sane by blessing you with a loving son and blessing him with a mate that would have the heart to nurse your health.

Instead of redeeming yourself from your past mistakes by supporting your son and loving him just how he is, you decided to work against and antagonize him. You decided to make his life hell by trying to rip the woman he loves away from him. It shows how unremorseful you are....” I said, and she shook her head.

“I am not remorseful; I am just bitter. Bitter about what you did. You refused to give me a chance but chose my maid instead. My maid, Gabriel. What did Gwen have that I could not give you?” She said, and I did not want to answer the obvious question.

“You turned me down as if I were nothing and sent me away easily without even considering my proposal. Because of you, Fredrick had the opportunity to do what he did, and I had to hide away in the woods like a wild animal and raise my son the only way I could, so yes am bitter, and I doubt I will ever forgive you for it,” She said in tears. I could see in her eyes that the obsession never died. It just somehow turned into resentment and a need for vengeance.

“There is nothing to forgive, Isabelle. I spared your life and protected you by sending you to your brother, hoping you will be cared for. I promised to care for Forest and return the territory to your child when you return. The only person you should harbor ill feelings towards is your brother for not welcoming you home and protecting you when you need him the most. It was Fredrick that failed you and not me,” I said and walked towards her. She stood up immediately, wondering why I was approaching. Her eyes danced with confusion, anticipation and a tinge of hope. Her feelings were the same.

“What are you doing,” she asked gently, and I touched her cheek. She closed her eyes to feel my palm, and I knew what was on her mind. I looked at her and concluded that even though she was no longer feral, she wasn't completely healed. I caressed her hand gently, and she moaned. I didn't want to be rough. She had gone through enough in her life.

“It isn't too late, Gabriel. I still want you,” she said, and as painful and heartbroken I felt for her, I knew I had to do it.

I clamped the bracelet on her wrist and locked it.

She snapped out of her trans and stepped away from me, looking at her wrist. She was dumbfounded as she stared at the bracelet, and tears were streaming down her cheeks. I knew she felt like I had somehow betrayed her.



“Why did you do this? Why?” she asked, wanting to take it off, but it was useless. I was the one with the key and ensured it wasn’t on me.

“My wolf Gabriel I can’t talk to her like this,” She said, crying.

“Alisia will be fine, Isabelle. You need help, and your son has given me instructions,” I said, my heart heavy.

“No! No! No! I did not cause Mathais’ death, I swear. I hated Fredrik for it. Had I known, I would have ratted them out. I swear! I loved him. I loved you both,” she said in tears.

“You need to get better, Isabelle, for your son’s sake. You need to get better,” I told her, holding her to take her to the bunker that would be her new home until Nikolas said otherwise. While we moved through the passage, she was yelling and crying.

“I promise I won’t trouble anyone. I won’t antagonise Aliana. I will be good. I won’t try to write to Fredrick. I won’t do anything that will annoy Nikolas. Tell him, Gabriel. Tell him that I love him and I will never hurt him. I want you to tell him. please,” she said, and the best I could do was nod as I led her to the bunker.

I thought this would be easy, but seeing Isabelle like this broke me. I had once told Mathias that speaking of Olive where his bride was might cause issues. I knew things might have turned different if she had her way, but how could she expect Mathais to wipe away the woman that made his heart beat for many years?

**This book will be fast-paced. We have roughly ten chapters to go, and it will be completed.**