

Forged In The Flames Chapter 91

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 91A Welcomed News (Nikolas POV)

"So, what are your plans for today?" Aliana asked me, sitting up in bed. I had just finished in the bathroom and intended to dress and go out. As I dried my hair with a towel, I looked at her lying on the bed. Her hair was a tangled mess; she was naked under the sheets she clutched to her chest. Her neck and shoulders were marked with hickeys, evidence of our passionate night together. I smiled at her, and she beamed back at me, rising from the bed and walking naked towards me.

"Don't tempt me, little wolf," I said, feeling a surge of desire. The mischievous look on her face showed that she was deliberately provoking me, reveling in the tease. She approached, maintaining eye contact without looking away.

"We don't spend enough time together anymore," she said, feigning sadness. I chuckled and pulled her close to me, letting the towel around my waist fall to the ground.

"Ah!" she gasped sensually as my body brushed against hers.

She looked up at me playfully. "What a big c*ock you have, your highness," she remarked, and I gently brushed her hair aside.

"The better to please you, little wolf," I replied, leaning down to k*iss her. She jumped onto me, wrapping her l*egs around me. Soon, she wouldn't be able to do this until after she had given birth, so I cherished the moment.

Pressing her against the wall, I began to work my magic. Aliana always felt incredible, and this morning was no exception. She responded beautifully to my t*ouch, and I felt complete satisfaction when we were done. Knowing she still needed to shower, I held her close and guided her to the bathroom.

"I'll try to finish my tasks early today," I said as we stood under the shower, and she smiled and nodded.

"Everyone is busy, even my father," she said, her smile fading. I sensed something was troubling her, despite her attempts to hide it.

"Tell me," I urged, and she turned off the water.

"I know you're doing all this for me, for us," she said, placing her h*and on her lower belly, then looking up at me. Tears seemed to well up, though they were concealed by her wet hair and face.

“I’d rather be your secret lover, to keep you alive, than have you leave me forever while trying to secure a better future for me and my people,” she confessed, her voice cracking.

“I’m telling you not to risk your life in the process, Nikolas. I don’t want to live in a world without you,” she poured out her fears, her emotions overwhelming her.

“Don’t die on me,” she pleaded, resting her head against my chest.

“I can’t go on if you die,” she sobbed, and I wrapped my arms around her, letting her cry into my embrace.

“I won’t die, Aliana. I promise I won’t leave you,” I reassured her, stroking her back as I held her under the shower. We finished bathing and returned to the room. We dressed, and she mentioned that she wanted to go to the clinic. “I thought Nurse Alison attends to you at home?” I asked, and she nodded.

“She does, but I’m bored. I asked Ania and Lisa to accompany me so we could visit the sick in the hospital. Besides, I want to see the progress being made and maybe stop by the market,” she explained, and I understood her need for companionship. It was different when she had so much to do, but now that she had more free time and the people she spent time with were occupied, it was natural for her to feel lonely. “Very well, just promise me you’ll take some money with you today. I noticed you haven’t been taking any from the dresser. Please do,” I told her, and she nodded.

After getting dressed, I left the room and made my way outside.

“Alpha, Prince Piotr and Commander Miles are having brunch in the garden and would like you to join them,” a kappa informed me, and I headed towards the garden.

As I arrived at the garden, I was surprised to find Piotr and Miles laughing together. They seemed to be getting along. When Piotr noticed me, he raised his eyebrows, his gaze fixed on me, causing Miles to turn and smile at me.

“So, he finally joins us,” Miles remarked, and I pulled out a chair to join them.

“You look energized,” Piotr commented, obviously aware of my recent activities this morning. I didn’t respond, instead pouring myself a cup of coffee.

“I’ll be leaving tomorrow morning,” Piotr announced, and I wasn’t surprised. I had expected him to depart soon since Natasha wasn’t with him. I commended him for the two days he had spent here, as he had made an effort to show support.

“I’ll also be leaving tomorrow morning,” Miles added, and I frowned, wondering why he was departing so soon.

“You too?” I questioned, and he nodded.

“We all know why Fredrick left me here. He wants me to spy on you, so he can gather information to use against you,” he explained, and I nodded, as he had already informed me of this yesterday.

“What will you tell him?” Piotr inquired, and Miles laughed.

“I’ll tell him I was under constant surveillance, but I didn’t witness anything different from what we saw upon our arrival,” he concluded, and I nodded.

“I don’t understand why you don’t just go after him. You have everything in your favour. King Aleksander is no longer on his side,” Miles suggested, and I shrugged.

“I want to give him time to come to his senses. I don’t want to fight unless necessary,” I explained, and Miles understood my perspective.

“Well, I hope it pays off because that man is stubborn, and he has his eyes set on the forest,” Miles warned, sharing information I was already aware of.

“By the way, thank you for the gift of knowledge,” Miles said earnestly.

“I got to meet my cousins and saw pictures of my mother. I heard stories from them that made me feel closer to her. You have no idea how much you’ve helped me, Nikolas. I spent my whole life thinking I was an unwanted mistake until yesterday. Thanks to you, I’ve been trying so hard to be useful, to always be wanted. Now I know better. If you ever need anything, I’ll be there to assist,” he added, and I thanked him for his offer.

The three of us spent the day together, and soon the garden party began. Miles and Piotr expressed their desire to attend, and I had no choice but to join them. As I sat at our table in the garden, I glanced towards the window of my room. It was dark, but I knew Aliana was inside. I had promised her that I would try to finish early, but I hadn’t been able to keep that promise. I could clearly see that the reduced time we spent together was affecting her. I witnessed it this morning, even though she tried to conceal her longing. I knew she needed me. She craved my presence, especially in her current condition. She wanted me by her side, and I wanted to resolve the situation with Fredrick so that I could fulfil my role in Aliana’s life and be part of her pregnancy.

As I thought about Aliana and her need for me, I couldn’t help but wonder how my mother had managed when she was pregnant and alone in the woods. It took months before I arrived. There was a possibility that she could have lost me before giving birth. No one should have to endure such a difficult experience.

However, she brought it upon herself by helping Frederick and leaving my father vulnerable. She paid the highest price, losing everything—her home, her companion,

her crown, and her sanity. I wished I could ask her if it was all worth it, but there was no need. She was incapable of regret.

We stayed at the party, and I was surprised when Ingham joined us, exuding high spirits. He wasn't supposed to be in Riverhead, so I excused myself from the table to speak to him. When he saw me approaching, he smiled and bowed.

"What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be training in Timber?" I asked, puzzled. He nodded.

"That's why I'm here," he replied, and I furrowed my brow.

"Apparently, the weres still have skilled warriors among them. I guess Gabriel grew tired of the bloodshed. I believe that is why he surrendered because they still had fighters, and many young pack members are capable of combat. Anyway, I wanted to let you know that we are battle-ready, and most of the weapons have been mass-produced," he informed me, and I could hardly believe my ears.

"Did you say we're ready?" I asked, and he nodded. "We are prepared for battle," he confirmed, and I couldn't contain my joy, laughing and shaking his hand wholeheartedly. I was thrilled by the significant progress and the positive news Ingham had just shared with me.

The rest of the night was filled with enjoyment, and we didn't retire until the early hours of the morning. When I returned to my room, Aliana was already asleep. I promised myself that I would make it up to her.

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Chapter 92 In Motion (Nikolas POV)

In the morning, I left my room to bid farewell to Miles and Piotr. Although they had only spent a couple of days in the Forest, I cherished the brief moments I had with them. Their presence brought a sense of calm and determination to me. However, I decided not to reveal my plans to Piotr until everything was ready.

I stood in front of the parked vehicles that would take them to their respective

destinations. I noticed Piotr's eagerness to leave, likely influenced by Natasha. Miles, on the other hand, remained unreadable, but I had a feeling he would have liked to stay a little longer.

Piotr broke the silence and expressed his hope that I would take action. He believed that the snake would never change. I nodded in agreement, assuring him that I appreciated his support if it came to that.

"It's a shame I didn't get to see Aliana this time," Piotr added.

"I'm sure there will be other opportunities," I replied, and Miles chimed in.

"Is that your werewolf girlfriend's name?" he asked. I was glad that Miles referred to Aliana as my girlfriend and not my mistress, although our relationship had evolved beyond that point. "Yes, that's her name," I confirmed, and he nodded.

"Maybe next time I visit, I can meet her when you trust me a little more," he suggested, and we all shared a laugh. Although he had a point, I knew he meant no harm, so I simply nodded and smiled.

"Yes, Miles, perhaps next time. Just make sure to take care of yourself, and if you ever need a place to call home, remember that you're welcome here," I offered, though I worried about how Fredrick would react when Miles returned without valuable information. He had a knowing look on his face and patted my shoulder.

"Don't worry about me. I'll take care of myself. But it's good to know I have a family now and that I'm wanted," he reassured me, and I nodded. They got into their vehicles and departed.

Since none of my officers were awake yet due to last night's party, I decided to return to my room and catch up on sleep. I wondered how things had gone between Gabriel and my mother. I knew I would receive feedback later, but for now, I needed to shut my eyes and rest.

I was awakened by the sound of a spoon clinking against a plate. The room was dim, and the sunlight seeping through the curtains indicated that it was already morning. Glancing at the clock, I saw that it was ten o'clock. I felt refreshed and well-rested. Aliana was sitting on the couch, eating. I wanted to make it up to her, but I wasn't sure where to begin.

As I got out of bed, preparing to head to the bathroom to freshen up, Aliana spoke.

"You're up," she remarked, and I turned to look at her.

"I'm sorry about last night. I hadn't planned to attend the party, but..." I started to explain, but she shook her head.

"I'm not mad, Nikolas. I knew you had guests. It was good that you took some time for them. Besides, yesterday was a bit chaotic for me.

After I showered, I fell asleep," she reassured me. I wondered why her day had been chaotic. "Why? I thought you were going to visit the hospital and go shopping," I inquired, and she nodded.

"I did those those things, but I ended up helping at the hospital. They were understaffed because you had relocated most of the population to the woodland. The nurses and two doctors who were there were struggling to cope. So, we decided to assist with patient care," she explained, and although I wasn't thrilled about her working, I kept my concerns to myself.

"I'm glad you were available to lend a h*and," I said, trying to sound supportive, although I didn't entirely approve. She squinted at me, studying my expression. She could sense my true feelings despite my attempt to hide them, and she shook her head.

"No, you're not glad. I can tell," she said, giggling.

"Don't worry, love. I won't do it again," she reassured me, and I relaxed.

"Come on, go shower and join me before I finish all the food," she joked, and I nodded, heading towards the bathroom to freshen up.

I didn't spend much time in the bathroom when Aliana wasn't with me, and this morning was no exception. I completed my morning routine in under thirty minutes and joined Aliana on the couch.

Taking a seat beside her, I gently k*issed her h*and as I held it. It felt delicate and soft.

"How are you feeling this morning?" I asked, and she giggled.

"Like I need more sleep," she replied, and I chuckled.

"I suppose the work drained your energy," I commented, reaching for a plate to grab something to eat.

"Nikolas," she suddenly spoke in a serious tone, capturing my attention. I focused on her, waiting for what she had to say.

"Are you planning to keep your mother locked up for long?" she asked, catching me off guard. I wasn't prepared for that question.

"I'm not sure, really. She poses a threat to my plans at the moment," I confessed, and she nodded.

"My father believes she may have some mental issues," she shared, and I nodded, as Gabriel and I had entertained the same theory.

“I’ll figure it out once all of this is over,” I assured her.

“By the way, my army is ready. Ingham informed me yesterday, so it’s time to set everything in motion,” I informed her, noticing her slightly tense. I knew this would be a difficult topic to address, even with her unwavering support.

“I assure you, I won’t die. If the worst-case scenario happens, I’ll take you and we’ll run away together. Here,” I playfully teased her, and she responded with a gentle giggle. Her laughter made her look even more beautiful, and I couldn’t resist pulling her close for a k*iss. “I think it’s time to tell her about her mother,” Bane’s voice echoed in my mind, causing me to tense up. Aliana noticed and broke away from the k*iss, frowning at me.

“What’s wrong?” she asked, sighing as she realised the sudden change. My wolf was right. “I need to tell you something, and I need you to promise me you won’t panic. I’ve already come up with a solution to the problem, and your father is aware of it. I’m only sharing this because I don’t want any secrets between us,” I said, and she managed to relax, waiting for my words.

“While I was away in the snow, Fredrick sent a woman to serve me,” I began, and she shook her head.

“If you had any involvement with this woman, please don’t tell me. I don’t want to know,” she pleaded with a shaky voice, reminding me of Gabriel’s reaction when I wanted to tell him about Gwen. The similarities between them surprised me. I shook my head to reassure her, finding it endearing how much it affected her. “Far from it, Little wolf. You are enough for me, and I could always wait until I returned home,” I assured her, and I could see her relax.

“I didn’ t know why he sent her until I came back. I suspected he wanted to test if I would recognise her. Unfortunately, I didn’t know who she was. However, when I returned, I discovered her true identity,” I explained, piquing her curiosity.

“Aliana, know that I’ll do anything to make you happy, and you can trust that I’m h*andling this situation,” I reassured her. I wanted to be cautious because of her condition. Seeing

Gabriel’s reaction, I didn’t want her to get worked up and potentially harm our child.

“Promise me you’ll stay calm,” I requested, and she quickly nodded, eager to hear what I had to say.

“She is your mother,” I revealed, and she gasped, covering her mouth in shock. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she shook her head in disbelief.

“Yes, Aliana. She is your mother. I want you to know that, despite the circumstances, she seems to be alright. Frederick branded her, claimed her, and made her his mistress, but she’s okay. Your father and I will fight for her freedom. It’s a promise. Only his death can set her free,” I declared, and she nodded.

Her hand still covered her mouth as tears continued to flow. She was trying her best to stay composed and not lose control. I understood her emotions all too well. I held her tightly in my arms, allowing her to weep and release the shock and mixed emotions she was experiencing.

I held her until she fell asleep, her tears the only sound in the room. I carried her to bed and tucked her in gently once she had drifted off. I contacted Ania and Lisa, instructing them to stay by Aliana’s side and inform me immediately when she woke up.

Heading to my office, I felt uncertain about how the news would affect Aliana. I prayed for the sake of our baby that I hadn’t made a mistake by telling her the truth. I hoped the goddess would comfort her and grant her the strength to be brave.

I contacted Qusack, Abraham, Grant, and Ingham to join me in my office. It was time to set our plans in motion. They arrived eager and prepared. I could see the determination in their eyes, and it reassured me.

“How prepared are the troops?” I asked Ingham.

“They’re ready,” he replied succinctly. I understood that they were already skilled warriors before this, which explained why civilians could defend their territories during the hunter’s attack. Everyone in the pack and territory was trained to fight, ensuring effective and swift training.

“So, what’s our next course of action?” Qusack inquired, the dark circles under his eyes suggesting he had trouble sleeping. I suspected it had something to do with Ania, but I kept my thoughts to myself. I wouldn’t mention it in front of the others, but I hoped whatever was bothering him could be resolved.

“We’ll send out invitations for my coronation to everyone while we prepare for battle,” I stated, and Qusack nodded in agreement.

“I can’t believe we’re actually doing this,”

Grant exclaimed, sounding both eager and amazed. I nodded in understanding.

“I had a feeling it would come to this, considering Frederick’s ambitions. But now that we have allies, we’re in a better position to fightback,” Abraham analysed, assessing the situation accurately.

He was right—I had support, but I couldn't rely on it completely in case they backed out at the last minute. My main goal was Fredrick's demise, and that was where my focus would remain.

Abraham began drafting an invitation.

"Prince Nikolas

Royal Palace

Kingdom of Forest

Dear Recipient

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. It is with great pleasure and immense honour that I extend my warmest invitation to you for a momentous occasion that marks a significant milestone in the history of our beloved Kingdom of Forest.

I am writing to inform you that the day after the upcoming new moon will witness my coronation as the new ruler of Forest. This auspicious event is scheduled to take place in the evening within the hallowed halls of the majestic Forest Royal Palace.

The coronation ceremony will be a grand celebration of our traditions, heritage, and the unity of our people. It will serve as a beacon of hope and a testament to the bright future that lies ahead for Forest. With the blessing of the celestial alignment, we shall embark on a new era of prosperity, justice, and harmony for all. I extend this invitation to you, as your presence would add immeasurable joy and honour to this historic occasion.

The festivities shall commence in the evening with a ceremonial procession through the capital's streets, Riverhead, leading to the Royal Palace. The main event will unfold within the opulent Throne Room as the sun sets. I will take the oath of office and receive the crown, symbolising my ascension to the throne.

Following the coronation ceremony, a lavish banquet will be held in the palace gardens, adorned with the most exquisite decorations and accompanied by live music performed by the kingdom's finest musicians. It will be an evening of mirth, camaraderie, and jubilation as we revel in the unity of our people.

We have arranged your accommodation at the royal guest quarters within the palace to ensure your comfort and enjoyment. A detailed itinerary, travel instructions, and necessary passes will be sent to you separately.

Please RSVP to the Royal Court, indicating your acceptance or regret. Your response will assist us in making appropriate arrangements and ensure a memorable experience for all attendees.

I eagerly anticipate the honour of your presence at my coronation and sincerely hope you can join us on this joyous occasion. Together, let us herald the dawn of a new era in the Kingdom of Forest.

May the light of the moon shine upon us all.

Yours faithfully,

Prince Nikolas

Heir to the Throne of Forest.”

The letter of invitation exuded perfection and conveyed a strong sense of confidence. I found it quite appealing. In order to ensure its widespread distribution, we assigned scribes to meticulously copy the letter, addressing it to both kings and every Alpha. Grant and Ingham took on the responsibility of delivering the invitations to the post office, ensuring that nothing was amiss. Regardless of the post office workers’ role as potential spies, we knew they had no choice but to deliver the letters to their intended recipients.

We exercised patience as we eagerly awaited responses, and after four days, the RSVPs began trickling in. While we received a few replies from the Alphas in Hill, there was still no word from the Kings. However, I remained unfazed by their silence, fully prepared for the possibility of war.

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Chapter 91A Welcomed News (Nikolas POV)

“So, what are your plans for today?” Aliana asked me, sitting up in bed. I had just finished in the bathroom and intended to dress and go out. As I dried my hair with a towel, I looked at her lying on the bed. Her hair was a tangled mess; she was naked under the sheets she clutched to her chest. Her neck and shoulders were marked with hickeys, evidence of our passionate night together. I smiled at her, and she beamed back at me, rising from the bed and walking naked towards me.

“Don’t tempt me, little wolf,” I said, feeling a surge of desire. The mischievous look on her face showed that she was deliberately provoking me, reveling in the tease. She approached, maintaining eye contact without looking away.

“We don’t spend enough time together anymore,” she said, feigning sadness. I chuckled and pulled her close to me, letting the towel around my waist fall to the ground.

“Ah!” she gasped sensually as my body brushed against hers.

She looked up at me playfully. "What a big c*ock you have, your highness," she remarked, and I gently brushed her hair aside.

"The better to please you, little wolf," I replied, leaning down to k*iss her. She jumped onto me, wrapping her l*egs around me. Soon, she wouldn't be able to do this until after she had given birth, so I cherished the moment.

Pressing her against the wall, I began to work my magic. Aliana always felt incredible, and this morning was no exception. She responded beautifully to my t*ouch, and I felt complete satisfaction when we were done. Knowing she still needed to shower, I held her close and guided her to the bathroom.

"I'll try to finish my tasks early today," I said as we stood under the shower, and she smiled and nodded.

"Everyone is busy, even my father," she said, her smile fading. I sensed something was troubling her, despite her attempts to hide it.

"Tell me," I urged, and she turned off the water.

"I know you're doing all this for me, for us," she said, placing her h*and on her lower belly, then looking up at me. Tears seemed to well up, though they were concealed by her wet hair and face.

"I'd rather be your secret lover, to keep you alive, than have you leave me forever while trying to secure a better future for me and my people," she confessed, her voice cracking.

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"Don't die on me," she pleaded, resting her head against my chest.

"I can't go on if you die," she sobbed, and I wrapped my arms around her, letting her cry into my embrace.

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"She does, but I'm bored. I asked Ania and Lisa to accompany me so we could visit the sick in the hospital. Besides, I want to see the progress being made and maybe stop by the market," she explained, and I understood her need for companionship. It was different when she had so much to do, but now that she had more free time and the people she spent time with were occupied, it was natural for her to feel lonely. "Very

well, just promise me you'll take some money with you today. I noticed you haven't been taking any from the dresser. Please do," I told her, and she nodded.

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As I arrived at the garden, I was surprised to find Piotr and Miles laughing together. They seemed to be getting along. When Piotr noticed me, he raised his eyebrows, his gaze fixed on me, causing Miles to turn and smile at me.

"So, he finally joins us," Miles remarked, and I pulled out a chair to join them.

"You look energized," Piotr commented, obviously aware of my recent activities this morning. I didn't respond, instead pouring myself a cup of coffee.

"I'll be leaving tomorrow morning," Piotr announced, and I wasn't surprised. I had expected him to depart soon since Natasha wasn't with him. I commended him for the two days he had spent here, as he had made an effort to show support.

"I'll also be leaving tomorrow morning," Miles added, and I frowned, wondering why he was departing so soon.

"You too?" I questioned, and he nodded.

"We all know why Fredrick left me here. He wants me to spy on you, so he can gather information to use against you," he explained, and I nodded, as he had already informed me of this yesterday.

"What will you tell him?" Piotr inquired, and Miles laughed.

"I'll tell him I was under constant surveillance, but I didn't witness anything different from what we saw upon our arrival," he concluded, and I nodded.

"I don't understand why you don't just go after him. You have everything in your favour. King Aleksander is no longer on his side," Miles suggested, and I shrugged.

"I want to give him time to come to his senses. I don't want to fight unless necessary," I explained, and Miles understood my perspective.

"Well, I hope it pays off because that man is stubborn, and he has his eyes set on the forest," Miles warned, sharing information I was already aware of.

"By the way, thank you for the gift of knowledge," Miles said earnestly.

“I got to meet my cousins and saw pictures of my mother. I heard stories from them that made me feel closer to her. You have no idea how much you’ve helped me, Nikolas. I spent my whole life thinking I was an unwanted mistake until yesterday. Thanks to you, I’ve been trying so hard to be useful, to always be wanted. Now I know better. If you ever need anything, I’ll be there to assist,” he added, and I thanked him for his offer.

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However, she brought it upon herself by helping Frederick and leaving my father vulnerable. She paid the highest price, losing everything—her home, her companion, her crown, and her sanity. I wished I could ask her if it was all worth it, but there was no need. She was incapable of regret.

We stayed at the party, and I was surprised when Ingham joined us, exuding high spirits. He wasn’t supposed to be in Riverhead, so I excused myself from the table to speak to him. When he saw me approaching, he smiled and bowed.

“What are you doing here? Shouldn’t you be training in Timber?” I asked, puzzled. He nodded.

“That’s why I’m here,” he replied, and I furrowed my brow.

“Apparently, the weres still have skilled warriors among them. I guess Gabriel grew tired of the bloodshed. I believe that is why he surrendered because they still had fighters, and many young pack members are capable of combat. Anyway, I wanted to let you know that we are battle-ready, and most of the weapons have been mass-produced,” he informed me, and I could hardly believe my ears.

“Did you say we’re ready?” I asked, and he nodded. “We are prepared for battle,” he confirmed, and I couldn’t contain my joy, laughing and shaking his hand wholeheartedly. I was thrilled by the significant progress and the positive news Ingham had just shared with me.

The rest of the night was filled with enjoyment, and we didn't retire until the early hours of the morning. When I returned to my room, Aliana was already asleep. I promised myself that I would make it up to her.

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Chapter 93 The Rise Of Hill (Piotr's POV)

It had finally happened. I knew Nikolas was up to something when I arrived at Forest for the committee meeting and found it almost empty. His audacity impressed me, but it hurt that he did not trust me with his plans.

There was also a possibility I had put the idea in his head.

I sat in my chambers, wondering how everyone would respond to Nikolas's actions.

This was a defining moment for all of us, and I was very eager to see the outcome. I wasn't lying when I said he would have my support. Whatever the outcome may be, I was willing to support him.

Avoiding my father, I linked my trusted Beta, Gerald, to gather our top officers and meet me in the training room. I did not know who my father would side with or what the alphas of Hill would do, but I owned my father's army, and I planned to lend Nikolas a helping hand.

The fight wasn't his alone. Nikolas being King would mean a bright future for Natasha and me, and I won't let him do all the work so I can reap the benefits if he succeeds. I plan to work with him and ensure he succeeds.

I wore my shirt and headed to the training room to commence the meeting. I asked two trusted warriors to position themselves at the entrance to ensure no one would eavesdrop on the meeting. They could hear our discussion posted outside, so they won't be excluded.

Gerald was surprised and confused about the impromptu meeting because it was unlike me. The look on his face showed he knew what I had to say was serious.

"What is the occasion, your highness?" Gerald asked me, and I took a seat.

"Prince Nikolas Kowalski has decided to crown himself as king of Forest," I said, and they looked confused.

I could understand their confusion because it had nothing to do with us on the surface.

“My father might sit on the fence on this one, but I do not plan to. I plan to support the prince, “ I said, and there was worry etched on their faces.

“If I may speak, your Highness. Don’t you think we would be stepping on King Fredrick’s toes?” he asked with worry, and I nodded.

“My point precisely. Hill isn’t Snow, so why should Fredrick have so much influence here?”

We are disrespected and disregarded by Snow citizens because they feel we bow to their King.

Our need for peace has made us the joke of our region.

Prince Nikolas is doing something we wouldn’t dare do out of fear.

I do not know if Fredrick would object and attack Nikolas on this. Still, I want us to seize the opportunity to liberate ourselves.

When I become King, I refuse to bow to Fredrick. It is best we join forces with Forest and take him out than allow him to take over Forest and become a more powerful enemy in future, an enemy we would have no choice but to bow.

This is the time to nip his tyranny and evil in the bud,” I said, and they understood my point. The comprehension in their eyes showed they were convinced.

“Any objections?” I asked, and there was none. “So, what should we do?” Gerald asked, and I nodded.

“Prepare yourselves and our warriors secretly. Fredrick is yet to react, so we will wait and see. If he does, we will claim to be neutral. We know what he would do next. He will seek support from our King and the alphas of Hill. After he has convinced them, I will call a meeting with alphas to feel for their allegiance. Mind you, this is not a move to ask them to join us; this move will be to feel for those likely to side with Fredrick and to ensure they cannot lend the tyrant a helping h*and..” I said, and an evil grin went across Gerald’s face. Most of the officers present understood my plan, and they liked it. “It seems you have it all figured out,” Gerald said, and I nodded.

He had no idea how long I had thought of this and how I was finally happy it was happening. From the moment I saw Nikolas, I knew his presence would signal a new era. I was glad to see it happening.

We ended the meeting, and they all went to work.

Two days later, Fredrick arrived at our Kingdom. It was unlike him to pay my father a visit. He would usually settle for letters and summon my father if there was a need for a face -to-face discussion.

This was unusual behaviour, but I already knew why.

My father disagreed with him when they attended the meeting in Forest. I knew Fredrick was being careful because he would need my father's support on this one. It was no longer between him and my father anymore. A third Kingdom was being resurrected, and the majority would likely win.

I was curious to know the purpose of his visit. Still, I dared not approach the King's office without being summoned, so I waited in my office nervously.

"Join me in my office, Piotr," I heard my father's voice in my head, and I was ecstatic. I did not care about the outcome of the meeting, but I was interested in the context of the discussion.

I got to my father's office and walked in. Fredrick was surprised and a bit offended to see me.

"Good afternoon, you Majesty," I said, bowing to Fredrick. He managed to respond.

"What is the meaning of this, Aleksander. This is the meeting of Kings," Frederick protested, and my father nodded while I sat on the couch in his office.

Frederick was seated on the comfortable chair before my father's Desk. My father was sitting behind his Desk.

"Piotr is the next King. I will be stepping down in four years, so I should carry him along to make the transition easy." My father explained.

"But this matter would be resolved in your time," Fredrick protested.

"Do not assume the future, Fredrick, and do not underestimate Prince Nikolas; he isn't feared and called a savage for nothing," My father said, but Fredrick would not have it. Too bad for him; he was a guest in our home and had to abide by our rules.

"Very well then," He reluctantly said, and I remained quiet. My purpose was to listen.

"I want you to join me in taking over Forest. Nikolas's behaviour is disrespectful and cannot be trusted with power, or he would abuse it," he said, and I fought a laugh.

"Like you have?" My father said, and he frowned at my father.

"It is amazing to see that you need my help, Fredrick. You are always bullying our Kingdom with your might. Suddenly you are afraid that Nikolas will do the same to you," My father said, and Fredrick shook his head.

"I am not afraid of Nikolas, but we both know what he will do when he becomes King. Our regions depend on the slave trade. We need people that would build our city and carry out our chores. We need Loyal people. The werewolves are more loyal and trustworthy than the Lycans. Nikolas has a werewolf bitch he is screwing; there is no doubt he would abolish the law," He said, and my father nodded, i "He never said anything like that, nor did he act that way. Besides, you have a werewolf mistress, too. Why haven't you abolished the law? We both know I have no problem letting the man have his rights. Forest belongs to Nikolas; it belonged to his family and was stolen. The man single-h*andedly created an army and took it back. He does not need our permission to be King, he has earned his place as King, and you have no right to oppose him," My father said, stating his part.

My father was right. As long as Nikolas did not break the unity law, Fredrick had no justification for attacking Forest. He will be breaking the law doing so, but no one was brave enough to tell him to his face. I was glad to see my father pushing back.

"So, what are you saying, Alex? Because it seems you have already chosen a side," He said, and my father shook his head.

"I will sit on the fence on this one. I will not waste the lives of my son and the military just to please you, Fred. You know I voted we give him his crown, and my vote hasn't changed. If you want to fight Nikolas and take over Forest, you will be doing it on your own," My father stated adamantly, and Fredrick looked at me. I remained silent and bore no expressions on my face.

"You have to support me because other than being colleagues, we will be family soon. Miles and Lena are together," he said as if it was a secret, and my father laughed. 1

"You mean I will be in-laws with Nikolas soon since Miles is his older brother. Besides, my children's love interest does not affect my decisions,' my father said, and technically, he was right. Miles was Nikolas's half-brother.

Frederick began to laugh.

"You are such an idiot. Your alphas are willing to help me. My men have contacted them, and they are willing to help me. I do not need your army or your support. I only wanted to carry you because I thought we were friends, so we could share the spoils of Forest, but I know better now. You are just as weak as I remember." He said and stood up.

My father was silent, unaffected by his words. I had never seen my father push back so hard before. I guess he had had enough.

“I am laughing at you now, Alex, because if you do not choose a side, and I go after Nikolas and finish him off, I will come for Hill. I will take everything dear to you, and you can do nothing about it,” he said, promising my father to come for him.

I would have loved to kill him on the spot for threatening my father, but I did not want a war in Hill. He had come on a friendly visit, and there were rules of engagement. It was hard knowing this asshole would leave Hill untouched. But I consoled myself, knowing I might have a shot at him on the battlefield if he dared to proceed and fight Nikolas.

“I would watch my tongue if I were you, Fredrick. You are no longer the one to be feared anymore. Nikolas has quite a reputation. In fact, I will implore you as a friend to let it go and keep your head on your neck because if you meet that boy on the field, he will take you out,” My father said. Fredrick laughed and started walking toward the exit.

“I expect your son and his army on the battlefield, Alex, and they better be on my side,” he said arrogantly before walking out the door. I guess his visit was over.

I remained sitting on the couch, silent. I did not want to be the first to break the silence. A few minutes later, my father spoke.

“Fredrick is leaving; I have instructed Obadia to ensure everyone he came with leaves Hill with him,” My father told me the situation.

I used that as my cue to leave. I got off the couch, and my father stopped me.

“Nikolas is your friend, and I know you have formed a friendly bond with the prince. You fight all my battles and lead my wars. I am putting you in charge of this. Whatever you decide to do, I am okay with it, Piotr, but above all, please bring honour to Hill,” he said, and I understood his words perfectly well. I smiled evilly and nodded.

“Thank you, Father. I won’t disappoint,” I said and headed out.

On my way out, I linked Gerald to arrange a meeting with all the twenty-six Alphas in Hill. I needed to figure out those that planned to fight for Fredrick and ensure they would not keep their promise. I went to my office and took out a pen and paper to RSVP Nikolas’s invite and inform Fredrick we were on his side.

We can only have victory with inside information, and I planned to get it myself. I knew the battle would commence between now and the new moon. My letter would have to be delivered to Forest in person as there will be issues I would want to be clear about.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 94

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 94 The Mad King (Fredrick’s POV)

I could not believe Aleksander's audacity to turn me down. The coward decided that he would sit on the fence when I needed him the most.

Sitting on the fence might make the Hill Alphas rethink helping me. I needed all the support because I was planning an overkill. I did not want anyone to surprise me in the future.

I left Hill in a rage.

I had respected Aleksander by visiting him in person, and he had insulted me, first by asking his son to join us and then refusing to help me. I know that my last words had shaken him, and just as always, he would comply. The last thing the bastard would want is for me to come for his crown after I am done with Nikolas.

Thinking of Nikolas, I planned to teach that boy a lesson.

Isabelle and her son would have been executed had my father been alive?

Isabelle had failed Snow.

We had Forest in our grasp if only she had agreed to poison Mathias, but she refused, and Leon died because he had to find other ways to finish the work.

Since Mathias and his werewolf officers never left a room open for us to strike and get a hold of Forest, Leon had to die because he was trying to do the impossible while Gabriel and Giles stood in his way.

I would think Leon's death would motivate Isabelle enough to do her work, but she had messed up.

She never loved Leon enough.

After her marriage, he became something to fill the void Mathias left.

Leon knew, and it pained him because she was once his. I did not care, really, because I wanted her with Alex and not the tainted halfbreed Mathias.

The bastard could never be Lycan enough for me, no matter how far his werewolf genes were.

I did not want Isabelle with Mathias. I knew she was fickle. If only she married Aleksander as I had desired, we would have owned Hill and going after the tainted Mathias would have been easy.

We would have controlled Hill, but she had to choose the more difficult King Mathias and fall in love.

I am glad that the love story didn't end well. It only helped her realise all the lessons our father used to teach us were true.

Love begets fall.

Had she not chickened out last minute, Isaac wouldn't have had the bright idea to force the werewolves to revolt. We would have successfully run circles around Mathias and taken Forest for all it had to help revive Snow.

Isabelle was the one that spoiled my plans then, and now her son was doing the same.

I stood in front of my father's portrait in the grand hall of my castle, feeling like a failure. Everything he entrusted me with and asked me to achieve was now slipping away.

"I am sorry, Father, I did everything you said, but your daughter was no help, and now her son is a problem. Snow is sinking, but I promise to revive it no matter what.

I also promise to add Forest to our territory and rule over the lands. It has always been your wish that our Bloodline will produce the King of kings. I promise to bring it to reality," I said, vowing to my father.

I stood there for a while and watched my father's portrait, a man who rarely smiled.

I wouldn't let Snow fall and my people go completely poor. I will put Miles in Nikolas's place since Nikolas has decided to rise above his station.

I returned to my bedroom to while away time while I waited for Miles to return from training. "Gwen," I linked my mistress.

I had a lot of anger and frustration; only she could ease it. I remember the day they brought her to me in a friend's cabin in Riverdale. She was stubborn, and my men wanted to kill her. She was mine from the moment I set eyes on her. How could the goddess be so cruel to tie me to a werewolf bitch? I was glad she wouldn't feel our bond like I do, but I hated it. I was yet to decide what to do with her, but I would never give her back because she is mine.

I thought about how Aleksander had likened Nikolas to me, and he was utterly wrong.

I might be fond of Gwen, but my head was screwed on properly. Should she defy me in any way or pose a threat to my kind or my

ambitions, I will kill her without remorse. The good part is she knew. I believed the only reason why she held on was the hope that her husband would one day come for her, a hope I try to crush every time, and I enjoyed every bit of her tears. How dare she think of Gabriel when she was mine?

Gwen came to the room in her sheer red tunic.

She never smiled, and I did not care. As long as I get what I want, I will be okay.

“What took you so long!” I growled at her and watched her fight my authority. It was fun seeing her squirm with fear. Betas were always stubborn.

“Next time I call you, you come running. Am I clear?” I asked her, and she nodded reluctantly. “Come over here, I ordered with compulsion. With her, I needed to compel her all the time, and I think that was why I liked her; she always made me work for it, and the fact that she did not know her stubbornness and defiance was the main reason I was attracted to her made it even much better.

When I was done with her, I got off the bed and started laughing. I realised I had gotten myself worked up for no reason. That was why I liked Gwen, time with her always gave me clarity.

“You know your daughter is a whore like you to the Forest Prince. Your husband is a slave, a stone cutter, I heard, and his health isn’t so good. Anyway. I am just giving you updates on your beloved family. At least you have it good here; I do not share you with my officers, no matter how badly they want you. I can’t say the same for your dear child. You know, I must really like you because I turned the offer to have her down when her master offered her to me,” I said, and she suddenly smirked.

“If that were true, you would have told me when you arrived. I bet the young prince drew the line,” She said, and I could see the defiance clear in her eyes.

“Today is what?” I asked her with an evil grin, and she replied.

“Saturday,” She said, confused.

“Well, not just Saturday but the last Saturday of the month. Since you have chosen to be a bad mouth,” I said, and the surprised look on her face gave me satisfaction that she had realised where I was heading.

“Well, I see you do not miss your wolf. If you did, you would have behaved yourself. I would have removed the silver so you could talk to her, shift, run in the wild, and hunt. Still, I guess you will have to wait until I have slaughtered everyone in Forest, including your daughter and former mate. As you already know, the mark on your neck says you belong to me. Never forget that,” I said, ordering her to get out.

She got off the bed, wore her tunic and headed out.

Watching her leave, I was pissed. I wanted to spend the night and hold her, but I knew it would be harder than just ordering her.

Usually, managing Gwen used to be easy because she had nowhere to run to. She knew I would unleash my army on her mate if she ran away, and Hill would not give her refuge. Something had changed now.

Nikolas was in the game. He was causing me to lose my hold on everyone and everything. I needed to take him out and return things as they should be.

I waited in the room, and then when I knew Miles had returned from his training, I decided to see him.

I went to his room.

The man had done well for himself.

He had proven his use, and now, instead of a cage with a collar on his neck like all my slaves, he had a room and was treated like a prince. It was time for him to show his gratitude and allegiance.

When he returned from Forest, I wasn't hoping he would get much information because I knew Nikolas would be guarded around him. Still, I had taken him there and left him there so I could use the vision of the life he could have to make his loyalty stronger than it already was.

The moment I entered his room, he stood up and greeted me.

"I see you are diligent with your training, ever ready to strike," I said, and he bowed respectfully.

"As we all know, I am not your biological father, and you have seen your father's home now and the young bastard claiming everything. My sister had a lot of affairs, so I wouldn't put it past her to pass another man's pregnancy to Mathias, but it is okay," I said and looked around the place.

"I took pity on you and raised you when your father did not want anything to do with you, and you have shown your gratitude by

eliminating my enemies and helping me to hold on to power. I would like to call on that loyalty today," I said, and he was attentive.

I studied him; I had his full attention.

"Nikolas has decided to defy me and belittle me. He is trying to destroy the reputation I spent sweat, blood and tears to build. He is trying to make me a laughingstock. I want you to help me take back my honour, Miles, and in exchange, I will make you ruler of Forest.

Though not King, you will be a lord, and anyone that does not like the idea of a halfbreed leading will have me to contend with. I will give you a place of honour in this world. No more will you have to bow to anyone.

You have seen Forest, and it expands, and I know you desire to own it. Never again will anyone claim you do not have a place in our world, Miles," I said, and he was attentive and quiet.

"Nikolas has decided to go against our law. Instead of waiting for the committee to vote and my approval to be crowned, he has decided to crown himself as King. Now we must not allow him to do this, or there will be chaos because everyone will feel they can ignore the rules and do as their like. Also, your chance of getting some of what belongs to your father will be lost forever. So, I want you to lead our army and that of our Alphas. Hill alphas will join you. I want you to go to Forest and wipe them out. Earn your place as ruler and owner of Forest, and let Nikolas know that he is the bastard," I said, and his face bore no expression.

"What about King Aleksander?" he asked me, and I laughed.

"The coward said he wanted to sit on the fence this time, but I gave him an ultimatum. If he does not send his troops to aid us in battle like his alphas have promised, I will come for his Kingdom and his crown," I said, and he nodded.

I guess Miles did not need too much convincing after all. Seeing how useful Miles had turned out for me, I wished I had taken halfbreeds from birth and raised them the way I raised Miles. I would have had killing machines, and my army will be more fierce than it is right now, but this would have to do for now. I left Miles's room to prepare my mind.

This wasn't a battle that I planned to send Miles forward and remain in Snow. I planned to go and lead by his side. I planned to make the victory mine.

I plan to physically take the victory and ensure my orders are diligently carried out.

I walked to my room, realising I should have done this long ago instead of playing politics with the bastard. I had learned my lesson, and I was better for it.

"What about Izzy," Rudolph, my wolf, asked, and I growled.

"The bitch will die with her son," I replied, and he was silent. He never tells me what to do anymore; I keep him happy by holding on to Gwen so we are even.

I headed to my chambers to write Isaac Lucas and inform him that he could now come out of hiding, and we could attack Forest together.

I knew Nikolas had caught and killed his men, which is why we had not heard anything from them; there was no need to have spies in Forest any more, Nikolas's days were numbered.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 95

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 95 Aligning Our Goals (Aliana)

Nikolas returned to the room, and I could see his nervousness. It had been almost a week since his friend and half-brother left, and I knew he was doing a lot.

I also knew we were preparing for battle. I wished I could pause everything and just savour the moment. There was fear inside me. The fear of failure, of losing him and everyone I know and care about.

Even though the battle was necessary to free my mother, was it worth risking Nikolas's life and the life of others?

Will our child be glad that his father was a hero if he has to grow up without him? The questions that plagued me made it impossible to lend Nikolas the needed support.

"How are you feeling," I asked him as he sat beside me on the couch.

"We are getting ready. I know Fred*ic*k will attack between now and the coronation day. I do not want the battle to take place in Riverhead. I would prefer the lands that lead to Forest so the battle would not destroy our progress," he said, and I sighed.

"Have you reached out to Piotr? Is he going to help?" I asked, and he shook his head. It scared me to think that he would be doing this alone.

"But you should," I said, almost in tears.

"You can't fight this war alone. He will benefit from it. You should, Nikolas," I said, feeling a panic rise in me, and he turned towards me.

"Shhh," he said, trying to calm me down. My body was shaking, and I was crying. He held me to his chest and k*issed the top of my head.

"Don't be afraid, little wolf. It shows how little faith you have in me," he teased, and I broke away and shook my head.

"No, Nikolas, I do not have little faith in you, but you are everything to me. Knowing that your life will be on the line is scary. I am afraid that fate will not favour us, and you will

lose. You really do not have to fight. You can just be Alpha, and we can....” I said, and before I could finish the sentence, I realised what I was about to say was impossible.

How can we be?

I was expecting his child.

As long as a child is between us, he will be found wanting and will have to protect his life.

“I had set things in motion by getting pregnant. It is all my fault. I should have researched and not gotten pregnant, Nikolas,” I said, panicking, and he shook his head.

“Be calm, Aliana. Our baby is why I have a purpose. You and our baby have given me a reason to push harder. I want this; I want you and our child. Both of you are a blessing to me, and I will be damned if it is likened to a mistake. I promise you I will not fall,” He said with strong determination, and I knew it would only be wise to boost his confidence and support him. So, I nodded, and he k*issed the top of my head and held me to his chest again.

“I will be heading to Timber this evening to check our arsenal. The troops are already in Riverhead, so I will return tomorrow to address and prepare the people. I need you to keep things in order before I return. Can you do that?” he asked, gazing into my eyes, and I nodded. It was the least I could do.

He held me for a while, and soon it was time for him to head to Timber. I managed to see him off.

After Nikolas left, I decided to support him by boosting the morale of my people and ensuring they understood the significance of this war. I needed them to fight with their heart because it was our war, not the war of a man who wanted to be King by force.

“Father, I need you to assemble all the werewolf warriors and abled-bodied fighters on the grounds. I want to address them,” I linked him. “Princess, wouldn’t that be seen as treason by other Lycans?” My father asked, sounding worried. Knowing everything we had been doing was secret, there was no point hiding anymore. We all know that werewolves will be part of the army and need a purpose.

“If we do not help them understand the importance of this war, they will not fight it as they should,” I linked with my father, who was silent for a bit.

“Still, we cannot gather them on the ground. As far as the Lycans are concerned, Nikolas is

moving to become King. I will have them gather in the abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of town. Both werewolves and half-breeds. Then I will send a Rickshaw to

bring you so you can speak with them. That way, the lower officers will not know, and there will be nothing to spy on," he explained, and I appreciated him for it.

Not long before I had finished talking to my father, Ania and Lisa entered my room.

Ania was looking down, and she reeked of Qusack. As much as I wanted to keep ignoring her latest behaviour, I couldn't, so I called her out.

"What is with you and Qusack," I asked before she sat on the couch, and she was in shock. She looked at me, and I raised an eyebrow. Lisa was chuckling.

"That obvious?" Ania asked me, and I nodded.

"Come on, share," I said quickly, and she sighed.

"I did not know, Aliana. I like him, but I also hate him," she said, and I already knew that part.

"Tell me something I don't know," I said, and Lisa laughed.

"Well, he has been trying to get with me, and I am yet to say yes because I can't get over the fact that he rejected me because I couldn't play chess," she said, and I could understand her pain. The whole branding situation and all.

"I know you have the right to make him suffer, but this isn't the time, Ania. We all know you are crazy about the guy, and now that he is talking to you and likes you, I do not think it is wise to procrastinate a decision. He is going to war, Ania, you should give him a reason to return," I told her the truth straight up, and she looked at me with misty eyes.

"How are you h*andling it, Aliana? It has been giving me sleepless nights. Since the troop started arriving from Timber, I have been worried. This morning he confessed to me that they will be going to war. I am afraid," She said, tears streaming down her cheek. I nodded, knowing that her behaviour was perfectly normal.

"Me too, but we must be strong for their sake and give them a reason to come home. It will be best for you two to iron things out before the fight," I said, getting up to change my clothes.

Ania was thinking while Lisa followed me to the closet to ask what I was planning.

"Well, You two are coming with me," I said, wearing a trouser and a blouse.

"To where? To do what?" Lisa asked, and I stepped out of the closet.

“I want to speak to werewolves and half-breeds about this war. We need to take it seriously because Nikolas isn’t going to war because he wants to be King; he wants to be King to liberate us and abolish the Unity law. We need to put our heart and soul into the battle and ensure we emerge victorious for the sake of our future,” I said, and Lisa was shocked.

I realised they were finding out the real reason for the first time.

“Oh, Aliana, it will be great. It means we can travel and won’t have to worry about hunters and slave traders. We can own things and won’t have to keep our heads down or be treated like lesser beings. It means we would be free,” Lisa said, overjoyed and determined.

Ania snapped out of her thoughts and looked at me with surprise.

“Are you serious?” She asked me, and I nodded. I saw relief wash through her and did not need to guess why. She was holding back from Qusack because she did not think their relationship would have a future.

“I need to find Qusack,” she said, and I shook my head.

“They went to Timber with our King. You are stuck with me until they return tomorrow. Now get off your ass, and let’s convince our people to support our King,” I said, and she beamed at me.

An hour later, my father sent a rickshaw to get us. I took some money from the dresser and headed out.

The ride was long, but we finally got to the venue. There were several rickshaws parked in the area.

It was clear a lot of people were present in the warehouse. The man riding the rickshaw we came in parked and followed us into the warehouse.

My father was standing on a make shift stage when I entered, so even though many people were in the roofless building, I could see him when I stepped in.

We began to make our way to him through the crowd, and they quickly parted the way for us. When my father saw me, he smiled.

“My daughter is here to speak to all of you, so I will implore you to listen and be patient,” he said and came down from the elevated platform. I climbed it and looked at the vast crowd in front of me. They stood and looked at me, wondering what I had to say.

“Hello, you all know me by now. Some of you call me the alphas’ whore, mistress, slave, name it, I have heard it all, but I am not here to address you because of that; I am here to speak about the pending war,” I said, and people began to murmur.

“It is bad enough that he killed our people and took our lands; now he wants us to die for his cause,” someone said, and everyone began to murmur; I did not know what to do, but my father helped using his alpha command to shut them up. The hall was silent immediately, and I could speak.

“Firstly, he did not steal your land because he is the rightful heir to the throne. He is King Mathias’s son. Technically, we were living on his land,” I said, and they were silent.

“Also, King Nikolas is not crowning himself by force for his vanity. We all know how badly Fredrick has wanted to take this land and enslave us. My father has kept us safe, and

Nikolas has done the same. Because of this, he has been denied his birthright.

Nikolas is fine with just being Alpha and living his life. He does not need the crown to validate himself, but along the line, he realised how unfairly we have been treated. He realised the lies of his past and decided to rectify it.

King Mathias did not sign the Unity Law; a man called Isaac Lucas manipulated it all and pitted us against the King.

You can ask my father, and he will explain it to you. I am not here to talk about the past but the future.

Nikolas is crowning himself so he can abolish the unity law so we can be set free,” I said, and people were surprised. I nodded.

“I would like to go into details, but we cannot linger here,” I said, reminding them that we were meeting in secret and our number would make our absence in town evident if we lingered. I watched them, and when I realised I had their attention, I summoned courage and opened my mouth to speak to them.

Standing before my people, my heart pounded with determination and anxiety. I took a deep breath, letting the weight of the impending war settle upon my shoulders. The fate of our future, our freedom from the clutches of slavery, and the welfare of our children rested upon the decisions we would make in the days to come.

I scanned the crowd, taking in the tired faces marked by years of oppression and hardship. These brave souls had endured unimaginable suffering yet still clung to a flicker of hope.

They had longed for a leader who would guide them to a brighter tomorrow, and now, in our darkest hour, Nikolas was determined to be that leader.

“Brothers and sisters,” my voice echoed across the gathering, “we stand on the precipice of a battle that will shape our destiny. The time has come for us to rise and fight for what is rightfully ours. Freedom!”

A murmur of agreement rippled through the crowd. They had been waiting for this moment, waiting for someone to ignite the fire of resistance within them. I had heard their whispered conversations, their doubts about their ability to prevail against the mighty forces that sought to crush us; I had shared in these conversations and doubts. It was my task now to dispel those doubts and rally their spirits.

“King Nikolas,” I continued, my voice steady and resolute, “is not just a king. He is a beacon of hope, a ruler who values equality and justice for all. His reign will safeguard our people, a shield against the tyranny that has plagued us for far too long.”

I paused, letting my words sink in. The crowd held its breath, their eyes fixed on me, waiting for me to lead them out of the darkness that had consumed our lives.

“We have been oppressed, downtrodden, and stripped of our dignity for many years. Trapped in Forest, we dared not venture far, or we would be captured and sold like a commodity,” My voice resonated with passion, “but we shall no longer bow our heads in submission. We shall no longer live in fear and restriction. It is time for us to reclaim our freedom, to stand tall and fight for a better future, not just for ourselves, but for the generations yet to come.”

A surge of determination coursed through my veins, spreading like wildfire to the hearts of my people. They cheered, their tired bodies infused with newfound strength. Their eyes sparkled with a glimmer of hope, a flame that had long been extinguished but now burned brighter than ever before. I looked at my father, and he was proud.

My words carried the weight of our collective dreams, our aspirations for a life free from chains, hunters, slave traders and fear. I knew that my people were willing to fight. Still, they needed to believe in the cause to understand that the battle they were about to wage was not just for themselves but for our children’s future. “Our children,” My voice softened, brimming with love and determination, knowing I would welcome my little one into the world in the near future.

“Our children are the embodiment of our hope. They deserve a world where they can grow, flourish, and dream without the shackles of oppression. They deserve a future not marred by the scars of slavery.”

Tears glistened in the eyes of many as they thought of their sons and daughters, innocent souls who had known nothing but suffering and confinement. They yearned for a world where their children could laugh freely, where their dreams could take flight.

“We cannot allow the chains of our past to bind the h*ands of our future,” I proclaimed, my voice resolute, “Nikolas offers us that future. He offers us the chance to build a society based on equality, where every person’s voice is heard, and every life is valued.”

As my words hung in the air, a sense of purpose descended upon the crowd. They were no longer a gathering of weary individuals but an army united in their quest for freedom.

The flame of resistance burned brightly in their eyes, ready to face whatever challenges lay ahead.

I took a step forward, my voice filled with conviction,

“Together, we can achieve the impossible. We can rewrite the course of history, shaping it in the image of our dreams. We can create a world where our children will inherit the fruits of our struggle and a legacy of courage, determination, and unwavering hope.”

The crowd erupted in cheers and applause, their voices echoing through the night.

I had gathered my people, ignited their spirits, and filled them with a fierce determination to fight for their liberation.

The war ahead would be arduous and the challenges daunting, but as long as we stood united, our cause was invincible.

And so, with hearts ablaze and hope coursing through their veins, they vowed to fight alongside Nikolas, the King who believed in equality, justice, and the power of a united people.

For the sake of our future, our freedom, and the welfare of our children, they would march forward, their spirits unyielding, ready to shape their destiny with their own h*ands.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 96

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 96 The Much Needed Boost (Nikolas POV)

I had yet to bring myself to send a message to Piotr requesting help.

I did not want to impose, nor did I want him to prove his friendship.

I believe if indeed he planned on helping, he would send me a letter, and the fact that I was yet to receive any from him, I believed it was all talk.

I was impressed with what Ingham and Grant did in Timber.

The werewolf engineers replicated the weapons we bought and even made exceptional modifications.

We did not know if Fredrick would come with weapons, but if that was the case, we would be ready.

Our blades were galvanised with silver, there were lighter, sharper and easy to wield. Our gun loaded faster and discharged bullets more quickly than the prototype.

We had some grenades too.

Also, special vests were created to stop bullets from piercing our chests. The engineers had outdone themselves, and I was impressed by their work.

“This is impressive,” I said to Ingham, who was standing beside me, and he beamed with joy and bowed his head.

He was the one in charge of the section, and he had done an excellent job.

He would have still been in the Ranks if he had not defied me and treated Aliana disrespectfully simply because he felt he could.

Not wanting to dwell in the past, I moved on.

Qusack and I checked everything and came to the conclusion that we were more than ready for the war. Though Fredrick had the number, we had weapons to even the odds.

I was satisfied with the work and grateful for the team I had gathered over the years. They had been indeed loyal and faithful. I wouldn't have come far without them; keeping that at the back of my mind, I appreciated them.

When we were having drinks in the night after we were done, I decided to speak to my men. I cleared my throat and looked at them with gratitude.

“Just yesterday, we were running in the wild trying to survive. I met you all at your lowest, and you all knew when I was nothing but a lost prince trying to survive and take back what is rightfully his.

You followed me diligently and were devoted to my cause.

They say Lycans are incapable of Loyalty, but in our case, it is wrong. Your Loyalty has been unwavering, giving me the courage to press on even when it seems there is no road ahead.

I want you all to know that I appreciate all you are doing, and I want to plead with all of you to ensure you do not fall on the battlefield.

The only one that should fall is Fredrick and his followers. I want to sit, party, and drink with all of you when this is over. I want to attend your weddings and meet your children. Promise me that you all will survive," I said, and Qusack patted my shoulder.

"We want the same promise from you, your majesty," he said, and with that, we made a toast promising each other that we would grow old and have each other's back. After the promises, Ingham moved to speak, and I decided to give him the floor.

"I want to start by apologising to you for what I did. It was wrong of me to treat Aliana the way I did, and my time away has helped me to reflect on my flaws. I just want to plead for forgiveness and hope you will give me a chance to apologise to Aliana properly," he said, and I nodded with a half smile.

"From the moment I called you in and entrusted you with a responsibility, a profound transformation occurred within me. It was a moment of forgiveness, a letting go of any lingering resentment. I am sure that Aliana, too, harbours no grudges. Nevertheless, I encourage you to extend your heartfelt apology to her, which shall bring solace to your troubled heart.

Ingham, I beseech you to understand something of great importance. It is a truth that resonates deeply within me, one that I implore you to embrace wholeheartedly: women, be they werewolves, halfbreeds, or Lycans, deserve the utmost respect. They should never be treated as mere objects of pleasure or amusement. No, they are the essence of our existence, the steady anchor that keeps us grounded amidst life's tumultuous storms.

They possess an extraordinary capacity to help us forget our troubles, providing us with a compassionate shoulder to lean on. When we find ourselves unable to reveal our vulnerabilities, they graciously offer their unwavering support. They endure our shortcomings and breathe life into us with their boundless joy, love, and laughter. In tending to our humanity, they preserve our sanity and nurture our souls.

These remarkable beings, whether friends, lovers, mothers, sisters, or colleagues, are the pillars of our strength. They deserve our utmost reverence and admiration.

Their unwavering love propels us forward, igniting the fire within our hearts. Their presence is a gift, a constant reminder of their profound impact on our lives. I hope you remember these things and never try to disrespect a woman again,"

As I spoke these words, Ingham nodded, his eyes filled with remorse and shame. And at that moment, I could sense a flicker of understanding awakening within him, as if he glimpsed the magnitude of his actions.

The rest of the night went smoothly. Morning came, and we headed back to Riverhead.

Getting there, we found a messenger from Hill waiting.

I was surprised I wanted to head up and see Aliana first, but I decided to attend to the messenger. He was a werewolf, so I knew he won't be going back because of the hunters.

We headed to my office, and I was surprised to find Gabriel and Isreal there. They had a map on the table, and I think they were working on something.

Gabriel was sitting in my seat. The moment I entered, he stood up. I did not take offence; instead, I went to see what they were working on. My officers found couches to sit on.

"Good morning, your Majesty," Gabriel and Isreal greeted me, and I responded.

"What is this?" I asked them.

"The map of Forest. I know you said that you wouldn't want to fight in Riverhead, so they do destroy the work done. So we are mapping out where the battle might likely occur, and it is here. Greystone valley.

They must pass through here to come to

Riverdale before entering the Oakland Forest and going to any part of the forest they desire. In this case, it will be Riverhead.

We can wait in Riverdale and ambush them in Greystone Valley. Both troops from Hill and Snow will have to converge at Greystone before heading towards us. Unless they go by sea and dock at Woodland's shore to invade us.

We know they won't put ships on the water, so they will likely travel on land.

What we are yet to determine is where we will lie in wait.

We have over a thousand five hundred troops. It will be hard to hide them in Riverdale unless we move closer and have some of our troops hide in Oakland Forest, while the Lycans would wait in Riverdale," Gabriel said, and Grant disagreed. "Why should the Lycans go ahead first," he asked, sounding defensive, and I had to scold him to speak to the man respectfully. Grant apologised, and Gabriel told him it was okay.

"I am not trying to be partial. But there is quite a distance between Riverdale and Oakland Forest.

Werewolves' mind link cannot travel that distance, so we won't be able to notify the people in Oakland Forest if the attack has begun.

But Lycan's can link further than that. The Lycans will notify those in Riverdale when the battle begins, and the troops will join Riverdale.

The two groups will have roughly five to ten minutes of distance.

It won't just be Lycans in Riverdale; werewolves will be there too; it will be a mix, but Lycans will have to be more because of the range," he explained.

With that, it was a brilliant Idea.

I shook his h*and and told him I loved the idea.

He had solved a problem I was trying to figure out.

He was right about Fredrick not using ships.

Snow and Hill did not have large vessels to transport troops. I had used the sea to invade Forest when I was conquering the packs in bits and pieces, and Woodland was the first to fall.

I could do this because I had only fifty men and did not require a large ship.

I went to sit on my chair, ready to read the letter, when Isreal h*anded me another letter that came from the post office. I thought it was an RSVP response until I saw Snow's seal on it and decided to read it.

King Fredrick Semenov of Snow

Snow Castle

Snow Kingdom

Alpha Nikolas Kowalski of Forest

Forest Kingdom

Dear Alpha Nikolas Kowalski,

I write this letter to you with a heavy heart but an unyielding determination to uphold the laws that bind our kingdoms together. Your recent actions have not gone unnoticed. I write to you today as both a warning and a testament to the consequences that await those who defy me.

You stand accused of defying the Unity Law,

which has kept the delicate balance between our realms intact for years. Your actions have demonstrated a blatant disregard for the harmony we have worked tirelessly to maintain.

Know that such defiance shall not go unanswered.

I, King Fredrick Semenov, swear upon the honour of my lineage that I shall not allow you to witness the day of your Coronation. You will not ascend to the throne with impunity while trampling upon the laws that govern our realms. Your dreams of grandeur and power shall remain just that – mere dreams, forever out of reach.

Prepare yourself; I shall descend upon your lands like an unyielding storm. I shall render your army feeble and your territories lifeless. The consequences of your actions shall be felt with a force that resonates throughout the

Forest Kingdom. Your reign of defiance shall crumble before the might of Snow.

But know this, Nikolas, you will not face my wrath alone. The Hill King, a steadfast ally and defender of the Unity Law, shall join me in bringing you to justice. We shall strip away your ill-gotten power and restore order to the Forest Kingdom.

You may believe that your actions will go unanswered and that you can live free from the consequences of your defiance. I assure you, Alpha Nikolas, this is not the case. You will not live to regret your actions; regret is not for the dead.

Consider this letter both a plea and a final warning. Submit to the might of Snow, acknowledge your wrongdoing, and seek forgiveness. Failure to do so will result in annihilating your ambitions and the irrevocable destruction of all you hold dear.

May you reflect upon your actions and choose the path of reason before it is too late. The choice is yours, Alpha Nikolas, but remember this: defying the unity that binds our kingdoms shall bear consequences that neither time nor remorse can ever erase.

With a heavy heart and unwavering resolve,

King Fredrick Semenov of Snow.”

It read, and I couldn't help but laugh.

He must have found a way to bully Aleksander to join forces with him. I was hopeful that he would attack because he had now given me the right to defend myself.

I also noticed that he attempted to justify his actions by claiming I had broken the unity Law.

How does taking a crown that belongs to me an act of defiance?

He might think I have toiled only for him to launch an attack and reap the benefits of my labour, but he is wrong.

This was indeed the beginning of the end for him.

I handed the letter to Qusack, who decided to read it aloud.

Everyone in the room laughed because Fredrick had sounded like a wounded Lion. He would not bother writing me a letter if he had the might he boasted of. He will just attack. Something was wrong with his presumed might. I guess we will find out soon.

I reached for Piotr's letter and opened it.

"My dearest friend,

I write to you with overwhelming joy and unwavering determination in my heart. I am immensely proud of you, and I want you to know that you have my unwavering support. Though I must admit, I was taken aback by the fact that you kept your intentions hidden from me. However, I firmly believe you had valid reasons for doing so, rooted in a noble purpose.

Recently, Fredrick approached my father, seeking his assistance in attacking you. I am delighted to inform you that my father rejected his plea. Furious, Fredrick has now set his

sights on Hill, vowing to strike after he defeats you. In light of these events, my father has entrusted me with the power to make a decision, and I have come to a resolute conclusion.

I have decided to play a double game, feigning support for Fredrick while gathering critical information about the planned attack. Rest assured, my friend, I will notify you of the exact day of the assault. I shall rally my troops and fight beside you on that fateful day. I have devised a detailed plan to identify the Hill alphas who intend to side with Fredrick. I solemnly swear that they will be rendered inactive when the time comes. This war is not yours alone to bear; it is also mine, for we seek the same thing. It is a battle for our future and happiness; you shall not fight alone.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for your extraordinary bravery. Through your actions, you have provided us with a magnificent opportunity to bring an end to Fredrick's tyrannical rule. I am optimistic and determined, knowing we can pave the way for a brighter future.

With unyielding joy and the utmost dedication,

Your friend and loyal ally,

Piotr Zielinska”

I folded the letter with a smile on my face. The situation was self-explanatory; Hill and Forest will go for Snow.

I would love to see the look on Fredrick’s face when he realises that Hill is not on his side.

I handed the letter to Qusack, and he read it aloud. There was joy in the office, and our confidence was boosted. Knowing that this was final. I moved to do the right thing. I was confident now that my people and I shared the same dream.

Excusing myself from the office. I told Qusack to gather everyone on the assembly ground, Lycans, Halfbreeds and werewolves; all that is within close range should be called. It was time to make my intentions clear.

I rushed to my room and found Aliana lying on the bed. Lisa and Ania were with her, and they greeted me and quickly excused themselves from the room.

Aliana sat up in bed and looked at me with curiosity.

“What is the Occasion, she asked.

“Come here,” I ordered her, and she got off the bed in my shirt with nothing underneath, I presumed, and walked to me.

“Missing me already?” I said, gazing into her eyes.

“It is comfy,” she said, not wanting to admit why she wore my shirt.

I lifted her up without warning and spun her around with immense joy. Aliana laughed at the rush, and when I came to a halt, I could see she was a bit dizzy. I held on to her so she won’t stumble.

“Someone is giddy,” she said, and I bent to k*iss her.

“We will have our dream, Little wolf. We will have our dream,” I said.

I did not know how Piotr’s silence had bothered me until I got his response. I thought I would be fighting Fredrick alone, but the victory seemed possible with Hill’s support.

“Hill is on our side,” I said, and Aliana squealed with Joy and jumped on me, holding me tightly.

Somehow we had thought that Piotr would chicken out at the last minute and felt all the friendship and support were based on convenience, but he had made it clear. It was real, and it gave us relief.

“Wear something and follow me outside. I want to address our people,” I told Aliana, breaking the k*iss, and she smiled at me. She rushed to the closet and wore trousers, leaving my shirt on, but she tied it in front so it looked fashionable.

We walked out and headed towards the assembly ground. The people were gathered, and they looked different than they used to look when I took over the forest. They looked healthy, well-dressed, confident and free.

Something that seemed like a mere illusion was about to come true for us.

“I am deeply t*ouched by each of you who have gathered here on such short notice. I cannot express enough gratitude for your presence today,” I spoke, my voice filled with emotion, as I held Aliana’s h*and firmly by my side.

“I know that news of the impending war between Forest and Snow has reached your ears, and it is natural to feel fear in the face of uncertainty. However, I implore you all to hold steadfast to your faith and remain undeterred by the rumoured strength of Snow,” I continued, my voice filled with conviction.

“For we possess something that Fredrick does not. We are driven not by selfishness or greed but by love and a yearning for a brighter tomorrow. I stand before you today to fulfil a mission that my father could not accomplish. I am here to liberate my people. Whether you are a Lycan, a halfbreed, or a werewolf, you are all my people, and you deserve to experience freedom,” I declared. A wave of cheers erupted from the crowd. It was as if they had already sensed the purpose behind this battle, realising it wasn’t merely for my ambitions.

“Perhaps some of you may wonder why we fight, and I am willing to share that with you,” I proclaimed, my voice softening with a t*ouch of vulnerability.

“The divine goddess has shown us that we are meant to coexist, that no race is superior to another. My maternal grandmother was a halfbreed. My father was fated to a werewolf and loved her with all his heart until her last breath. And now, I, Nikolas, am fated to be with a werewolf, and my love for her knows no bounds,” I confessed, and a gasp swept through the crowd. Turning to Aliana, I saw shock and tears in her eyes.

“Yes, Little wolf, you were mine from the very moment our eyes met,” I whispered, her voice choked with tears, and streams of emotion flowed down her cheeks.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” she sobbed, tears staining her face.

“I didn’t want our connection to be built solely on fate,” I replied gently, wiping her tears. At that moment, I knew I had much begging to do when we got back inside.

“Yes,” I declared, redirecting my attention to the enthralled crowd before us,

“Aliana Nowak is my destined mate and shall be my queen!” The crowd erupted into thunderous applause and jubilation. The joy emanating from their spirits uplifted my own.

“As we face Fredrick and his Snow Alphas on the battlefield, remember this: Forest is our

home, and we possess the right to be free!” I proclaimed, and the crowd roared with passion.

Tears streamed down some women’s faces, overwhelmed by the significance of this moment. My gaze returned to Aliana, and without hesitation, I pressed my lips against hers in a fiery kiss, a display of our love that I had yearned to share publicly. It was a fleeting moment, as we knew we would have to retreat once again, but it marked the beginning of a new chapter in our lives.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 97

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 97 Busy and Fruitful (Nikolas’s POV)

After the speech, I walked back into the room with Aliana, and I could see the tremor of emotions still affecting her. Stepping into our bedroom, she suddenly broke away from me, her eyes filled with hurt and confusion.

“Why, Nikolas? Why didn’t you tell me?” Her voice quivered, and I found myself at a loss for words. Beyond wanting our relationship to be founded on genuine love rather than the binding force of a mate bond, I had no other explanation.

“Was that the reason you took me away from my father?” Her question hung in the air, and I couldn’t provide a straightforward answer, for it was both yes and no.

“I fought against it, Aliana. I tried with every fibre of my being. Still, I couldn’t resist its overpowering hold,” I confessed, watching as she wiped away her tears.

“Why can’t I feel it?” Her voice trembled with concern as she looked at me, searching for answers.

“I’m certain you can feel it, my love; perhaps you haven’t fully comprehended the sensation.

It's why you calm me in moments of rage, why I could never bring myself to harm you, and why I desired you so intensely, even before truly knowing you. I want you to understand that what we share is not solely based on the bond but on the depth of our feelings for one another.

The more I discovered about you, the more determined I became to spend the rest of my life with you. I thank the heavens that our destinies intertwined, so I needn't worry about anyone else taking you away from me. You are mine to love and cherish, Aliana," I poured my heart out, and she rushed into my arms, holding onto me with all her might. Her tears dampened my chest as she rested her head against it, and we clung to each other tightly.

"I love you, Aliana, and my love is not merely a product of our bond," I murmured, and she held onto me, her grip unwavering.

"I love you too, Nikolas. I love you with all my heart, and I appreciate everything you're doing for us," she whispered, and I kissed the top of her head, holding her close.

We remained secluded for the rest of the day, revelling in each other's presence. I made love to her, trying to compensate for the times I had been absent due to my demanding schedule. Now that she knew the truth, her response to my touch differed. There was a sense of belonging, and the fear of being torn apart had dissipated. I was grateful that I had chosen to forge ahead despite the challenges. As I lay beside Aliana, I knew that love would be my ultimate reward once all was said and done.

I woke and went to the office in the morning, three days after I had addressed the crowd. I was waiting for a message from Piotr to inform me of Fredrick's plans.

Ingham and Grant said they were working on something, and because of that, they were scarce. I was tired of sitting in the office, so I asked Abraham to join me on a stroll.

Qusack wasn't in the office, and I didn't need to guess where he was. I knew he was with Ania. I did not know what had changed, but I was sure they were together now. I hoped my friend would not mess it up.

Stepping outside, I saw Ingham and Grant walking towards the palace, dragging a man they had chained in silver and beaten bloody.

They had smiles, and anyone looking at them would think they were psychos, but I knew the man they were dragging was important.

They got to where I was and stood. The man could barely open his swollen eyes. He was injured, and the silver hindered his healing.

"What have you two been up to?" I asked them, and Grant looked at Ingham, who beamed at me. "Your majesty, meet Aski Claus, aka Isaac Luis," he said, and Abraham

and I were stunned. How did they pull this off? I had no idea how to catch the bastard. I also had no idea they were investigating him. This was a fantastic turn of events.

Without further ado, I quickly led them to our interrogation room at the back of the palace. Once they had secured the prisoner and it was just us, I waited for them to elaborate.

“Since we caught and executed those spies, we have tirelessly pursued him, gathering evidence of his involvement in a web of criminal activities in Forest during and after your father’s reign.

Since the werewolves we were training did not need supervision because they were already trained, we devoted our time to finding him.

We finally got his location the day before yesterday. We traced him all the way to the outlands, between Forest and Snow, in a cabin in Riverdale. The man was living like a hermit. We also found the correspondence between him and Fredrick. We are determined to extract the truth from him, no matter the cost,” Ingham said with determination and anticipation.

I had focused on Fredrick and figured Isaac could be dealt with later. I was indeed impressed with these two. I could see Ingham’s desperation to get back in my good books, and I was proud of him.

The room was dimly lit and windowless.

Ingham and Grant confronted Isaac, who was bound to a chair. The atmosphere crackled with tension as they prepared to use any means necessary to make him talk.

Isaac was a hardened man, and I could see it from his resilience; he sneered defiantly at us even though he was severely injured.

The man clearly had a death wish, even though death was inevitable.

For him, how he died mattered.

I knew we would make him beg for it.

Ingham, known for his stern demeanour, leaned in close.

“You can spare yourself the agony, Isaac,” he growled. “We know about your alliances with Fredrick and Leon. We know about the crimes you’ve committed together.”

Isaac’s eyes flickered, a hint of uncertainty creeping into his expression. He knew his carefully constructed facade was slowly crumbling, and we had unveiled the depths of our investigation.

Resigned to the inevitable, he finally confessed to his involvement, spilling the details of their plans and misdeeds. All that we already knew, piecing together the details we found in the archives.

“Mathias was a tainted man and did not deserve to be King. Leon was supposed to be King, but a stupid law disqualified him. All I was guilty of was drafting letters on behalf of the King and signing decrees.

How the recipient of the letters chose to use is not my fault,” he said, and I punched him in the face. I felt a surge of rage in me.

Looking at the man, I realised my father would be alive if he did not exist.

Indeed my mother did not sign those decrees, and she did not help them kill my father, but her silence about their intentions left my father vulnerable. I growled, and Abraham told me to be calm.

Isaac finally confessed to his crimes.

He told us how he got in with the help of my mother’s recommendation. He said my mother believed he was from Hill and King Aleksander had recommended him.

She thought he was only coming to help my father, but he and Fredrick had other plans that did not involve her and my father surviving.

Leon was dead by then, so they had a free playing field.

They were responsible for the poisoning of the officers that led to my father finally ending Giles and going into seclusion.

My mother helped pass the Unity law to avenge Leon’s death and protect my father.

Isaac said she was stupid. He said she believed that Giles and the werewolves did not mean well; Gabriel’s rejection did not help matters either. The woman was vindictive.

It also made me wonder why she was fixated on the man.

As Isaac listed their crimes, I felt sorry for my father; he was truly alone.

With each revelation, the room seemed to grow colder. Isaac disclosed the heinous murder of Olive and the subsequent forgery of my father’s signature to conceal their tracks and forge their agenda.

He divulged the extent of their manipulation of affairs, weaving a sinister web that had ensnared Forest’s unsuspecting inhabitants and led to war.

I listened intently, my mind racing to connect the dots.

The puzzle pieces were falling into place, and I realised the true extent of Fredrick's strategy and plans.

It was precisely what I suspected.

Snow was dying, and he wanted to make Forest his home and its riches his own.

Contrary to what we thought, Isaac was from Snow and not Hill, but he had a residence in Hill.

King Aleksander's seal and signature were forged on his letter of recommendation to make it seem like he was from Hill and not from Snow, so my mother won't be suspicious of her brother. Should my father want to investigate him, he will not be connected to Snow, and my father will not be suspicious.

It was well planned, and the thought that Fredrick had used my mother to bring in this snake angered me.

When he was done with his confession, I relaxed and calmed down.

"So, what are Fredrick's plans about the war?" I asked, and the sick bastard started laughing.

Clearly, he was from Snow because only Snow could produce such mentally challenged individuals.

"You are done for, Little boy. Hill and Snow are coming for you, and your brother will help lead your uncle into victory for the promise of your position," He said, laughing, and Abraham punched him.

I had never seen Abraham lose it before, but clearly, everything Issac said annoyed him.

"We become Scholars to make our world a better place, not help evil people destroy it," he said, and I could understand his anger.

Isaac Lucas was like Abraham; he was a learned scholar, which was why he could do things meticulously and get away with his crimes.

He understood the Law and knew the records. He was able to manipulate them to good use.

Put him in the underground silver hole in the palace's forest. Let him starve and thirst to death," I said, walking out, having heard enough.

The man began to protest. He was silly to think his death would be quick and easy.

As I walked out of place with Abraham, I linked with Ingham and Grant to thank them for their hard work. Because of them, a puzzle piece had been closed, and we finally had the whole picture.

It wasn't different from what we suspected, but it helped clarify my mother's role, which was useless to me.

While I walked back to my office, I thought of all the promises Miles made and his enthusiasm.

I honestly wanted to believe him, but I am glad his action didn't fool me. Regardless of his prowess, he will not be able to defeat Piotr and me. If killing him will bring the peace and

freedom we craved, so be it. I hope my father will forgive me for ending his son, and when Miles joins him in the hereafter, I hope he can face his parents and tell them what he tried to do.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 98

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 98 A War For Revenge Part 1 (Nikolas POV)

Four days later, Piotr finally told me they would be heading for me in two days.

The number of warriors that Fredrick was bringing was impressive.

They did not plan to use weapons, but it seemed the odds were on their side.

Still, he implored me to be brave, and there was hope.

I confirmed that Miles will be leading the Snow army. It was a shame that he would die a traitor to his kind and his parents. Fighting for the man that ruined his entire existence.

They were indeed coming through the land as Gabriel had predicted, so we decided to use the plan Gabriel had mapped out for us.

A day before departure, after meeting with my officers and the troops to go over our plans and positions, I told everyone to spend time with their loved ones.

Aliana went to see her father.

I wasn't mad because I had the rest of the evening and the entire night with her before we started moving towards Riverdale.

I was sitting on my couch and thinking of our formation and strategy, wondering how many enemies we would face, hoping the moon would favour us when Aliana returned. She didn't spend too long with her father. I was surprised.

I thought her face would be tear stricken, but I was wrong.

She was confident and determined.

In fact, I saw a tinge of optimism in her, and when she approached me on the couch, she did not sit beside me; instead, she straddled me, facing me.

"I hope you are not planning to go to battle without giving my fix of you and reminding yourself why you should come home in one piece?" she asked, and I chuckled.

She joined me and laughed.

I gently brushed her hair behind her ears and k*issed her.

I was breaking the k*iss when she held me in place and k*issed me fiercely as if I were air and she needed me to survive.

I wrapped my arms around her waist and k*issed her sweetly, drinking her in.

We k*issed for a while, and then she rested her forehead on mine.

"Tomorrow, you set out for war. You are not allowed to die, Nikolas," She said, and I could hear the tinge of fear in her voice even though she tried to mask it.

"You are not allowed to lose," she added, taking my h*and and placing it on her lower belly.

"We are counting on you, my love. Promise me you will come home in one piece. Promise me you will survive," she asked, and I sighed.

"I promise you, my love. I promise I won't throw away my life and our future. I promise you won't go through the pregnancy alone. I promise I will be there when our baby comes, and we will raise our child together. I promise I won't let you mourn me, Aliana. I promise I will come home, we will wed, and I will claim you publicly to give you your honour as should be," I said, and I felt her tears on my cheek as she pulled away and nodded.

I pulled her back into my arms and k*issed her neck.

“You were doing great just now, my love. Be strong,” I said, and she held on to me.

With her l*egs wrapped around me, I got off the chair and took her to bed. Aliana did not want to make love. She wanted me to hold her, so I did just that, holding her in my arms and breathing her in, promising myself that I would not throw away my life and break her heart. That I will come home and fulfil all my obligations to her.

Morning came. It was finally time for us to leave.

I planned to send Aliana, Ania, and Lisa with gold to Woodland, where a small boat awaited them. I did not tell her why but even though I did not plan to fall, the war’s outcome was up to destiny.

Should in case I fall, she would be able to get away. I paired them with two Half breeds, five Lycan warriors and five werewolves, to protect her and my child. Should I not return, she will get away. It might be selfish, but I wouldn’t forgive myself if she died.

“What is this? I hear that we will be going to Woodland?” Aliana asked me while we were in the shower. I sighed and pulled her close.

“I want Riverhead empty just in case Fredrick plans a sneak attack,” I said, knowing that could be possible. They might get past us in Riverdale and in Oakland Forest.

She nodded with understanding and pulled me in for a k*iss.

I travelled with my l*ips to her neck, and she m*oaned sweetly, sucking on the sweet, sensitive skin; her m*oans encouraged me to proceed.

She always smelled so lovely, and her voice was like music to my ears.

I felt her curves and sucked on on breasts. I could smell her arousal, her m*oans getting louder, but I was only beginning. I carried her out of the bathroom and placed her on the bed.

Hovering above her, I stared into her eyes.

Her eyes were filled with eagerness and anticipation, longing for what I would do while aching to fill her up.

I parted her l*egs and delved in with my tongue to taste and pleasure her. She gave me access and m*oaned continuously for me.

Falling into a rhythm, I felt her clit pulsate against my tongue, and she grabbed onto my hair and stretched as her orgasm washed through her.

I let her ride her release while I continued to use my tongue to flick her knob until she began to shake.

Knowing her walls would be clenching, I delved in with my cock, and the pleasure washed through my body. I felt it in my toes, and I groaned with pleasure.

She ground herself against me, and soon I was deep inside her pumping. She felt soft, wet, tight and slippery.

The perfect sensation for me.

She was built especially for me because I have never had this good.

I pumped and pulled her up, supporting her with my arms as I pumped into her, maintaining a rhythm and ensuring I was hitting the right spot. I knew she was coming from how her body moved on its own, and her pace increased. I continued until she came, unable to hold it anymore; I spilt into her. We lay in bed briefly, with her in my arms, until it was finally time to leave.

I watched Aliana get into a vehicle with her friends and the two half-breeds; the warriors followed behind; by then, most of the people in Riverhead had moved. I watched the car until it disappeared before I sprung into action.

Gathering everyone, we arranged ourselves. My officers were in front while Gabriel and the others were behind. We had divided ourselves as planned.

My team will wait in Riverdale, while Gabriel's team will hide in Oakland Forest, five minutes from Riverdale.

We had decided Riverdale would serve better than Greystone, which was farther from Oakland's forest.

The moment we feel the enemy approaching, we will link them to join us.

We armed ourselves, hoping to use our weapons to reduce the number on Fredrick's side to even our odds.

If Fredrick had anything going for him, it was the size of the army; we needed to decide means that would help us even out.

We moved into our formation, and after walking for two hours through shortcuts, we finally arrived at Riverdale.

Gabriel and his team remained five minutes behind us in Oakland's Forest, hidden from sight.

It was evening, and the sun had finally left the sky. We patiently waited for Fredrick and his army to arrive. Soon it was nighttime, and we knew our enemies would quickly emerge. They planned to attack Riverhead; I knew they would be surprised to find us waiting for them on the road. I had two Lycans stationed in Greystone to link us when the enemies approach.

We waited patiently. The moon hung high in the night sky, casting an eerie glow over the neutral grounds where the fateful confrontation between Fredrick and me was about to unfold.

My men linked me to inform me that the enemy had arrived and was heading towards us in Riverdale.

We took position while I linked Gabriel to join us with his troops. The battle was finally about to begin.

The air crackled with tension as two armies approached, one led by Piotr and some of the Hill alphas and the other led by Miles and Fredrick along with some Snow alphas, each step echoing through the silence, promising a clash that would shake the very foundations of our realm.

My eyes burning with determination, I led my loyal forces towards the battleground.

My heart raced, fueled by the newfound knowledge that had fuelled my resolve to challenge Fredrick.

I knew this would be the only fight of its kind, and only one side will emerge victorious. I had to trust in the loyalty of Piotr to hold his own against the adversaries in his territory who supported Fredrick; I had to trust him to keep his promise.

As my men reached the field, they saw their opponents converging from the opposite direction. Fredrick's army, bolstered by the support of Hill, exuded misplaced confidence, their eyes gleaming with a misguided sense of superiority. But I had something far more potent: unwavering faith in my pack.

They were surprised to see us. They had planned to surprise us and destroy Riverhead, but we had the element of surprise thanks to Piotr.

Piotr rallied his men, his senses honed, and I noticed he was trying to identify the alphas supporting Fredrick. Seeing his behaviour, I knew I need not doubt his support.

The progression stopped, and I watched the people leading Hill and Snow. Some of them were alphas I had hosted in my home. I did not feel anything.

I was confident that with Piotr on my side, I need not worry.

I looked at Miles, disappointed that he chose Fredrick over me. I hoped he could face the shame of his decision.

“So, you lie in wait like the snake that you are. I am beginning to suspect you anticipated this, Nikolas?” Fredrick said, breaking the silence between us.

“It takes one to identify the other,” I said, and he laughed.

“You would have been great had you not decided to be a rebel,” he said, sounding sorry for me, but it did not bother me. I chose to be silent.

“Surrender, Nikolas, and I will be merciful,” Fred*ic*k said, and I knew there was no turning back from this.

“You have chosen to insult those that are greater than you. You’re a child that wants to wear his father’s shoes. Would you be able to walk in it, or will you stumble?” he said and laughed, and I joined him.

“I am not here for a crown. I am here for vengeance. I have Isaac Lucas,” I said, and his face faltered.

I also have evidence of how you used him to forge my father’s signature on the Unity Law decree. How you worked with Leon, my uncle, to try to kill my father and how you managed to create the battle between the werewolves and Lycans in Forest that led to my father’s demise. How you wanted my mother to marry Aleksander so you can control Hill. How you plan to be the only King and no one else.

I am here to clip your wing and tell you that you do not have the right. That you bleed just like the rest of us, and you must bow to order,” I said, and my men cheered.

Seeing Fredrick, I knew my words had caught him off guard, and he was thinking of a comeback.

“No one seems to be complaining about how things have run for thirty years. No one except you, Little boy. Now isn’t that an issue?” he asked, and I laughed.

“A dying territory with diminishing population and resources isn’t prosperity. You want Forest because Snow is no longer prosperous.

Unfortunately, you will not have Forest. I will not let you destroy my home like you did yours,” I said, and he laughed.

“Your home is in the woods, living in caves like the savage you are,” He replied angrily, and I chuckled.

“That is right; my home is the forest, and I won’t let you have it.

I would have said you must live with your choices, but I do not intend to let you live. I do not plan to allow you to go beyond Riverdale, Fredrick.” I said, and Fredrick growled.

I guess he knew that bantering with me would expose more things. I could see him giving up, and that was fine with me.

Even though we had come with weapons, because of our proximity, I could see that this fight would not be that of weapons.

If we attempted to use weapons, we would be at a disadvantage. They will tear through our formation in their beastly form, and using the weapons would mean we would have to remain in our human forms. We will have to shift and fight.

We all had just one goal, Fredrick’s death, and the battle will end.

Miles was also on my Kill list for his betrayal of his family, his kind and his parents.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 99

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa’ad Usman

Chapter 99 A War For Revenge Part 2

Nikolas POV

I watched Fredrick, Piotr, Miles, and the alphas shift into their wolf form and bare their teeth at me.

We did the same; Qusack, Ingham, Grant, Abraham, Gabriel, Isreal, and I shifted to our wolf forms and growled at them in return.

Piotr’s wolf and mine locked eyes, and with a silent nod, his soldiers advanced, fangs bared and muscles coiled; his men shifted immediately and surrounded a small number of warriors and their Alpha, ready to attack them and finish them off.

His actions had stopped the Hill Army from advancing and seeing the small number of people they had surrounded meant that most of Hill was on my side.

Fredrick’s wolf growled at Piotr, and Piotr roared back, ready to engage.

Miles moved forward, taking charge of the forefront of Snow’s army, and to my surprise, the werewolves and Lycans he was leading launched a fierce assault against Fredrick’s troops.

Caught off guard by the ferocity and strategic brilliance of my friend and brother, Fredrick’s forces faltered, their lines breaking under the weight of Miles’ s onslaught.

Chaos erupted as the clash of fangs and claws reverberated through the night.

The air filled with the scent of blood, sweat, and fur as bodies collided and battle cries pierced the darkness. We joined in because Fredrick still had several troops on his side, and they were plenty.

The conflict reached a temporary stalemate, the sheer magnitude of Fredrick's numerical advantage offset by the sheer determination and skill of the people on my side.

We forged on, and soon, we were at an advantage as we had drastically reduced their numbers.

My men were skilful, and the werewolves on my side fought reverently and skillfully.

We had so much to fight for and so much to live for. What drove us kept us going, a drive Fredrick and his men lacked.

Fredrick's men and Alphas, recognizing the futility of their position, surrendered by howling at the moon and pulling back from the fight, their eyes filled with resignation.

Fredrick shifted back into his human form, and I did the same.

He was betrayed by his own forces, his pride wounded, and his spirit broken.

Fredrick stepped forward, his gaze locked onto me in a voice laced with venom.

"You are a snake and a coward!" he told me. I could see the sign of defeat in his eyes, a sign he wasn't willing to admit to.

"No, Fredrick, you are the snake and a coward. Asking others to fight your battles for you is weak. If truly you wanted me gone, you should have sought to do it yourself. I only took what was rightfully mine. Something you tried to prevent because of your greed. If you wanted Forest so badly, you should have challenged me. Even though it was mine, I fought for it. Still, just as always, you are just a coward that uses other people to do his bidding," I said, and Piotr and Miles shifted back to their human form along with the other alphas. The warriors remained in Wolf form.

"If you want, Forest, I challenge you to a one-on-one fight here and now. Let us spare lives and not require anyone to die for our ambitions. Accept the challenge and fight me," I said; and Fredrick was silent, then he looked around him. I recognized the Alphas that were with him; all eight of them were from Snow. They were more than that initially, but some of them had been killed in the struggle. A price to pay for following a leader blindly and not questioning his decisions. Too bad for them.

"We will fight you until...." Fredrick began, and Miles cut in.

“You will fight him, no one will engage with the other side,” Miles said, and Fredrick looked at him angrily.

“You ungrateful bastard. After all, I did for you?” he said, and Miles laughed.

“Did for me? Your friend killed my mother and twin sister, stole me from my father, and brought me to you. You put me in a cage, tormented me and told me lies all my life. You used me to drive fear in your enemies; now I am taking back my power. I will not fight my people; I will not help you kill my brother. I do not want to rule Forest. I just want to be free,” Miles spelt out to him, and Piotr laughed.

“I guess your evil has caught up with you now. Either you take the challenge and fight King Nikolas, or he takes you as his spoils. What says you?” Piotr asked, and Fredrick looked at the other alphas.

“Did you hear this?” Fredrick asked them, and they nodded.

“Yes, and Prince Piotr is right. King Nikolas has issued a challenge to spare lives; I suggest you take it. We have done enough. Some of us that had no business in this fight have fallen tonight. We have given enough. It clearly isn't a Unity law issue like you made it seem. It seems more like a family matter laced with revenge. Seeing the magnitude of what you did, we won't interfere anymore,” the Alpha said, speaking for the others, and it suddenly dawned on Fredrick that he was alone.

He took several deep breaths and stepped forward, ready to accept the challenge.

The moon hung high in the midnight sky, casting an eerie glow over the battlefield. The scent of blood and sweat filled the air as my heart pounded in my chest, anticipation mixing with the raw power coursing through my veins. This was the night; it had finally come to a one- on-one battle that would determine our territories' fate.

I would have allowed Gabriel to fight Fredrick, but it was a fight between kings. I looked at Gabriel, and he nodded.

“Your victory is my victory,” he said, and with that, I had the strength to forge ahead, promising myself that only one of us would survive, and that will be me.

I stood tall, my muscles coiled like springs, ready to unleash the fury within me. My fur bristled, and my claws extended, gleaming in the pale moonlight. Fredrick emerged, his massive frame imposing and his amber eyes burning with an unfathomable hunger for power. He was a mad wolf. I could see it now.

We lunged at each other without a word, our bodies colliding with a bone-shattering force. A symphony of snarls and growls filled the air as we tore at each other, neither willing to yield an inch. Fredrick was strong, his blows landing brutally, but I refused to succumb to his dominance.

As we circled each other, our feral instincts taking over, I seized the opportunity to strike. With lightning speed, I pounced, my jaws clamping down on his shoulder. Fredrick let out a guttural howl of pain but retaliated, sinking his teeth into my hind leg. The agony surged through my body, but I channeled my pain into a fiery determination.

We continued our deadly dance, our bodies locked in a violent struggle. With every clash, the earth trembled beneath us, witnessing our savage battle. Adrenaline coursed through my veins, granting me heightened senses and reflexes, while Fredrick, too, drew upon his primal strength.

With one final surge of energy, I managed to break free from his grip, spinning around to face him head-on. My fangs glistened with saliva and fury as I lunged again, my jaws closing around his throat. Fredrick thrashed beneath me, desperately trying to loosen my grip, but I held on with unyielding determination.

In that pivotal moment, I felt a surge of power, a primal energy that surged through my entire being. I channeled it into a crushing force, and with a sickening snap, Fredrick's neck gave way beneath my relentless grip. His body fell limp beneath me, lifeless and defeated.

I stood there, panting heavily, my chest heaving with the exertion of the battle. The victory was mine, but it came at a cost. Blood dripped from my wounds, mingling with the dirt beneath my paws. I had emerged triumphant, but I knew the scars of this battle would forever mark me. Fredrick had wasted lives for his greed, and thus they had died for nothing.

As the moon slowly descended from its zenith, I let out a mournful howl, a mixture of victory and sorrow. The winds carried my cry into the night, a testament to the fierce King emerging from the chaos. I was the King, the victor, and my people would know no bounds from now on.

Forged In The Flames Chapter 100

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

Chapter 100 The Aftermath (Nikolas POV)

After the war, the alphas of Snow surrendered to me. Unknowing, I had somehow become King of Snow because I had conquered their King. I watched them howl at the moon and bow their heads. Piotr and Miles joined me where I stood, unsure what to do.

I shifted back to my human form, and everyone copied me. I never imagined something like this would happen to me, but it was finally over. I was too exhausted to jubilate.

I was also wounded. Limping, Piotr and Miles supported me while Ingham and Grant ran back to Riverhead in wolf form to get a car to take me to the clinic.

My uncle was a formidable foe. He gave a good fight, and it would have gone either way. I was grateful that I did not underestimate him and that the moon favoured me. Qusack and Gabriel instructed our troops to arrest the Snow Alphas.

“Stop,” I managed and looked at Gabriel. I knew he was angry and hurting.

“They have not committed any crime, they only followed their king to war, and it is now over,” I said, and Gabriel shook his head.

“They supported him,” he argued.

“Just like you will support me regardless of your values,” I said, and he froze. I knew what was really bothering him.

“They will bring her to you, Gabriel; Gwen will return. To you,” I said, and Miles interrupted.

“Gwendolyn?” he asked, and I looked at him and nodded. Of course, he would know Gwendolyn.

“She is your wife?” He asked Gabriel, surprised.

I guess they didn’t speak much.

She possibly didn’t know who Miles was since Fredrick had kept his identity a secret until he felt his ambitions had been threatened by me.

“I will bring her to you, I promise,” Miles told him, and Gabriel relaxed.

“I looked around me and saw the number of souls lost tonight, and I cursed Fredrick for taking so many lives with him. I promised myself to be better. There might be a belief that madness ran in the Semenov clan, but I will prove them wrong.

The vehicle finally arrived, and I returned to the settlement with my officers. Piotr and Miles led their people back to where they came from.

I had placed Miles in charge of Snow, unsure what I wanted to do with the place. One thing I was sure of was I wasn’t going to merge Forest with Snow.

I felt a bit faint, having lost a lot of blood, and I knew it would take a day or two to return to normal.

We finally arrived at the Lycan hospital, and I was carried in.

A room was prepared for me. There were no medical practitioners on the ground, but some of the werewolves that went to war with me were medical practitioners, so they knew what to do. No one stopped them from attending to me.

It wasn't long before I was given a room when I finally embraced sleep to rest.

I woke up, and her scent filled my sense. I knew I had slept off the hospital bed, so I figured I must still be there. I turned in the direction the scent was strongest, and there she was, sitting beside me in the hospital. The moment Aliana saw I was awake, she smiled. Her smile was beautiful. There was peace to her. Her swollen eyes showed she had shed tears, but I knew they were that of joy.

"Hey," I managed, and she smiled at me. She reached for my hair and stroked it a bit. She had a beautiful smile on her face.

"Hey," she replied breathy, confirming she had wept.

"You tried to send us off on sea," she said, and I knew she would not like it, but it was necessary.

"Well, you don't have to go," I said, wearing a broad grin and managing to sit up. She smacked my arm gently.

And then we stared at each other for a while. Aliana looked away at the clock.

"You have been out for two days. You lost a lot of blood, so they needed you to be alright," she said, and I nodded.

Two days was a long time, but it was a small price to pay for recovery.

"Miles is around," She finally confessed, and I did not need to guess why she had swollen eyes. It wasn't because of me. It was because she had seen her mother. Tears started streaming down her cheeks again, and she smiled.

"Thank you, Nikolas. Thank you for making all my dreams come true. I love you and am glad you came back," she said.

I could see she felt every moment. I opened my arms, and she moved closer to me. I hugged her holding her against my chest. I stroked her hair gently. We remained in that position for a while.

The doctor finally discharged me, and I headed home.

Piotr and Miles were around. I wondered why Piotr did not bring Natasha. Then I remembered I was yet to sign a decree to abolish the unity law in Forest and Snow, then persuade the committee and

Aleksander to abolish the law once and for all.

Since I owned Forest and Snow now, it will be given because I suspected King Aleksander would gladly do the needful.

I couldn't spend time with Aliana in the room after I returned because there were a lot of matters to attend to, my coronation being at the top of it.

I wanted to head to the office when Aliana stopped me.

"Little wolf," I asked, and I could see her contemplating her words. I sighed and relaxed my shoulders so she would feel comfortable.

We were standing in the foyer, and people were going about their business. I t*ouched her chin gently and gazed into her eyes.

"Don't make me claim you before our wedding," I teased, and she giggled a bit. Then stopped and sighed.

"Your mother. I think you should see her. You are the only family she has now," She said, and Bane almost growled, but I controlled myself.

"Please, Nikolas, you can't lose both your parents," She pleaded with me, but I doubted my mother had any maternal instincts in her. I couldn't blame her, though. Learning how they were brought up, they couldn't have turned out better, but I was hurt that she remained silent until Fredrick succeeded.

"Okay, but you are coming with me," I said, and she nodded. Seeing how she reacted, I figured she had somehow spoken to my mother. I did not bother asking.

Aliana and I walked to the cell where Gabriel was keeping my mother.

To my surprise, it wasn't a terrible place at all. It was comfortable. It had iron bars instead of doors and was smaller than her room. She put down the book she was reading the moment she saw me. I did not miss the silver bracelet on her hand. Gabriel must have really felt sorry for her to treat her with so much respect.

"Son," she said with misty eyes, and I signalled the guard to open the bars. Aliana and I walked in, and for the first time, my mother did not react negatively. I also noticed her hair was made.

"Who made your hair?" I asked her, trying to ease the tension, and she t*ouched it.

"Gwendolyn," my mother said, smiling.

“She’s back, Niko. Fredrick took her. He took her,” she said, and I nodded. I knew she did not have that information.

“So, you own Snow now?” she said with a big grin, and I shook my head.

“Miles owns Snow. I own Forest,” I said, and she nodded.

“Fair enough. My father and brother committed a lot of atrocities there. A change of leadership will help,” She said, and I nodded. There was a silence in the air.

“About your father, Niko, I did not know what they were planning. I loved my husband very much...” She started in tears, and I interrupted her.

“Yet you like Gabriel too,” I said, and her lips quivered.

“He is my fated, Niko...” she said, and I was completely shocked. Aliana gasped too. 3

“He did not know. They don’t feel it like we do, which makes it hurtful,” she said, wiping away her tears.

“But I do not feel the pull anymore. He has reclaimed Gwen, so it is gone, and I can breathe now,” she said, and I knew she wasn’t lying. She was too damn arrogant to admit her feelings.

“So, what do you want to do now?” I asked her, and she bowed her head.

“I want to stay, Niko. I want to witness your coronation and the birth of my grandchildren. I do not want to be alienated from you,” she pleaded with me and looked at Aliana.

“Please beg him on my behalf,” she said, tears streaming down her cheeks.

“I won’t trouble anyone ever again. The day I do, I ask you to take my life. If you grant me this one request, I promise to keep the silver bracelets on, so I will never seem like a treat to you or anyone. I have apologised to Aliana, who has forgiven me; please, Niko, forgive me.

I only did the things I did because I wanted you to get the crown without war. Fredrick was a strong man, and I did not want to lose you too. But now that he is gone. I am happy. I am free. I am just begging you that you do not send me away. Please, Niko,” she said and went on her knees.

I told her to stand up and helped her up. I embraced her, and she wrapped her arms around me and wept. For her sake, I hoped she was telling the truth because, unlike my father, I won’t hesitate.

When leaving, I told the guards to take her back to her room, but she said no. She said she wanted to linger in the cell a bit to reflect. I knew it was shame that hindered her from going to her room, but sooner or later, she will have to face everyone again. I told her they would take her to her room when she was ready. I left Aliana to return to our room while I headed to my office.