

# Forged In The Flames Chapter 31

Forged In The Flames By Karima Sa'ad Usman

## Chapter 31 What to Do (Nikolas POV)

I remained seated on my chair, and the silence in my office was absolute.

Qusack did not say a word, and Abraham looked confused. I was just as confused as he was because I did not know what to do.

I looked at Qusack to give him immediate order so we could act.

Fedrick may have said one month, but he could strike anytime. I refuse to let him steal my birthright. I had never heard of this mistress or child, so I was highly suspicious of his intentions. Also, knowing how his relationship with my father was, I doubted he would have entrusted his son to the Snow King.

"Qusack, get me a pen and paper. I need to write a letter to the Hill king to carry on certain issues," I said, and he leaned forward to ask me.

"Like what?" He said, and I knew he was only asking out of concern. I could not get mad about it. We have been friends for so long that I knew I could always trust him. "The Snow King is trying to say that I am a fraud. I was wondering if Gabriel, the traitor, could identify my mother as his former Queen. Maybe that would shut them up," I said, and Abraham disagreed.

"Before I joined your pack, Alpha, I used to work in the legal library of scholars in Snow. I was cast out because I helped a nobleman remove a law account from the archives.

I am trying to tell you that I know how the committee works.

Gabriel's account will not suffice. The reasons are that he is a werewolf.

According to the Unity Law, he has no right to speak. Let us say they choose to make an exception because of the circumstances; they could argue that his account is false. You are his master, and he is your slave. He could say anything you want him to say.

Let us now say they do not see it that way, and he indeed identifies your mother as Queen; they could argue that you found her in her feral state in the wild, recognised her, knew of the mutiny and decided to seize the opportunity to claim she is your mother.

Moreover, I have heard from the Halfbreeds in Snow that their parents told them the Queen was accused of having affairs. They do not know you are King Mathia's son and your mother is Queen Isabelle. Due to the restricted access to the Queen, they haven't seen her yet, but there are rumours that the Old King was so in love with his fated who

passed away that he neglected his Queen, and she had to result to having flings. It is also in their records.

King Fedrick is malicious. He could argue that you are a bastard.” Abraham said and left me wondering because my options weren’t great.

“Where is the light in all of this, Abraham?” I asked him impatiently.

“The only way you can win against the Snow King is if your mother regains her sanity. No one would dare to tell her truth, and Fedrick would not have a choice but to accept whatever you say,” He said.

“What about this son that Fedrick said is with him? I know he is an actual person. I heard his name in Peakland,” I asked, and Abraham nodded.

“Bastards can’t inherit when there is a legitimate heir,” he said. That did not sit well with me because my being regarded as a legitimate heir involved my mother regaining her sanity—something I did not see ever happening.

“Also, he said the King had a son by his mistress; the only mistress your father had in the records was a werewolf named Olive. It means this son is a halfbreed, and the unity law forbids his ascension as King because all halfbreeds are to be treated as werewolves,” he said.

I could not believe my father had fathered a halfbreed. Something I grew up knowing as an abomination. Bringing a half-breed into this world was cruel because they never truly fit in anywhere.

The werewolves never accept them because they look and smell like Lycans. The Lycans never accept them because they do not smell right and lack particular lycan abilities.

It was hell for halfbreeds, and that is why it had been forbidden.

We might have let the ones in Forest live, but I learned they usually kill them from birth in other parts. They saw it as a form of mercy killing.

What Abraham said relaxed me, and I beamed because that was true. If Miles is a half-breed, why did Fedrick, the King who hates werewolves the most, raise a tainted child?

“How does Fredrick plan to make this guy the king?” Qusack asked.

“I think he would use the law of exception, it doesn’t always work, but he might use the law of exception and win because people are afraid of him. The law of exception states that without an heir, anyone related to the King by blood can ascend if they are male and of age,” He said, and I wondered how that would help.

"That did not say a halfbreed?" I said, and he nodded.

"Anyone means anyone, if they had said, except werewolves and halfbreeds, then anyone would mean Lycans strictly. But it said anyone and gave no exception, so he could use that law to do that; he has to prove that you're a fraud. I am sure it would be a bit difficult because there has to be Lycans that can identify your mother," he said, and Qusack shook his head.

"Not when all of them are afraid of Fredrick. They would not want to get involved," he said, giving a valid point, and I nodded in agreement.

"If he has to use the law of exception, he must conquer us. Because you did not inherit Forest, you conquered it and took it over; he would have to take it by force from you to give this supposed heir. We all know he would not have a problem with that. Unlike us, he has a vast

werewolf army. Something we lack immensely. And I do not trust these werewolves to train them. They were the ones that rose against your father; they could do it again. They might even prefer a halfbreed as King than you, Alpha," Abraham said, and Qusack cleared his throat.

"I am sure they are not stupid, Abraham. Anyone in their right mind would know Alpha Nikolas is a better option than someone the Snow King raised. The man has only a daughter, so he may have replicated himself in this child. We need to investigate the supposed heir to know his ideals," Qusack said, and it was a valid point.

I doubted Fredrick would raise the child right.

Miles might just be as sick as Fredrick, which may be why the Hill King and Queen panicked when Lena told them she was seeing the guy.

"I will advise you to do the needful and stop trying to take Forest as a birthright. It doesn't stop Fredrick from waging war against us, but the entire committee would be against him because he has favoured a halfbreed over his kind," Abraham said, and I sighed.

"I do not know what he wants from me, and to think he is my mother's brother," I said, and Qusack gasped, Abraham did not seem surprised.

He probably knew all along.

I wondered what else he knew that he was keeping from me. He did have a fascinating job before he was cast out. All that knowledge in his head would be useful someday.

"I found that out in Hill. My mother went to Snow after the treachery, and he rejected her. He is why we had to live in the woods of the Forest. I learned he did not only reject

her but also sent hunters after her. My mother lived in fear of hunters throughout. I thought they were werewolves, but now I know that the hunters were from Snow and her brother had set them on her. I do not understand why my mother would withhold such vital information. She only spoke of the werewolves,” I said, and Abraham sighed.

“I guess she was angry at the people that put her in the situation. If the werewolves had not killed her husband and taken her home, she would not need to return to Snow. King Fedrick would have no power over her. It was normal that she would hold on to the grudge of the people that cause the problem,” Abraham said.

“I disagree,” Qusack said and looked at me.

“I know Queen Isabelle is your mother, and you love her so much, but it is highly suspicious that she did not tell you this, but she spent ten years telling you of Gabriel and his friends.

Her brother had also wronged her. His duty was to take her in and lend his army to her to help her retrieve Forest from the werewolves. Suppose he turned her away, then he is equally in the wrong.

She has a right to Snow and his army. She has the right to return home. There is no shame in it. He wronged your mother, and she should know it.” Qusack said, and I knew he was trying to say something but must have held back out of respect.

“Say it, Qusack. We have come a long way for me to be mad,” I said, assuring him and bracing myself for whatever he would say that might hurt my feelings.

“She was hiding something. That was why she told you nothing about her brother or what he did to her. Gabriel did worse, but sending hunters after his pregnant sister was extreme. There must have been some severe bad blood between the two, and she might have been at fault. It might also be the reason he is transferring the aggression to you. Oddly, he would side with an outsider over his blood,” Qusack said, and Abraham shook his head.

“There don’t necessarily need to be bad blood between them. Forest is the richest place on our continent, so it is normal for him to covet it. After all, he had tried to take Forest several times, and Gabriel could resist him. Gabriel had been resisting him until we came along. I believe he would continue because now that we have taken over, it means Gabriel can no longer resist, but he might be playing it safe simply because you are a Lycan, and the Lycan Unity law is against attacking a Lycan directly for no cause.

Snow has lived off the riches of Forest for a while. The only thing they have been unable to make money off is the slave trade.

The cost of slaves is extremely high now because the Hunters have to result to kidnapping and stealing instead of taking.

Other than that, they had been stealing resources for the woods and selling them in the market. Others have no choice but to purchase from them because Forest has been cut off.

Throughout Gabriel's leadership, no one could trade with Forest. It was forbidden, and Gabriel would not let anyone enter Forest, so they had to rely on the black market to get things or depend on recycling instead of creating new things.

I learned that development has been slow because of it, but they make much money from it.

What makes you think that King Fedrick would side with Alpha Nikolas against a child he raised himself? With this child as the King of Forest, Snow will have access to everything in Forest. The natural resources and the slaves.

Compare it to his sister's son, who grew up in the wilderness.

Once Alpha Nikolas is King, he cannot command or order him. It is more profitable that the bastard is King than the actual heir.

I can bet you all that he has terms and conditions he wants Alpha to fulfil before he supports his kingship. I am sure that access to the Forest's natural resources, along with the werewolf demographic, is high on the list. It is also something that Alpha would not willingly give easily," He said, and we were silent.

Abraham joined my pack five years ago when he was sentenced to death for a crime and managed to escape. I knew he was a scholar, but this was my first time seeing his worth. It was amazing how well he blended in with the rest of us.

"So, what would we do now?" Qusack asked, and I sighed because I did not know what to do.

My mother had made me vulnerable by not telling me the entire story. I just hoped something would happen in my favour.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 32**

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### **Chapter 32 Gifts (Aliana POV)**

I woke up on an empty bed. It was a late night, and I wondered where Nikolas had gone.

I gathered the sheets to cover my body and went to the window to see if he was in the garden with his officers.

The party was on as usual, but Nikolas, Qusack, and Abraham weren't there.

I wondered where he might have gone to.

I was mad about the joke he cracked and relieved at the same time that it was a joke. He had indeed brought out my fear. Even though my father's warning rang through, I conditioned my mind to trust Nikolas.

He did not seem like the type people could force into doing anything, and if he set his heart to do something, he would do it.

I had to trust that he wouldn't hurt me eventually, But I also had the duty of making life easy.

If he became King, my kind would be free, but was I willing to sacrifice my happiness for it? My heart had never beat this way for anyone, and my wolf and I have never longed for anyone as I longed for Nikolas.

Was I willing to remain a mistress while he took a queen to abolish the Unity law comfortably?

I left the window and went to the bathroom, hoping the goddess would smile at us, and it wouldn't come to that. Because I did not want to share, nor was I willing to let go.

If he were equally invested in this as I was, then it would be okay for me to be stubborn about it.

I brushed my teeth, showered and put on an oversized T-shirt.

I considered linking him but decided against it last minute, so I linked Ania instead because I was hungry.

"Are you up? I need food," I said, and it took a bit before she responded.

"I will bring something for you and Alpha. He is yet to eat, too," She said. Wondering where he was, I chose to link him.

"Where are you?" I finally linked him, unable to continue wondering about his whereabouts.

"On my way to you," he replied, and even though he sounded all right, I could feel something was wrong with him.

Nikolas entered the room ten minutes later, and I noticed he had freshened up. "I thought you were at the party," I said, and he looked at me and smiled, then came to join me in bed.

He pulled me close and k\*issed my forehead. His l\*ips lingered while he breathed, and I knew he did it more to calm down.

He pulled away and got off the bed, then went to his dresser and returned with something in his hand.

“A shop owner in Peakland gave me this to give to that special someone,” He said and took my hand.

He caressed my hand gently and k\*issed it, then wore me a beautiful bracelet made of Amethyst and emerald. It was held together with bronze. I loved it.

It was a beautiful and rare piece. I would be surprised if it were the only one of its kind. The craftsmanship was exquisite. The jeweller that made it was gifted.

“It is beautiful, Nikolas,” I said, and he held my hand.

“It might not be gold, but it was valuable to the owner. I hope you cherish it too.” He said, and I pulled him close and k\*issed his l\*ips softly. Sensing something was wrong, I pulled away and looked at him curiously.

“Is anything the matter?” I asked, and he shook his head.

“Nothing to bother yourself over,” He said and looked around.

“I am famished. Let us eat,” he said quickly, changing the topic, and I nodded. “Ania is bringing food. I asked her to,” I said, and he smiled and left the bed.

He went to open his luggage.

I wondered why he did not place it in the closet, but I figured he had his reasons. He opened the bag and took out two shopping bags that his clothes had compressed. It was white, and the writing was in gold. It read ‘His Fantasies’; I wondered what was in the bags.

Nikolas came towards me with the bags. “I would love to see you in them,” He said and handed it to me, then sat on the side of the bed while he watched me go through the content.

They were lingerie. A red one, a black one, nude coloured and purple set. They were lacey and racy, and I looked at him and smiled.

He grinned mischievously.

“You decided to step it up from what they used to give me to wear to see you,” I teased, and he laughed.

"I love beauty, and you are an embodiment of it. There is no harm in feeding my eyes and desires," He said, and I giggled. I loved them all, but I would wear the red lace first. I liked it best.

I put them away, and we waited for the meal. It came in forty minutes later, and how Ania and Lisa looked when they served showed they were sleeping.

I felt bad for interrupting their slumber, but it was necessary. There was no way I could keep up with Nikolas' energy on an empty stomach.

We ate hurriedly, and Nikolas took the food tray to leave it at the door outside.

When he got up, I went into the closet with the bags.

I stripped down, wore the red lace, and looked at myself in the full-length mirror.

I looked like a seductress.

My b\*reas\*ts looked full in the lacy-wired bra. The lace thongs looked exquisite, and the short lacy robe that I was to wear over it brought them together and made it look splendid.

I let my hair down and put on red l\*ipstick.

My l\*ips were already plump, so the look was complete.

I was shy because I did not look like my usual self, but Raven was in a hurry to show off.

"Come on, Aliana. Do not live up to the Little girl nickname he gave us," She said, annoyed that I was contemplating stepping out of the closet like this.

I had worn things like this before, but it was easier when someone put it on me and I had to wear it. But now I chose to wear it, and my intentions were obvious. It was different.

Raven made me leave the closet and step out. Nikolas had already turned off the lights, and only the soft glow of the lamps illuminated the room. He sat in bed shirtless with his back against the bed rest, facing the closet. He knew I had gone in there to wear the gift. The bracelet hung loosely on my wrist.

"My favourite colour," he said, and his eyes looked highly l\*us\*tful. I could feel his wolf coming to the surface. He left the bed and came towards me. I backed away a bit, still shy, and he pinned me against the wall.



“Are we going down this route again, Little wolf,” He said, caressing my chin and looking into my eye.

“You look beautiful, and you shouldn’t be shy about it, my love,” he said, stepping away to admire me with my back against the wall.

His eyes were completely black, and I could see he was h\*ard.

“Perfection,” he said and moved close to admire my curves with his hands. He caressed every inch of me, moving slowly and feeling my body and the lace simultaneously. Anticipation built up inside me.

“The moment I saw it, I knew it would look perfect on you, little wolf,” he said, feeling my b\*reas\*ts. He squeezed gently, making me moan.

He moved close to me and k\*issed me. I returned the k\*iss hungrily because I was on fire already.

His desires were my desires, his need had become mine, and my body craved him. The five days were hell—three days of distance and two days away. I planned to get it all back.

He bent over and l\*icked my n\*ippl\*es through the fabric of the lace. The lace was in the way because I wanted to feel the entire sensation.

He removed my b\*reas\*ts from the cups, leaving the bra under my b\*reas\*t and began to s\*uc\*k on them gently. I moaned uncontrollably.

I knew I was getting w\*et because my walls clenched at what he was doing.

Soon, I ran my fingers through his hair, and he pinned that hand to the wall with his hands. Being unable to touch him while he worked on my b\*reas\*ts gave me a n intense sensation. It made me feel like I was at his mercy, and I liked it. It shot the pleasure straight to my head.

“Nikolas,” I moaned, and he growled with approval and went on his knees in front of me. Releasing my hand in the process. He brushed my panties to the side and felt my clit with his tongue.

“Ahh,” I moaned.

He placed my legs over his shoulder with my back against the wall while he ate me. I was running wild, and he knew it.

He continued l\*icking and s\*uc\*king the nerve bundle until I erupted and shook.

I wanted to push his head away, but he held still, and soon another came. By the second time, I wanted him inside me badly. I felt my wetness run, and he stood before me, lifting me.

I wrapped my legs around him, and he buried his cock inside me and pumped with reckless abandon.

Nikolas was utterly gone, and so was I.

My claws grew out from the intensity of the pleasure, and I held on to him. He pumped, and soon I saw his teeth elongate. The pleasure was intense, and it was getting to our heads.

“Goddess, I missed you,” he groaned, pumping inside me. I came, but he was only beginning. He moved me to the bed and made me go on my hands and knees while he rammed into me from behind.

There was a possibility this Lingerie wouldn’t have a second use because I did not know how it was coming off, but I knew it wasn’t taken off properly but beastly.

He pumped and pumped, hitting all the right spots. My orgasms were prolonged, and I liked it. His name never left my lips. I was on a pleasure high, and he was my drug.

Nikolas finally released into me, pushing himself deep and strongly. I felt the energy of his release, and it was more intense than mine. He pulled out gently and laid down beside me in bed, panting.

I did not know when sleep came, but it did, and it was blissful.

I woke up and saw it was afternoon. Nikolas wasn’t beside me, and I knew he wasn’t in the bathroom. It was odd because I knew he planned to stay indoors with me the whole day, so I wondered where he must have gone.

I got off the bed and saw my ripped red lace lingerie on the floor. I was sad because I liked it, but we were too eager to be careful. I picked them up from the floor to trash them when I heard Ania’s voice.

“Are you up?” She said, and I knew she must have been trying to reach me for a while.

“Yes, Ania, I am up. What is the matter?” I asked her, and she was silent.

“The Queen has regained her sanity, and Alpha just absorbed her into his pack,” She said, and I gasped.

I was in complete shock.

I did not know what to do.

I did not know if I should laugh or cry.

The joy in me was so intense that I just sat on the bed and wept tears of joy and relief.

Finally, something good happened to Nikolas.

Finally, he could show her his achievements.

Finally, she could see how far he had gone to change their status.

I am sure she would be proud, but I also knew a lot of work would be needed to bring her up to speed.

I decided to remain in the room and not interrupt his moment with her. They both deserved to enjoy the joy of her healing together.

I thanked the goddess for coming through for Nikolas.

I prayed that the heir of Forest did not miraculously show up to destroy their bliss.

I planned to tell Nikolas about him, at least when we are together. Even if I could not discuss what happened with King Mathias, I could tell him of an Heir that might come to Claim Forest. He deserved to know. At the end of the day, my people were just spoils. We had always been spoils.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 33**

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### **Chapter 33 Awake (Nikolas POV)**

Voices came like a torrent in my sleep, and I thought I was having a nightmare. I woke up and looked at the clock. It was eight in the morning.

“Alpha,”

“Alpha”

“Alpha”, I heard eight voices at once. Qusack and Ania’s representatives were the most prominent, and I knew something was wrong.

“What is it,” I asked.

“Nikolas, you have to come quickly! The Queen is beside herself with grief! She is hysterically calling for her little boy,” Qusack said, and I gently got off the bed so I did not wake Aliana up.

“I am coming,” I linked back and hurried to slip on something. I wore shorts and a T-shirt and slipped out of my room.

I was quick on my feet, eager to get to my mother in time. My heart was pounding really fast. I felt the adrenaline of excitement and fear course through my veins.

Could this be what I had hoped for nineteen years? Was it possible that she was no longer feral?

I wondered what must have gone wrong to make her hysterical. Did all our efforts go down the drain? Was she worse off than she was yesterday?

Although all through the years of her on- and-off feral episodes and the final one that kept her in that state for nineteen years, she had never spoken a word, so asking for me was a huge sign of improvement.

I got to the door, and there were people there, something I had prohibited because I did not want anyone to see her.

I growled, and they all dispersed, leaving Qusack and the maids. The guards weren't there.

“Where are the guards?” I asked.

“Holding her down. You know she isn't in chains,” Qusack said, and I rushed in.

My mother was growling and trying to break free from the men holding her. Each guard held on to an arm, and they held on tight.

She struggled on the bed whilst sitting and seeing her suffer like this was heart-wrenching. Her eyes were shut tight, and she tried to break free with all her might.

My mother looked at me and was silent, then started growling. I wondered what had gone wrong. Her eyes were still feral, but I could see the redness fading gradually. I could not believe my eyes.

“Where is my Niko?” She asked, and I was in shock.

That was the first time she would speak to me in nineteen years.

“Where am I? Where is my son?” She asked, and it was logical that she would ask those questions, but still, I was frozen on the spot.

She tried to fight them off, and I could see her strength draining with every struggle getting weaker and tears streaming down her cheeks whilst she cried.

I had to snap out of the shock and advance towards her. Her eyes were normal. They were brown, as I remembered them, not red but brown. Had she not worn silver bracelets, I am sure they would have been black. She wasn't feral any more.

I could not waste time just in case it was temporary.

"Momma," I said, and she looked at me with confusion. "Momma, it is me, Niko," I said, and she frowned.

"My Niko is a little boy," she argued, doubting herself as she spoke, and I nodded.

"Yes, I was, but I am grown now," I said, touching her cheek gently and sitting before her. She flared her nostrils as if smelling something offensive.

"I need you to pledge your allegiance to me so you do not go feral again. You have been out of it for nineteen years,

"Momma, I doubt we will be lucky again," I told her, and I could see realisation and shock form on her face.

"Niko?" She asked me with realisation. "I need you to plead your allegiance now, Momma," I said, afraid the insanity would come back. This was all I had ever hoped for, and I would be damned if I let the opportunity slip.

"I, Isabelle Kowalski, swear to you, Alpha ..." She said and searched my eyes.

"Nikolas Kowalski," I told her my name and her eyes widened with the realisation that I wasn't lying to her. She stopped giving the guards a hard time and relaxed. "...Alpha Nikolas Kowalski," She said, tears streaming down her cheeks and staring at me with disbelief and profound sorrow.

"...to be forever loyal and serve you as yours until the day I die," She said, and I felt the bond snap into place. I did not know I was holding my breath until I exhaled.

I exhaled with deep relief, knowing she would never be feral again. My days of living in fear of the red-eyed beast were finally over. I felt like a little boy again. She touched my face and ran her fingers over the scar on my left eye. I dared not tell her she was the one that did it. Her tears streamed uncontrollably, and she grabbed onto me and hugged me tightly while she wept.

"I am sorry, Niko, I am so sorry. I should have listened to you and gone back to our cave," she said, remembering our conversation before she went feral. She would remember that because she was stuck at that time. Although nineteen years had

passed, to her, it was like a moment ago, the only traces of time passed was that I was now a grown man and not a ten-year-old little boy.

“Leave us,” I linked everyone at once while I held her, and I heard them recede and close the door. Bane was mainly silent. He had never met our mother before.

She broke the hug and began to sniff the air.

“Halfbreeds and werewolves,” she said, sounding confused, and I bowed my head. Was her hatred so entrenched that she could remember them too?

“Where are we, Niko,” she asked me.

“Your home. I took it all back. I conquered the forest as promised and took it all back,” I said, telling her what I had done, and she widened her eyes.

“How?” she asked as if it were an unbelievable task.

“We will talk about it later; right now, I think you should rest,” I said, and she shook her head.

“Did you ensure Gabriel and his cohorts pay for their crime Niko?” She asked, and I tried to avoid the question.

“Niko, why do you reek of werewolves?” She asked, sniffing around me, and I did not know what to say. Telling her of Aliana now would be too much. I needed her to be all right and then ease her into it.

“Niko, why aren’t you answering my questions?” She asked me, and I shook my head.

“I will answer your question when you are all right. If you do not like Halfbreeds tending to you, I will send the Lycans over, but mind you, it was halfbreeds and a werewolf that nursed you back to health,” I said, letting her know who was responsible for her excellent health.

Had Aliana not stepped in, she would have died.

The physician was already counting down the days, and they only fed her enough to prolong the inevitable. There was a point when the food would no longer be enough again, but the goddess had been kind enough to make Aliana offer her services. This was all thanks to her. But how will I balance between my mother and the woman I love?

My mother began to growl.

“How dare you leave me at their mercy? After all, I told you they did to your father and me. They are the reasons we were cut off from the world. The reason why we had to

hide Niko? Or did they feed you lies and tell you otherwise? Nineteen years is a long time,” She said, sounding angry and disappointed.

She also looked hurt, and it got to me. She looked at me as if I had betrayed her. It hurt because I had lived my life trying to accomplish her goals, her revenge and recover what she told me we had lost.

The look on her face broke my heart, but I let it go. It was normal for someone who never really liked the werewolves and had all the right to hate them for their treachery.

I wanted to tell her that I knew the truth and that the werewolves weren’t the ones hunting us in the woods but her brother, but I held my peace because she had just come through.

“I will avoid discussing the past with you until you are all right,” I said, standing up.

I was happy that she would not go feral again, which meant we had all the time in the world. It also meant Fredrick would not win and would have no choice but to give me my place.

As for my relationship with Aliana, I plan to have it all. I deserve joy and happiness. I have lived all my life trying to make my mother happy, pursuing her dreams and trying to keep my promises. It had been an empty and lonely life for me, but finally, there was colour in my life, and I planned to keep it. Hopefully, my mother would forget her hatred and accept the woman I love and want to be with.

I stood up, and she held onto my hand and looked up.

“Where are you going?” She asked.

“To my room. You are all right now. I will send the physician to check your vitals, and then I will send the Lycan women to tend to you. Mind you, they aren’t good nurses, but since you said you do not want Halfbreeds around you, I will have to remove them from serving you,” I said.

“Why are you allowing them freedom?” she asked me, and I pulled my hand away.

“You have been out of it for Nineteen years, Mother. I was ten when you lost your mind. You are regaining your sanity after nineteen years. Instead of being grateful to the goddess for the gift she has given us, you are bringing up your grudge and vengeance. I would like to breathe, Mother, and you should learn to do the same,” I said, stepping away from her.

She had honestly irritated me with her words and questions. Someone who missed nineteen years of her son’s life should be grateful she has a chance to build new memories and close the time gap.

She should want to catch up and not remind me of the promises she forced me to make as a child and her grudges against the werewolves.

I was at peace because I had done everything within my power to keep my promises, all except two. I didn't kill her, and I didn't kill Gabriel and his family. Those were the only exception, and I had the right to decide who I killed.

I am sure Gabriel is suffering for his crimes right now. I also know Aliana is suffering too.

Even though I chose to ignore it, I knew it was h\*ard for her. Knowing I hate her father and force him to work long hours as a slave must be h\*ard. She visits him and knows his h\*ardship, yet she returns to the palace and smiles for my sake, ready to please me, always there for me when I need her. Aliana has made our relationship and my life easy at her expense.

She has learned to refrain from complaining just so it would work out. Even though I have confessed my love and intentions, she still walks on eggshells believing what we have will crumble someday.

She might even think this is a ploy to hurt her d\*eePLY.

I knew both she and her father were suffering.

I try to separate her from him in my mind and love her regardless of his crimes, but I know it isn't the same for her. She must feel like a traitor s\*leeping with the man who ruined and humiliated her father. She must conflict with herself.

Sometimes, I am tempted to cancel my revenge so Aliana can be happy, but the thought that I would betray the woman that gave me life always holds me back.

I am suffering, too, because my anger has dissipated, but I have a promise to keep and a father to avenge, so I keep going. My mother was being inconsiderate and ungrateful at this moment.

We were all suffering, and it was heart wrenching that my mother would bring up her grudge immediately after she regained her sanity. It was sad. How much more did she expect me to give?

"I am sorry if I upset you, Niko," I heard my mother's gentle voice and looked at her. She looked sad and wiped away her tears.

"I will try to follow your lead. It is just that everything is still fresh in my mind. Nineteen years might have passed, but it is still like yesterday," She said. I did not know how to tell her I knew her brother was the one hunting us and not the werewolves.



I needed to give her time to get used to the environment before I ironed things out with her.

“I do not know why you reek of werewolves, but be careful, Niko. They can’t be trusted. I would hate to see you betrayed as they did to your father,” she said and began to weep.

Remembering my father constantly tormented her. I was glad I had some of his features but didn’t look like him, or she would have thought I was him.

“I need you to rest, Mother, and we can have lunch together in the dining room,”

I said, smiling at her so she would not think I was mad. She nodded with hope in her eyes and reluctantly let go of my hand.

I bent to k\*iss her forehead and then left the room.

I knew my life had just gotten difficult, and there was nothing I could do about it; balancing my mother, Aliana, and my pursuit of kingship would be h\*ard, there were two factors in my life against one, and I wasn’t willing to give up either.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 34**

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

### **Chapter 34 Thoughts (Nikolas POV)**

I returned to my room and found Aliana sitting on the bed, her eyes were swollen from tears, and she was smiling. I knew that she knew what had happened.

She rushed towards me and hugged me. I relaxed the moment she wrapped her arms around me to receive the joy she was giving willingly.

“The goddess smiled on you,” she said, and I wrapped my arms around her waist and buried my head in her neck to breathe in her fruity scent.

She let me hold her. I needed it. Something that was supposed to be a celebration was a cause of worry.

Here she was, happy that my mother was all right, but I knew my mother would never accept her, and I could not let either of them go. Aliana was my future, and my mother was a past and a part of me.

I held on tight and k\*issed her neck, then travelled with my k\*iss to her l\*ips to drink her in. She tasted as sweet as always, and I was at complete peace in those moments.

I was calm and broke away.

“How is she?” Aliana asked me, and I nodded.

“She is fine,” I said, leading her to the couch so I could talk to her.

“Aliana,” I said, and she was attentive. I could also sense she was a bit worried, and I knew it was because of my tone.

It wasn’t playful as usual, so it was bound to make her worry. Still, I couldn’t help it. The situation did not call for a happy, playful tone.

“My mother isn’t open-minded, she does not like werewolves and halfbreeds. So, you and your friends won’t be attending to her anymore. I would not want to do anything to aggravate her,” I said, afraid that Aliana would take it wrongly.

She placed her hand over mine and looked at me.

“I wasn’t expecting she would be different. You and Beta Qusack are an exception. It is okay. I will stay away from her if that is what it takes,” she said, and I felt my heart break in those moments.

I wish my mother would make my life easy, just like Aliana. I hope my mother will respect my decisions and support me no matter what. Only time will tell.

“I need to tell you something,” Aliana said, and I frowned at her because it sounded serious.

“I should have told you when you returned, but we were too busy, and I didn’t want to spoil our moment, but I believe I should tell you now. Especially now that your mother is all right and you have decided to make Forest your home,” she said, and I wondered what she wanted to tell me.

“Please listen to what I have to say unbiased. I know you hate my kind, and my father, and you must have your reasons. It may be based on what was said they did in Forest.

I will not try to manipulate or persuade you to do otherwise. If you ever forgive them and choose to be kind, it should be of your own free will, but I need you to know this part of the story. Hopefully, that would prepare you for what might come shortly,” She said, and I frowned at her. I hoped she wasn’t trying to justify her father’s crimes.

“If it has to do with your father’s crimes, please do not tell me anything that would spoil our relationship, Aliana,” I said quickly, and she shook her head.

“I am not here to defend what they said my father and his friends did to the late King. I have heard both versions of the stories, and I am not here to talk about them, but I will tell you a part that might affect you in the future. Please permit me to speak freely

without consequence, Alpha,” She said, and Bane growled because she was still walking on eggshells around us.

Why would she think there would be consequences? No matter what she does, there will be no consequence. Had she not figured that out? From the onset, I chose to ignore her rudeness and snide remarks.

No one had gotten away with what Aliana had gotten away with. I had found every bit of her stubbornness enjoyable and amusing.

By now, she should know that I was a fool for her. As much as I wanted to tell her, I held my tongue and listened.

“You may speak, but do not refer to me as Alpha again. How can you dare to be formal after everything we shared?” I asked her, and she looked at me with misty eyes.

A look on her face let me know she was hanging on a thread where I was concerned. Did she figure out who my mother was already?

“I am listening,” I said, and she exhaled. “My father told me that on the day of the battle after the death of the late King, the werewolves brought out his pregnant Queen and forced her to kneel in front of the palace.

They wanted to kill her. My father was once the late King’s beta and friend, so it didn’t sit well with him.

Things had gone bad, but he wasn’t willing to allow the King’s lineage to end. The King had already lost his firstborn. A child he had with a woman called Olive. Rumours were that they might have been fated, but she was a werewolf. For the late King to succeed his father as King, she pleaded with him to let her remain his mistress so he could be King. That was why he married the sister of the Snow King.

Olive died giving birth to their child, and the child was stillborn. No one saw the corpse, not even the King, because he was too distraught. His half-brother, Leon, was the one that helped with the funeral.” She said and sighed.

“Knowing that the King had lost a child already, my father did not want his lineage to end, so he disagreed with the werewolves and let the Queen leave with her trusted maids. He would have let her stay to rule because the fight was a huge misunderstanding, but he knew some people were working against the King and werewolves. He also knew the werewolves were too aggrieved to allow her to live, so he had no choice but to send her to where she would be safe.

My father told her to go back to Snow and live with her brother. He promised her that he would keep Forest intact and make sure it remains the way it is so that when her child is

of age, the child can come back and claim what is rightfully theirs,” She said, and I did not know what to say. I had to hold my tongue so she could finish her words.

“If the child is a boy, he will show up in four years when he is thirty-three. My father no longer owns Forest, so it isn’t his to give. It is now yours. If it is a daughter, she might show up soon. I just want you to know that I just found out that the former King’s wife is alive, and she left while pregnant with his child. She is living in Snow with the heir to the throne.

I do not know what is happening to your kingship application, but the Snow King will not support you because his sister’s child is the rightful heir,” She said, and I pulled my hand from hers.

Everything she said was conflicting, but parts of the story were in tune with fragments I learned from King Aleksander and even what Abraham, the former record keeper and now my gamma, said.

I did not know why my mother did not tell me Gabriel set her free and his promise to her. It was easy to believe because the man never spent or did anything in Forest. He treated the place as a keeper and not an owner. It didn’t change the fact that he killed my father.

Whatever the misunderstanding might be, he still killed my father. If people were working against my father and the werewolves in Forest, it was understandable that they would rise against him. However, I could not forgive their crimes still. There were other ways they could have resolved their differences than mutiny.

My mother was all right now, I planned on confronting her with what I had just heard.

“So what do you think I should do if the heir should come?” I asked Aliana, realising she didn’t know my true identity yet. It was understandable because she did not know my last name. They swore their allegiance to me using my first name only.

“I am in no position to tell you what to do,” she replied, and I shook my head.

“If we are going to spend the rest of our lives together, you should learn to suggest your opinions,” I said, composing myself and processing what I had just heard.

“I love you and know you did all this for you and your mother. Now that you two have a home and power, I wouldn’t ask you to give up what you have spent years trying to achieve, and now that your mother is all right, it would be heart wrenching to lose it all.

Still, if an heir should show up, it is his right. My father has failed him by losing and surrendering to you. So, he would be wrong to ask you to give up what you fought for,” She said.

"I do not like war and death, but it might lead to it. He can only get Forest back if he fights you because it is no longer in his family." She said, and that was the truth. "And you will support me if I choose to fight him? Even if your father decides to side with him?" I asked, and she looked at me and nodded.

"I will support my heart, and it lies with you, Nikolas," She said with the utmost sincerity that almost brought tears to my eyes.

"If the heir is a woman. You know the committee might want an alliance by marriage. What would you do then? Would you still want peace?" I asked her, and she bowed her head.

"I know you will be a good King, and my people will be liberated because you are a man of your word, but I will never put you in a difficult situation. I am willing to walk away so you can be happy and give your mother and people the life you promised them," She said with a crack in her voice, and I knew she meant it. The tears I fought diligently finally came, and I blinked to stop them from falling.

I held her hands and asked her to look at me. I knew she was crying; She smelled of salt and tears.

"Aliana," I said and searched her honey-coloured eyes.

"If what your father told you is true, then you have nothing to worry about because I am that heir, and my mother, Isabelle Kowalski, is the queen of the late king," I said, and she gasped. She covered her mouth, and her tears continued flowing.

"He said he sent her to Snow. Was he lying to me?" she asked, connecting the dots immediately.

If my mother were in the Snow, I wouldn't grow up in the wilderness, and she would not have gone feral because her brother would be her Alpha.

"I do not know, Aliana, but she is sane now. I am sure she would tell me her version," I said, and she shook her head.

"We can't be together," she said with fear in her eyes, and I frowned at her.

"You hate my father for a good reason, and your mother hates my father and my kind..." She said, and she became hysterical and afraid. I knew she feared losing me, so I held her to my chest to calm her down.

"I have learned to separate my grudge from the matters of the heart. I have learned to separate you from your father's crimes. You are mine, Aliana Nowak, and I do not plan to let you go. No matter what happens, I plan to keep you by my side.

I know it won't be easy, and many people would kick against it, but we won't let them win, Little Wolf," I said and broke the hug to look into her eyes.

"You need to keep calm while I try to figure things out," I said, and she nodded.

I pulled her close to my chest and took several deep breaths because I knew things would be more complicated than they were. My mother had kept many things from me, and I was worried I might not like what I would find.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 35**

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

### **Chapter 35 Before Lunch (Nikolas POV)**

The whole issue with my mother had destabilized me. I wasn't supposed to feel the way I was feeling. I was supposed to be happy. My joy was supposed to be immense, but I felt more worry than joy.

What Aliana had told me got me thinking.

Gabriel had told her this without even knowing that I was the heir. I wondered what happened and why my uncle would turn my mother away and then deliberately oppose me knowing there was a possibility I was his nephew.

I sat at the foot of the bed, unwilling to step outside. I had planned to spend the entire day with Aliana, but it didn't seem like that would happen now that my mother was

awake. I just dreaded facing her and telling her that I was in love with a werewolf, the daughter of the man she called a traitor, the very man that saved her life. It wasn't comforting.

Since what Aliana said her father told her matched what I had heard, I planned to look into what happened in the past. Had Gabriel allowed the werewolves to finish my mother off, I wouldn't be here, and he would have still held Forest. I owed him my life. Even though he betrayed my father, I owed him my life. He must have regretted his action all these years.

"You look worried. Should I move back to my old room?" Aliana asked me, and I wondered why she would ask such a question. Her words snapped me out of my deep thought, and I looked at her, a bit confused.

"Why would you say that?" I asked her, and she shrugged. I could see the fear in her eyes. I knew in her mind that our relationship had come to an end. I hoped I would be able to prove to her otherwise. She deserved my assurance, and words weren't going to do, but I will try.

"I lived nineteen years without my mother's influence. I have lived without her longer than I know her. She cannot wake up and change my life. I knew what I was getting into when I chose you. Allow me to handle this my way Aliana. Yes, I would want to gradually ease her into our relationship, but I do not plan to beg her for approval," I said and went to the bathroom to shower.

I knew I would have to prove to Aliana with my actions. It was normal for her to feel this way. People still referred to her as a slave and mistress. I have to keep it that way until the deal with the Lycan committee and the Kingship pulls through; then, I can reveal my true intentions to our world. Everything seemed like forever, but I was hanging on. I hope Aliana will keep faith in what we have.

Ania and Lisa finally served us breakfast in my room, and I told them they would no longer serve the Queen, but they should continue attending to Aliana so she isn't idle.

They did not seem happy about the development but were silent, just as they should be.

My mother regaining her sanity will change a lot, some of the changes would be unwanted, but it was necessary. I would use the time to reform her hateful mind to successfully build the world I want to build in Forest without opposition. I was determined to make the werewolves more comfortable and free for Aliana's sake. They deserve a haven, a place they could call home, and this was it.

If my uncle is willing to side with a halfbreed to become King instead of his nephew, my children with Aliana would be good enough. Still, we had to wait a little longer. All these dreams could not be achieved as a rogue prince but as a king.

We finished eating, and I placed the tray outside for Ania to pick up without entering the room.

I returned to sit on the couch beside Aliana. "I think you should find a hobby, something you will love doing, and put your friends to work. There is nothing for you to do, and I would hate to keep you indoors all day doing nothing," I said, and Aliana giggled. It was good to see her laugh. I guess she trusted me. I pulled her close and kissed her shoulder.

"I am glad you are a lot more relaxed now. Just trust me, Little wolf. I do not make false promises," I said, and she nodded and giggled.

The relief in her eyes showed she trusted me. It was a lot of responsibility for someone to look at me the way Aliana was looking at me. Letting her down will not be an option.

I turned on the soft music while we talked about ourselves and the things we liked. I wanted to know her better. I understood her body, I needed to understand her mind, and honestly, I wasn't disappointed.



While we talked, I dreaded having lunch with my mother. The time was drawing near, and it made my stomach churn. I knew I would have to say things to her that might hurt her. I wasn't looking forward to it.

I did not want to face her, at least not yet. I wished I had to go on a trip. It would have been a lot easier, but I had to face her now, whether I liked it or not. Who knows, she might ease into the idea easier than I think.

The time flew by fast, and it was finally time to join my mother for lunch. I decided we would eat in her room to avoid

eavesdroppers and trespassers. The dining room had an open arch instead of a door. We weren't safe from roamers that might end up eavesdropping there.

"I have to join my mother for lunch; I hope that is okay?" I asked Aliana, and she nodded.

"I was surprised you would spend so much time with me, knowing this was all you have wanted for nineteen years. I can't be mad," She said, giggling and getting up to turn off the music.

"I will send Ania and Lisa to keep you company, and you can eat with them. If you get bored, feel free to go strolling or visit your dad if he is home before I return," I said, trying to ensure she did not miss me much because I did not know how long I would be with my mother.

"It's okay, Nikolas," She said and came to k\*iss me where I was seated on the couch. I grabbed her, and she sat on my lap; then, I rested my head on her bosom while she ran her fingers through my hair.

"I will wait for you here," she said softly, and I k\*issed where I lay my head and grabbed onto her tightly. My wolf and I could never get enough. I held her tightly, preparing my mind to fight for what we have.

I got up to leave eventually, and the moment I left the room, my heart began to pound in my chest again. I felt like the little boy in the wilderness, afraid of his feral mother. I did not know why I was feeling this way. I had done nothing wrong but fall in love, so why did I fear guilt? I walked slowly, unwilling to reach my mother's room and face her. My breath was irregular, and my heart

continued to pound in my chest. Though I looked composed outside, I was a complete mess inside. I placed my hand on the doorknob and sighed, bracing myself for what would come.



I knocked, and my mother's voice asked me to come in. It sounded a bit strained, not as strong as I remembered, but it was welcoming. It was an answered prayer, and I appreciated it.

I walked in, and a table with two chairs was already prepared for us. She also looked neat and put together. Her hair was combed and packed neatly in a pony, making her face more pronounced. They even applied some makeup on her. She was dressed well, but I knew Aliana and her friends would have done better.

My mother smiled at me and then scrunched her nose. It was best she got used to the werewolf scent because it wasn't coming off. I might try to get rid of it for my meetings with the kings and maybe the committee to champion my desires, but I wasn't willing to get rid of it for her sake. If she loves me truly, she will accept Aliana wholeheartedly, no matter how deep her grudge is.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 36**

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

### **Chapter 36 Hard Lunch (Nikolas POV)**

"Niko," my mother said, smiling at me and battling her disgust. I went to sit on the second chair at the table.

"I see you look better," I said, trying to make it less awkward.

"Gezel and Erica did a great job. They call me Queen, you know," she said, smiling, and I nodded.

"Were you able to get the kingship?" she asked eagerly, and I sighed and shook my head.

Just then, Gezel and Erica brought our meal.

My mother smiled lovingly at them, and I wondered if she knew the kind of scum they were. I kept them around so they wouldn't divulge my conduct to the people outside Forest and hurt my chances of being King. Otherwise, I would have sent them away.

I was silent until they finished bringing the food. My mother touched Gezel's hand gently and thanked her with a smile before they left. I wondered if she would feel so grateful when she found out that Gezel and Erica were one of the people that underfed her and kept her like a wild animal. I doubt she would be happy.

"How have you been, Niko?" my mother finally asked, and I sighed.

"Fine," I said, and her smile dissipated.

"You can't have been fine, my love," she said, reaching for my hand. You were just ten," she said, and tears began to well in her eyes.

"I failed you. I should have listened to you and returned to our cave. I am sorry, Niko," she said, tears streaming down her cheek. "I wanted you to have meat that day. I knew you liked meat and wanted to get it for you. Please forgive me for being unable to hold on to my sanity long enough," She said, and I patted her hand.

"It is okay, Mother, you are back," I said, and she shook her head.

"I missed nineteen years. It is as if a huge part of my life has been taken from me," she said and began to weep. I rubbed her hand gently to calm her down.

"Why didn't you bury a blade in my heart,

"Niko?" she finally asked me, and I remembered the silver blade she sharpened every fourth night while we were in the woods.

"I couldn't," I confessed, telling her the truth.

"Then you should have left me for the hunters and saved yourself," she said, and I shook my head.

"You told me you didn't want to be left at the mercy of the hunters, and I was hoping the feral episode would be like the others and you would snap out of it in no time," I said, telling her the truth.

"Only that it wasn't, and you had to care for a feral wolf for nineteen years. Moving me about while you tried to accomplish something for yourself. I am sorry," she said, and I continued to rub her hand so she would know it was okay.

"How did you manage to keep me? You were only ten, Niko," she said, realising how it would have been impossible for me to subdue her.

"You came at me, and I ran back to our cave. You chased me there, but I was fortunate to hang the silver chain on your neck, forcing you to change back to your normal form and weakening you; then, I secured you on the tree you normally tied yourself to. We were deep in the forest, so we didn't have hunter issues. I cared for you there until I got my wolf and started building a pack," I said, and she was shocked.

"You are a true Alpha and a true King," she said with respect, and I should feel great about it, but I didn't.

"How did you take it all back?" she asked me, and I sighed and looked at our empty plates, then started to plate the food for both of us.

"It took me five years to build an army and nine years to conquer every part of Forest," I told her, and she was silent.

"Eat, Mother, so our food does not get cold. It is venison," I said, and she nodded slowly with her eyes on me in shock while she absentmindedly picked up her fork.

We ate in silence, and she appreciated the food but ate slowly.

"So, are you king now?" She asked, and something in her eyes revealed that she knew the truth. She must have had a lengthy discussion with Gezel and Erica. I wondered what they might have told her.

"Not yet, King Fredrick is opposing me, but I am working towards it," I said, not giving away that I knew he was her brother.

I saw her grip her fork in anger and squeeze. "That bastard. What did he say his reasons were?" she asked, and I shrugged, still eating my food.

"He said I might be a fraud and that the only heir the Forest King has is living with him. He said he won't support me and he would oppose me in the committee," I said, and she got angry.

"How dare he say such a thing?" she asked, and I shrugged.

"So, what are your plans for getting your birthright?" she asked me, and I shrugged. "I fought for this place. It is my prize, and I plan to claim it in whole," I said, and she shook her head.

"It doesn't work that way. If the leader was a king, then you can just take it, but I doubt the werewolves had a king," She said, and it was clear my mother knew the rules.

"So, I heard," I said, and she nodded.

"What about Aleksander, the coward?" She asked, and I smiled at her.

"He is the only support I have gotten so far but is unwilling to go against the Snow King for my sake," I said, and she growled.

"Typical of the coward. He fears Fredrick," she said, looking away from her plate and muttering obscenities. She was furious.

"So how do you plan to do it then?" She asked, trying to be calm but failing at it.

"Going through the committee," I said, and she shook her head.

"How will you achieve that while breaking the Lycan Unity laws, treating werewolves as if they are our equals and sleeping with the daughter of the man that killed your father?" She said, finally speaking her mind, and I put down my fork and looked at her.

"And what is wrong with that, Mother? What is wrong with treating them with some kindness?" I asked, and she growled at me.

"They can't be trusted. Why walk the same path your father did? Your father trusted them, and look what they did to him; to us," she said, and I nodded.

"Yes, I know, but you left out the part where Gabriel set you free and sent you to your brother so you will be safe," I said, and the shock on her face and the shame that replaced it let me know it was true.

"You left out the part where he told you that you can return when I am of age to claim Forest," I said, and she looked away.

"He might have done that, but he also hunted us," she said, still trying to lie. I did not know if it were to pursue her revenge or out of shame, but it was malicious of her.

"Do not lie to me, Mother. Nineteen years is a long time to dig," I said, and she looked at me with misty eyes, unwilling to speak.

"Those hunters were Fredrick's doing, not Gabriel's," I said, and she shook her head.

"Lies!" she said, and I nodded.

"I will be glad to tell King Aleksander that you called him a liar," I said, and she widened her eyes.

"What did you think, Mother? That Gabriel told me all of this? I haven't even spoken to the man," I told her, and that was true. Other than what Aliana told me out of concern, I had not spoken to him.

"If he did not kill your father, none of this would have happened. We would have been happy; Mathias would have been here. It is all his fault, and you should be ashamed of yourself, Niko. f\*ucking his daughter and keeping him around when both of them should be dead and forgotten just like he killed your father." She said, and I shook my head and looked at her.

"You know nothing about politics, Niko; these wolves would betray you as they did, Mathias," She said.

"So, what do you propose?" I asked her, wanting to know how far she was willing to go, and she nodded with approval and sighed. "Obey the Lycan unity law, and the committee will side with you against Fredrick and his halfbreed heir," she said.

She had just given herself away because I never told her the heir was halfbreed.

"So, you know of him?" I asked her, and she realised she had slipped up.

"Your father did many things, Niko. There is no point soiling his image with things of the past," she said, pushing her plate away.

"But there is a point regarding resolving past issues and killing people for it. Why is your story selective, Mother? It is almost as if what you have against the werewolves has nothing to do with my father because clearly, he loved them too," I said, and she shook her head.

"A halfbreed cannot be king!" She said with anger.

"How is that for you to decide when he had the boy long before he married you?" I asked her, and her eyes widened.

"Gabriel has gone too far with his lies," She said, tears streaming down his face.

"My father married you after his werewolf mate died while giving birth to their son, who was declared a stillborn but has miraculously surfaced. How do you explain that?" I asked her.

"Ask Fredrick how he acquired Mathia's son. I know nothing of it," she said, telling the truth for the first time. I could feel it. She was connected to me now, so I could feel she wasn't lying about this one. It was her truth.

She sighed and looked at me worriedly.

"Still, you should not be mingling with them. It will hurt your chances. What if the council finds out? Your father knew he could not be King with Olive by his side. That was why he never married her.

It was his birthright, Niko. His father had died and passed the Kingship to him, but the committee refused to let him succeed his father because he was involved with a werewolf. If you enjoy this girl's company is all right but do not get serious or show affection now.

I heard you parade her about and even punish your kind for her sake. If word gets out, you can kiss the kingship goodbye," she said, sounding concerned, and I cursed. I decided I would punish Gezel and Erica for running their mouths.

"I do not know who this girl is, but if she is Gabriel's spawn, she can't be trusted," she said with tears in her eyes.

"Gabriel was your father's Beta, his friend, yet he buried a silver sword in his heart," she said in tears.

"I remember it like yesterday. The werewolves carrying your father's body like a trophy and Gabriel holding the sword that smelled of Mathias's blood. His kindness towards me was from guilt and nothing more. Would he have given you Forest if you had returned as Mathias' heir? He wouldn't have. He believes werewolves should have equal rights as us, but how can that be when we are superior? The goddess made it so," she said, and I shook my head.

"If the goddess made it so, then she wouldn't fate werewolves to Lycans. Olive was fated to father," I said, hiding my truth, and she shook her head.

"It was an illusion," she argued.

"How can you know when you were there to observe them?" I asked her, and she bowed her head and sighed.

"Let's say you go on with this, Niko; you can't marry or have her as Queen. The committee will kick against it. It goes against the Unity law. You are likelier to succeed as a single man than a man mated to a werewolf. You will be degrading yourself and ruining your life in the process. If this girl has a conscience or cares, she would walk away, just like Olive did," She told me, and I laughed.

"I am the one holding on tightly, Mother. I am the one holding on tightly," I said, repeating my words, and she began to cry.

"This is all my fault. Had I been there to guide you all these years, none of this would have happened. I need you to listen to me, Niko. You couldn't have fought for all of this, received battle scars, and lost comrades to throw it all away for a woman," she said, pointing at the scar on my left eye. The scar that I was unable to tell her that she gave me.

"You deserve to be King. You deserve it all," she said, and I nodded and looked at my plate.

"I will do it on my terms," I said to her and looked at her.

"What if I am right and Gabriel has evil intentions and might be using his daughter to achieve his evil intentions?" She asked me, and I sighed.

"It is a risk I am willing to take, Mother," I said and looked at her.

"I am glad to have you back, and I love you, but we are not in the forest, and I am not a ten anymore. You do not make the rules around here, and you do not control me. I am alpha and will be King if the goddess wills it. Stay away from Aliana and her father, and

keep your opinions about my relationship to yourself. I will not welcome it, Mother, not even from you. I do not know why you kept many things from me, and you must have your reasons; just as I respect your decisions, you should respect mine.” I said, and her eyes widened.

“As for Gezel and Erica, I will punish them for gossip. They had no business talking about Aliana and my conduct.

I hope I am clear. You owe your health and sanity to that woman.

Gezel and Erica starved and mistreated you while you were in their care. I wished you saw yourself then, Mother. They treated you like a wild animal; none of us knew better. We thought it was the only way. We were counting the days to your death.

You had no hope and future until Aliana came along.

I put her to care for you as punishment, and she offered to nurse you back to health because she could not bear seeing you suffer, and she wanted to make me happy.

She fed you until you regained your health; she watched you and ensured you were cared for. She never missed your care for a day. She read you stories and kept you entertained. You might not remember these things, but I do.

She chose to show your love and care while I showed her father and people hardship and hatred.

So, I warn you, Mother, stay away from her and keep out of my business. You are free to do as you like, do not get me wrong, Mother, but do not meddle in my relationship with the werewolves, and do not bring up revenge when there were other factors in play.

If you care for me, you will focus on getting your brother, who, by the way, is responsible for what happened to us, to sign my coronation request instead of discussing matters that don’t concern you,” I said.

There was hurt in her eyes, but it was necessary. I had a feeling that she would give Aliana hell, and I wanted to prevent that at all costs. Aliana was already suffering at the hand of her kind and might never be liked by them. It would be stupid and weak of me to expose her to hatred from my mother.

I am sure Gezel and Erica did this on purpose; I planned to discipline the two of them mercilessly. I love my mother, but it would be unwise of her to make me choose.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 37**

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

## Chapter 37 Pondering On It (Aliana POV)

The moment Nikolas left the room, I became scared. Who would have thought he was King Mathias' son? His hatred towards my father when he arrived, was understandable.

My heart broke, and I tried to hide it so I do not spoil his mood. It was unfair for a prince to grow up in the wild and watch his mother go feral. I am yet to know how Queen Isabel lost her mind, but going through all that would drive anyone off the edge.

I looked around the room and thought of Forest as an entirety and realised everything was his all along. He never took anything, and the fact that he had to fight for it made me feel like a thief.

It made me feel guilty. I wasn't the one that took it, but I felt that way.

Nikolas must care about me to ease his rage on my people. I could just imagine what was happening in his head when he arrived and saw my father: the man he believed buried a sword in his father's heart, stole his kingdom and banished his mother.

My father was lucky to be alive.

I was fortunate to be alive.

As much as Nikolas told me I had nothing to worry about, I knew I had plenty to worry about.

Queen Isabelle was bound to hate me, and soon he would have to choose because I doubted the woman would let it go.

She was alive when everything happened. She had her version of the truth based on experience; her pain and hatred would be more profound than Nikolas's. I was afraid and didn't know what to do.

Everything was against me. I wasn't only a werewolf but the daughter of the man that ruined their lives. I couldn't tell him what my father said about how his father died, he would think it was because I knew, and he would not believe it. Only the goddess could vindicate my poor father.

I am sure if my father could glimpse into the future, he wouldn't have tried to march the werewolves to the palace to demand freedom, but if he hadn't done that, King Mathias would have wiped us out.

There was no way King Fredrick wouldn't have taken advantage of the slave trade deal. It was for the best but at the expense of Nikolas and his poor mother.



I had held it together throughout my time with Nikolas since he returned from his mother's room in the morning. But now that I was alone, I broke down.

I broke down because I was afraid, and I wasn't willing to let go. I was fooling myself when I believed I could walk away when the time came. I knew deep down I wouldn't be able to do it.

Someone feared, hated and misjudged by my kind loved me wholly and wholeheartedly. No one would ever love me as Nikolas does, and that thought alone made me dread a separation.

Someone knocked on the door, and I did not need to guess who it was. I wiped away my tears and asked Ania and Lisa to enter. They came with two trays of food and a frown. I didn't bother to ask them why they were frowning because I wasn't faring well either. It was best I minded my business so they do not get into mine.

"Aliana, Alpha said we should eat with you and keep you company because he would spend the rest of the day with his mother. Hope you don't mind?" Ania said, and I smiled at her, but Lisa continued frowning. She put the tray on the table and came to look at my face.

"Aliana, are you crying?" She said, and I tried to look away, but she caught it. She gasped immediately, and I wondered what was shocking.

"Alpha ended your relationship?" She asked, and I shook my head. She was the most pessimistic person I had ever known. She frowned, wondering what was the reason for my sadness.

"So, what is the matter?" She asked and sat on a chair at the table. I joined her and Ania at the table to look at the food.

"She doesn't want to share Alpha's attention with his mother," Ania teased, laughing. She easily got over her anger.

"She is missing her man," she continued, but Lisa wasn't buying it.

"The woman is hateful, I would be worried too if I were Aliana," Lisa said, and I looked at her because she was closest to the reason. "Alpha has stopped us from attending to her, so all we are charged with now is hanging with you and doing whatever you like. I can't believe the woman would hate the people that nursed her to health, halfbreed or not, werewolf or not; if Aliana did not step in and we were not diligent, the woman would be dead by now. Gezel and Erica finally got the promotion they wanted. I heard Gezel saying the woman plans to get rid of you and get her son a Lycan bride. For goddess sake, she just got her senses, and I think she would be trouble for everyone. I hate to say this, but I regret everything we did for her," Lisa said, and I gasped. Ania did not do the same; she agreed.

"What?" Lisa said, sounding a bit angry and looking at me.

"Ania was there; she saw how the woman behaved. She was disgusted by our scent alone. You should be worried, Aliana. That woman is not a good person. Feral or not, I think we messed with the mercy of the goddess by nursing her to health," she said, and I covered her mouth.

"The walls have ears, and Lycans have abilities. Watch what you say, please," I said, and she mumbled something, so I immediately removed my hand from her lips.

"You have been warned, Aliana. That woman is no good," She said, and I sighed.

After learning what I learned, Isabelle's hatred was justifiable. I could not fault her for hating werewolves.

"It isn't her fault, you know?" I said, and they both looked at me as if I had lost my mind.

"Are you crazy? That woman is planning on separating you from Alpha. And don't lie about how you feel because we have been there from the beginning. You two are so good together, Aliana; what that woman intends to do is a crime and a sin. Do not justify her intentions," Ania said, sounding slightly annoyed, and I nodded.

"Yes, you are right. I am in love with him. I want things that I should only dream of with him. In fact, I deceive myself daily on the matter, but I have to be honest with myself," I said, and tears began streaming down my cheeks.

As much as I wanted to hang on to Nikolas's words, only time would tell. I do not see him cutting himself off from his mother, and if she fails to see the light, one of us has to go, and it definitely won't be her.

"I am f\*uc\*ked!" I said and covered my face, letting my tears fall.

I couldn't cry like this with Nikolas around because he would say I do not trust him, but I could cry my heart out with Ania and Lisa; they would listen to me and help me unburden my heart.

"I am afraid," I confessed and got up.

I had lost my appetite and did not want to eat anything. I went to the couch, and they followed me.

Nikolas must have permitted them to be free because they sat on the couch with me.

"I am sure Alpha will not let you down, Aliana. You need to see how he looks at you and behaves with you. It is out of his character. He has made many exceptions, for your sake. Your people are safe because he loves you. All he has done to make you happy

cannot go to waste. It will not go to waste, Aliana. One thing I know of this man is that he has a mind of his own and cannot be manipulated. The few times I have seen him handle problems, I have known he can't be easily swayed. You are the first woman he would cling to like this. It has to count for something." Ania said, and Lisa stroked my hair.

"I am sorry I do not have encouraging words to give you like Ania, but what Ania said has to count for something. Alpha cares about you. He might not give you honour and might have taken you from your father to show dominance, but he has been loving and gentle towards you," Lisa said, and I wiped away my tears.

"Yes, I would feel the same way if he wasn't the son of the late King and Isabelle, the former queen," I said, and they gasped and moved away from me immediately.

I could see their dancing eyes doing the math. They understood my fear and could now see it. It was sad.

"Are you sure about what you said?" Ania asked, and I nodded.

"You have an excellent reason to be worried, Aliana. You have every reason to be scared," She confessed, and I knew I wasn't overreacting because Ania was the positive of the two, and that was what she had to say. "So what do you want to do?" Lisa said with a low voice.

"I can't do anything. I just have to wait and see," I said, and she shook her head.

"You have to guard your heart and brace yourself for the worse. Your father killed his father and took over his kingdom. He had to grow up in the wild with his mother until she became feral, while you grew up in his kingdom like a little princess. I am afraid for you, Aliana, because only the goddess knows his true intentions towards you.

Guard your heart and expect to be disappointed so when it happens, you won't be disappointed," Lisa said, and I laughed like a mad woman.

I was laughing at myself.

My heart was racing; fear ran in my veins, but I continued laughing.

Why was everything difficult, and why weren't there easy solutions?

"How can I do that when I have fallen completely in love with him?" I said, and Ania came to sit down and stroked my hair. They felt sorry for me. I felt sorry for myself; my fate was in the hands of the goddess.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 38**

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

### **Chapter 38 A Stroll (Aliana POV)**

We sat quietly on the couch for almost five minutes, processing all that we had discussed. It was a lot.

“What did Alpha tell you after he revealed his identity to you?” Ania said, trying to calm the situation.

“He said he didn’t care about the past,” I said, and she nodded and touched my hands.

“Now listen to me; you have to trust Alpha. He has no reason to lie to you. But you also have to keep away from his mother. Do not allow yourself to be caught in the same space, either. Let us find a hobby and spend more time outside. Do not see her, and do not allow her to see you.

If that happens, then you will be at her mercy.

I do not know if she is a bad person, but she has a bone to pick with your father, and just like Alpha, she might do it through you. She also does not like our kind, so she would not want you with her son. She will try everything she can to make Alpha end the relationship.

You must brace yourself for that part because she might succeed. As things are, your relationship with him is impossible because he wants to be king, but he might have a way to beat it.

This woman might just complicate things,” She said and hugged me.

I let myself cry. I needed to shed tears so I could brace myself for what was to come.

They ate without me. I did not have the appetite to put anything in my mouth. Ania told me I should link her if she is not with me when I get hungry, and she would bring something for me.

After they ate, they decided that we should take a stroll.

I wanted to link Nikolas to inform him, but I did not want to interrupt his time with his mother.

Nineteen years were too long for both of them; he deserved to enjoy his time with her uninterrupted. They had much to catch up on, and I did not want to disturb them.

“Alpha said you will think of a work to do. He said something like a hobby,” Ania said once we stepped outside, and I nodded.

"A hobby means I would have to do it in that building, but as things are, I doubt I want to be in that building all the time. So let us volunteer to work in the werewolf clinic. There we can take care of people for free, and we do not have to be there always like their regular staff; we will need to only come in when I am not with Nikolas. That would keep me away from the palace and out of Queen Isabelle's way," I said, and Ania nodded.

"Well, you are right. After all, we were nursing her; now we can care for others. I like it, but you have to run it by Alpha first. If he approves, we will apply if there is a need," Ania said, and I understand why she was unwilling to jump without Nikolas's approval.

"Should we go to the market? I have little money we can spend there; besides, the Werewolves do not have much, and their stuff isn't expensive, so we will be fine," Lisa said.

Ania lifted my hand to admire the bracelet on my wrist.

"Where did you get this? It is so pretty and professionally crafted," She said, and I looked at it and shook my hand lightly so it would dangle on my wrist. I laughed while I looked at it, remembering when Nikolas put it on my wrist with love and care.

"Alpha gave it to me as a gift from Peakland," I said, and she beamed and touched it gently.

"Real Emerald and Amethyst held together with pure copper. It is a thing of beauty. Alpha has an eye for beautiful things," She said, looking at the bracelet, then turned her attention to me and touched my chin.

"His taste is exquisite," She said right about when we walked past my father's house.

He was yet to be home, so we moved past it. Lisa looked at the bracelet and touched it gently.

"I wished someone would do something this nice for me. It would be romantic," She said with a dreamy voice, and we all giggled.

For someone so pessimistic, she sounded too wistful to be true. Her cheeks were coloured with embracement.

"It is okay to feel, Lisa, I was there a few months ago, and now I am head over heels for Alpha," I said, and we all giggled.

I needed the crying session. It helped me deal with my fear, and now that it was over, I was light and free, ready for the bumpy ride ahead.

I planned to hold on to Nikolas and follow his lead wherever he took us.

“Should we check the market out?” Ania asked.

I looked at the palace, which was far now, and nodded. I doubted Nikolas would be done with his mother by now.

I wouldn't miss him much if I were occupied.

We hopped on a Cycle rickshaw so we could get there faster.

I thought the person riding it was a Lycan until Ania told me he was a halfbreed. I planned on learning how to sense them.

“What part of the market are you going?” He asked.

“Foot Lock, where the werewolves have shops,” Ania said excitedly, and he nodded and cycled.

We sat there with Lisa in the middle and Ania and me at both ends.

While we rode by, I saw people look at me with disgust. It made me look away and stare ahead.

The market wasn't so far, so we arrived in thirty minutes.

Lisa paid the cyclist, and we alighted the vehicle and entered the market.

There were multiple stalls.

Some had food items, while others had objects like clothes, cookware, decorations, costume jewellery, and so on.

Some sold their things on the table, while others laid them on the floor for purchase.

There were some small shops too. It was organised, and there were people buying things at every point. I noticed that people moved away every time we passed them; I wanted to believe it was because of me, but I ignored them and moved on.

“See that scarf shop; let's buy something there,” Lisa said, hurrying ahead of Ania and me. A few followed behind and stood in front of the shop.

The seller came out right when I touched the yellow scarf that caught my eye. She yanked it from me.

“Do not touch my things with your filthy hand,” she sneered at me, and I frowned. I smelled the air; I knew she was a werewolf, so where was this hostility coming from?

"Hey, don't speak to her like that," Ania said, coming to my defence.

"She shouldn't touch my things with her Lycan filth. She reeks of it," she said and spat on the ground as if I was making her nauseous.

"You should be ashamed of yourself, Aliana. Your mother will be rolling in her grave. Sleeping with the monster that stole our home and enslaved us. Look around you!" she yelled.

"Look what they have reduced us to, We are nothing but filth to these people, and you dare to come here. You should be ashamed of yourself," She said, and people began to gather, and they seemed to agree with her. "She follows him about. Who would have thought she had a w\*hor\*e in her?" I heard someone say.

"When he finally dumps you because he will, I hope you do not expect any of our brothers or sons to settle with you," someone said, and Ania began to growl.

"You ungrateful wretches. Aliana is the reason you can buy and sell. She is the reason you are earning wages and have some freedom. You should be grateful to her. She has sacrificed herself and happiness for your kind..." She said, and someone shut her up.

"Enough! Had her father not killed the king, the savages won't be upon us," someone said.

"And the King would have sold you all as slaves to the Forest King. Was it not your men that met my father and begged him to liberate them? My father had no qualms with the king, but he sided with them against the king for your sake, and now you spill nonsense," I growled, and they were silent.

"No one is forcing you to remain in Forest. If you feel Alpha Nikolas is too much of a savage to lead you, go to the forest and surrender to the snow hunters. I learned snow Hunters are looking for slaves," I said, and they began to throw things at me.

"I am not ashamed of myself!" I yelled at them, and they stopped.

"Since you all see this as suffering. I will be happy to convey your feelings to the Alpha so you won't have the need to buy and sell anything again, and all privileges you claim you do not need will be revoked," I yelled, and they were silent.

"That is right. Aliana should just tell Alpha there is no need for him to show her kindness by being lenient on her people; he should treat all of you as the other two kings treat werewolves. I am sure you will all be happy," Lisa said, and they remained silent.

"My father became the enemy to buy you all twenty-nine years of freedom. How many werewolves in other regions can boast of the same? Alpha Nikolas is kind to all of you because of me. How many werewolves in other regions can boast of the privileges you



have? I am not hoping your sons or brothers will fancy me when all this is over because I doubt they can ever meet up to the standards the Alpha has set. But I will advise you to watch yourselves around me and my father. The only reason we surrendered was so none of you would die, but the day you make us realise it isn't worth it, you will all be at the mercy of the lycans," I warned them, and most of them began to walk away out of fear.

I thought they were tough and just looking for someone to pick on. I snatched the yellow scarf from the woman and smelled it. Then threw it back at her.

"Not my taste. It reeks of your filth," I said, and she was terrified. I wondered what they were thinking, trying to mess with me the way they were. I wasn't an easygoing person, so they should have known better. I guess they chose to vent to the wrong person.

"Should we leave?" Ania asked, and I shook my head.

"We came to the market; we will buy something," I said, moving along.

We branched several shops, and they were a contrast to the scarf lady and the crowd that gathered around us.

They were kind and respectful towards me. Most of them gave me things and thanked me.

That was when I realised that the scarf woman and the street she sold on consisted of werewolves from Woodland, Oakspring, Timber, and other parts of Forest.

In contrast, the place where they were nice to me consisted of the people from Riverhead, my people. They had words of encouragement for me.

A young blacksmith told me he would marry and care for me when Nikolas dumped me. He said he didn't care that Nikolas marked me with his scent.

He appreciates all that Nikolas has done for them because of me and told me to remember his promise. His name was Oliver Greenford. He was a handsome man, about twenty-five, and he looked like he meant every word. I knew there would be no need because I trusted Nikolas, and I was hopeful. But if it all ended, I planned to never replace him.

We had a wonderful time.

I ate some street food, and when it was almost sunset, we got on a Cycle Rickshaw and headed back to the palace.

I hoped I had not overstayed.



We arrived when it was dark. I walked past my father's house and saw he was home, but there was no way I could go in to see him.

It would have to wait until Saturday when I was authorised to see him. The three of us hurried into the palace.

I was heading up the stairs when I heard Gezel announce that the queen was passing.

I looked for a hiding place, but it was too late because the woman had seen me.

Our eyes locked briefly, and I immediately bowed my head.

"Is that the w\*hor\*e?" She asked Gezel, and I heard Gezel answer her.

"Yes, your majesty," I wanted to laugh, but I held my tongue.

The illusion of the woman being a queen was hilarious. She was technically a nobody until Nikolas officially becomes king, but Gezel was willing to massage her ego.

I heard her approaching, and her scent became strong, and soon I saw her feet before me.

"Kneel slave," She said with rage and contempt, and I knew I was the one she was talking to.

"The three of you! Now!" she yelled, and I knelt. I did not want to be seen disobeying the 'queen.'

She lifted my chin and looked at my face. There was rage in her eyes. I believed she was reliving her past.

"You might have charmed my son with your looks and fake affection, but I will expose you for what you are. I will have you out of his life in no time. My son will not fall as his father did," She said and raised her hand to slap me when I heard someone growl at the staircase. It wasn't Nikolas.

"With all due respect, you are not allowed to do that, your Majesty. Aliana answers only to Alpha Nikolas. If you have a problem with her, I advise you to take it up with your son," I heard Qusack's voice say, and I looked in the direction of the voice. He was looking at me.

"The three of you should return to your rooms," he said, and I saw the woman ball her fist in anger while we all stood up.

I looked at Gezel, fighting the urge to smile, and she looked scared; she knew I would report her to Nikolas, and the punishment that would follow would be severe.

"I am watching you, Nowak," Isabelle said, and I regretted helping the woman. She did not seem like a good person at all.

I hurried up the stairs and entered Nikolas's room. He was going through a letter whilst sitting on the couch. He put it down, looked at me, and smiled.

"Had fun?" He asked me, and I went to him.

I tried to k\*iss him on his forehead, and he drew me to sit on his lap and then k\*issed me passionately on the lips.

"I am glad you had fun," He said, breaking the k\*iss, and I giggled.

Ania knocked and brought the bags of the things I got from the market and left immediately. Her cheeks were coloured, and I knew why.

"You went shopping?" Nikolas asked me. I bobbed my head slowly.

"Lisa had some money and said we should check out the market, so we went. Most of the things were given to me by the traders as gifts," I said, and he smiled.

"Next time, take money from the dresser. Do not go out empty-handed again," he said, and I nodded.

"Also, when next you have a run-in with my mother, disobey and link me immediately. Qusack told me what she did. I won't tolerate it. I want you to be at peace, but on no account should you ever kneel again. Greet her and move along; if she has issues, tell her to take it up with Qusack or me. I know what she is trying to do.

Do not worry, Little wolf," he said, and I was surprised he would side with me that easily. Maybe it won't be a bumpy ride after all.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 39**

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

### **Chapter 39 Catching and Drawing Lines (Nikolas POV)**

After lunch with my mother, we spent time catching up on events that she missed. She was genuinely grateful that I kept her, and she kept expressing her gratitude repeatedly. She did not spoil our time by bringing up the werewolves or Gabriel, but one thing she was hell-bent on was that I shouldn't give up on the kingship.

"I will get my brother to sign it. He owes us that much," She said, and I stopped smiling to ask her a very serious question about her brother now that it seemed she was comfortable discussing him.

“Why did he turn you away?” I asked her; I needed to understand the reason Fredrick would be so cruel to do such a thing. Had he been kind to his sister, we would have lived well, and I could have easily returned to claim to the kingship.

“Our relationship is complicated, Niko. Fredrick never liked Mathias and did not like me marrying him instead of Aleksander. It’s a very long story, one which I do not want to talk about,” She said with misty eyes.

“So he let you rot in the woods and sent his goons after you because he disagreed with your choice? I believe it is more than that, Mother, but I will let you talk about it when you are most comfortable,” I said, ending the topic. She was uncomfortable, and there was a sign of gratitude in her eyes that I was dropping the topic.

“So, would we be throwing a glad-you-are- back party for me?” she asked with a glow in her eyes.

“Your father threw parties for everything,” She added, sounding nostalgic, and I smiled at her. It was a subtle blackmail, and she knew I figured it out.

“You can do as you like, mother. Just let your maids know what you need, and they will handle it for you?” I said, and she beamed. There was silence for a few seconds. It was as if she had another request but was uncomfortable asking.

Her eyes looked unsure. I could see she wanted to ask for something but was worried about my reaction.

“You know the worst I can do is say no, so just ask,” I said, and she smiled at me.

“If I am throwing the party. Erica and Gezel might be unable to handle it alone. I do not mind the slaves helping out. I mean the werewolf and half-breeds. They can’t be roaming about idle. Gezel said I was their only charge, and now that I no longer require their service, they can put themselves to good use,” she said, and I controlled my temper by exhaling.

I reached for my mother’s hand over the table and stroked it gently.

“You are my mother, and even though I have missed you for nineteen years, I still love you dearly, but I will advise you not to push me, Mother,” I said gently, and she was worried. My words had made her uncomfortable, but it was necessary. I was never a nice guy. I believed Aliana had softened me a bit, but I needed to show my mother I couldn’t be manipulated.

“To you, Aliana, Ania and Lisa are off limits. They have no business being near you or interacting with you. You made that clear the moment you regained your sanity this morning.

I do not have the time to deal with malice and complaints, so I advise you to use people you are most comfortable with. I am sure there are many lycan women that would love to help you," I managed as nicely as I could, and she pulled her hand away from mine.

"Whose malice? Mine?" she asked, and I pinched my nose bridge from frustration.

"All I asked was to keep them busy. I know what you do with that werewolf, so do not make it seem like you are trying to avoid conflict," she said, and I stood up.

"What I do in my bedroom is no one's business, not even you, Mother. Let this be the last time you will bring this up. I have told you my decision. Have your party and do what you must without Aliana and her friends. I hope I am clear," I said, and she looked sad.

"Where are you going?" She asked me, and I sighed.

"It is four in the evening; I have matters to attend to. I will see you when I am free, which might be tomorrow. In the meantime, find something fun to do," I said and went to kiss her head.

She wanted to protest but stopped last minute, and I quickly walked out of the place.

I knew she would leave the common room and head to her room since our catching-up time was over.

We strolled there after lunch and ended up sitting there to discuss things. It would have been fun if she wasn't emphasising how the werewolves betrayed my father. I did not know what else she wanted.

I had conquered Forest, and it was in my control. I had humiliated Gabriel and dishonoured poor Aliana in the name of revenge. I had enslaved the people and taken their freedom. I had punished them severely. What more did she want?

Many werewolves died during my conquest; that should mean a lot. My mother's expectations were unfair and wicked. She needed to be merciful because I had already taken everything from them and belittled them completely. There was nothing worse than what I had done to the werewolves. I could not slaughter the rest of them to please her, nor let go of the woman I love and eliminate her father and her just to please my mother. My mother needed to change her mindset and accept that it would always be like this now.

I wasn't King because of her brother and whatever grudge they had between them.

I was determined to meet this Miles guy. If he is my half-brother, I must understand him and determine whether he is a threat. I doubt anyone raised by Fredrick would not be a threat, but I intend to give him the benefit of the doubt.

I walked away quickly and returned to my room, hoping Aliana would be there, but the room was empty, and the surfaces were cold. I knew it had been a long time since she left. I tried to link her, hoping she was with her father, but I did not hear anything.

I was so worried that I linked a Kappa werewolf to help me trace her. I wouldn't be paranoid if I did not know that most Forest residents hated her and only a few cared for her. I did not want her to be lynched for sleeping with their enemy.

When I took her from her father, I knew this would happen to her. I wouldn't have dared it if I had known I would give in to our bond. I had ruined many things for Aliana, and if I did not do right by her, her life would never be great. Her only crime was that she was Gabriel's daughter.

The Kappa eventually told me they were at Footlock Market, so I told him to go and keep an eye on her. He was to report everything when he returned.

I sat on the couch, raking my head on how to manage the situation. Pretending that all that was between Aliana and me was just s\*ex had become extremely difficult, but I dared not slip up, knowing Fredrick had spies in Forest.

I hoped Aliana could hold on a little longer just so I get my coronation approved. Once I become King, I will cancel the Lycan unity law in Forest and make Aliana my queen. I just need her to pretend a little longer.

"Alpha, two letters arrive. One is from Prince Piotr, and the other is from King Fredrick," I heard Qusacksay, and I wondered why Fredrick would send me two letters in a row.

His last letter was arrogant, and it drew a line between us. I wondered what he had to say this time around.

I slipped on something comfortable and headed to my office.

Qusack was the only one there, and when I asked him of Grant and Abrahams's whereabouts, he said my mother had sent them on errands.

I did not appreciate it at all.

These were my officers, she could have sent anyone, but she chose to send them. I did not like that. I suspected she still believed she was a queen. I might have given her the title as honorary, but I believed the sooner I stripped her of the title, the sooner she would face reality and act accordingly.

I could not trust her with power yet. Her malice and rage had blinded her, and it was destructive. I spent a lot of time gathering this for me to allow her to crumble what I have built because she is hurt.

My Officers were off-limits too.

I opened Piotr's letter, and he told me he would visit in two weeks. He had meant it when he told me in Peakland he would visit me. This was the proof. I immediately wrote a reply to inform him that he was most welcome.

After placing my seal on the letter, I realised that we would have to pretend about how we treat werewolves in Forest. I was yet to understand Hill's stance on the matter, so I needed to choose the safest option.

"I need you to call an assembly and instruct the werewolves to pretend life is h\*ard for them here whenever we have visitors. They will only need to do that until I am King, but I will require their full cooperation," I told Qusack, and he nodded and told me he would handle it right away.

We had both agreed to relax the laws in Forest, and it had paid off. The werewolves worked better, and there was no resistance. No one was trying to leave anymore. A little kindness did go a long way.

I picked up Fredrick's letter to read.

Knowing there was a possibility the content might be vile, I took a d\*EEP breath and exhaled before breaking the seal that held the letter.

"Nikolas, I see you have grown some balls.

Hunting in Snow without my permission can be seen as treason. Kindly recall your men, and I will let this go; failure would lead to other severe and dangerous actions.

You have been warned," It read, and I started laughing.

I had gotten the reaction I wanted.

I handed the letter to Qusack, and he laughed too. We had gotten the reply we had anticipated. So I took out a pen and prepared to respond to him.

"Your Majesty, with all due respect, I received your letter and am surprised at your words. I complained to you several months ago that your hunters were hunting i n my woods without my permission.

Nothing was done about it. You never responded, nor did you fix this problem. See this letter as an open invitation so we can sit and settle our differences. I will be waiting for your response. Thank you," I wrote and sealed it. Then asked Qusack to expedite the sending.

Qusack and I talked about many things. My mother was part of his concern, and he didn't hide it at all.

"The woman seems to loathe werewolves. How would you manage with Aliana because I know you are crazy about her," Qusack said, knowing my inner feelings.

"I am crazy about her. I can't even lie about that now, but she knows we should pretend to be master and slave until the time is right. I just need to get this kingship, and then I will do what I want. It is no longer about my feelings. If I want Aliana to be truly happy, I have to liberate her people to ensure that," I told Qusack, and he agreed.

"I am the only one that knows how you truly feel about her; I will keep it a secret so it does not spread and be used against your goals," He said, and I thanked him.

"But, you will have to protect Aliana from your mother. She is a bit unnecessarily vicious for someone that just regained her mind. Instead of trying to catch up, she is trying to relive an old grudge and is unapologetic about it. It's only been less than a day, Niko. You need to be careful so she does not hurt your chances of being King and Aliana or chase Aliana and her father away," he said, also noticing the palpable hatred my mother felt towards Aliana.

Qusack promised to help me watch out for her when he could, but I would have to find time to address the problem.

I returned to my room to study some law documents while I waited for Aliana to return.

Two hours later, the Kappa I sent linked me to inform me about what had happened at that market and to tell me Aliana had returned.

His story made me laugh, and I wanted to see if she would tell me all that had happened.

I was still laughing when Qusack linked me to inform me about what happened between Aliana and my mother, and I was glad he was there to stop her. I knew I would have to publicly draw the line so my mother would know her limits.

I remained seated, knowing Aliana would walk through the door anytime soon, and she did exactly as expected. She entered the room and said nothing about her encounter with my mother. She came to me.

Pulling her close and having her sit on my lap made me relax. I knew I would never get enough of her. She was made especially for me. There was no doubting it, and I was determined to make it work.

## **Forged In The Flames Chapter 40**



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

### **Chapter 40 Clear Lines**

#### **Nikolas POV.**

Aliana and I had dinner together while she told me about her adventure in the market. It matched most of what the Kappa had said.

I was very pissed off with the FootLock traders, and I planned to withdraw their privileges the next day. They would know better than to disrespect Aliana next time. Their actions had just further proven that my mother was right about them.

They were supposed to see Aliana as their hero. They were supposed to shower her with love and gratitude. Instead, they acted stupidly towards her.

I was grateful that Aliana wasn't a pushover and that she could stand her ground against the stupid market werewolves.

"Have you thought of a hobby?" I finally asked her, and she nodded.

"We plan to volunteer at the werewolf clinic to help the sick," She said, and I paused to study her. I had instructed her to find a hobby and not a job. Why would she want to stress herself?

"Why would you choose something stressful?" I asked her, and she smiled at me. "It isn't. I do not want to sit idle, waiting for you to return. If I find a hobby, like reading, knitting, quilting, or pottery, I will still miss you. I need something that would occupy me mentally and physically," she said and got up. She cleared the table, placed the food tray outside, and locked the door.

We showered together, and I took her in the shower. After a very stress-filled and eventful day, love was enough to help me relax and appreciate what I had.

Aliana responded to my touch beautifully, and I knew I could never give it up. There was nowhere in my world I would find love as good as I had with Aliana. Secret or not, what we had was unique.

We returned to the room to continue our fun when my mother tried to link me; I blocked the mind link immediately.

She should know she had no business linking me at the time she was linking me.

Whatever she had to discuss with me would be addressed the next day. The rest of the night was for Aliana.



It had been a long time since I tasted Aliana, so I went between her legs to show her how willing I was to please her. She ran her

f\*ingers through my hair, twisting in bed, feeling every bit of the pleasure I gave her. I placed my f\*ingers in her, and I felt her p\*uss\*y walls squeezing it. My c\*oc\*k was h\*ard, and wanting to get inside her badly, but I controlled myself.

I felt her come, and I looked into her eyes. There was love and Lust in them, which

mirrored what I felt. Staring d\*eeep into her eyes, I pumped my f\*ingers into her. I wanted to see what my love did to her. She tried to look away, but I made her look at me.

“Nikolas,” She moaned, edging closer to another release just how I wanted it. I increased the pace of my f\*ingers, and I felt her p\*uss\*y clench violently. I stopped because I wanted to delay her orgasm.

She became impatient, and I picked up the pace again.

“Will your blacksmith suitor Love you like I am doing right now, Little Wolf?” I asked, and she widened her eyes with surprise. I could see the fear and pleasure in her eyes.

Two conflicting emotions made her body run wild. The Kappa I sent reported most of the things that happened at the market, especially the Blacksmith that promised to be there when I dumped her. She had left that part out when narrating her story to me. He had better move along because Aliana would never be free.

“Answer me, Little wolf,” I said, increasing my pace and edging her to release; she said no and came with her words.

I turned her around and drove my c\*oc\*k into her w\*et p\*uss\*y. It was clenching uncontrollably and ready for me; I smacked her lightly and could tell she liked it from her response. I rammed into her and soon held her at a forty-five-degree angle and rammed into her.

I kneaded her b\*reas\*ts gently and caressed her n\*ipp\*les while I continued. I knew we were loud, but we could not help it. The pleasure was intense and very strong, and I liked it. I felt an unusual high, and I battled Bane from claiming Aliana.

I felt her c\*limax, and I couldn’t hold mine anymore. I p\*oured into her, but I wasn’t done,” She fell face flat on the bed, making me chuckle.

“Tired already, Little wolf?” I asked her, and she mumbled something incoherent.

“Next time you see your smith friend, let him know whom you will always belong to,” I said, laughing at my pettiness at the same time.

I realised that I had changed. Usually, I would have dealt with the Blacksmith, but I found his show of care funny. I noticed that I had let a lot of things go recently. Was this what love did to people? I do not regret it. If anything, I wanted more of the feeling. My life had never been so carefree and easy as it had been lately. There was a joy that came with my relationship with Aliana that erased every negative and helped me focus on the positive alone.

I pulled her into my arms, and she placed her head on my chest. She fell asleep immediately, and I heard her snore slightly for the first time. So I adjusted her body so she could breathe better.

I knew waking her up for more would be inconsiderate, seeing that she was exhausted. So I let it go and allowed myself to fall asleep too. Tomorrow is another day, and the other days after then.

I made love to Aliana before we got ready for the day.

I left my office after breakfast and instructed Ania and Lisa to remain by

Aliana's side. I did not trust my mother's intentions towards her, so I decided to keep an eye on Aliana to ensure my mother didn't do something that would hurt me.

I found Qusack and Abraham in my office. Grant was yet to resume, and he said he was on his way when I linked him.

Qusack planned to address the werewolves on how to behave when we have guests that morning. I knew it was a difficult conversation, but it would help hinder the Snow King from proving that I was breaking the unity law.

My stance toward the Unity law was to remain unknown before my coronation was approved and carried out. If not, all those favouring the Unity Law would be against my kingship, and King Fredrick was in the middle.

We discussed Fredrick's latest letter, which I responded to but had not received a reply. Due to the distance, I was sure to receive a reply the next day or the day after that. He might as well ignore it and carry out his threats. We were unsure.

We agreed that we might have to train werewolves since our war with them depleted their military force, but we were also afraid of doing it because we did not want to empower them to stage an uprising.

They were capable of doing it. They had done it in the past. Nothing could stop them from doing it again. So it was best we observe them and select trainees based on our observations.

They all left me to handle their duties.

Qusack and Grant went to address the werewolves and planned to visit the woodland, Military tower construction after.

I instructed Abraham to look into the trade business and see how to set up direct trade with Hill territory, just as I had promised King Aleksander. Abraham left me and headed to the library while I reviewed files and documents.

My mother strolled into my office an hour later, and the look on her face showed she was displeased.

She wore a simple floral kaftan and sat on my couch.

"You did not have dinner with me last night," she began, and I put down my pen and looked at her.

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

"I am glad you still have your manners, son," she said, and I chose not to be offended by her words.

"You didn't come for dinner, and you shut me out when I tried to link you," She complained, and I sighed.

"I eat dinner in my room with Aliana. I do not plan to break that routine. Unless there is an attack, you have no business linking me at eleven at night. I am a grown man, mother," I said, and she nodded.

"I am sorry," she said and stood up. She approached my table.

"I know I do not have the right to say anything. You practically raised yourself, Niko, but it wasn't my fault. I did not throw away my sanity deliberately," she said with tears.

"You do not know how I feel knowing I missed nineteen years of your life. That is nineteen sweet years I can never get back. It hurts me. Now that I am here, I just want to ensure you do not make mistakes that would cost you and your survival." She said and placed her hands on the desk while standing before it.

"You might call me paranoid, but I would be damned if I sit and let those werewolves do to you what they did to your father," She said, wiping away her tears.

"You weren't there, Niko," she said, discussing the werewolves and their dangers again.

"And I am watching my back," I said, and she sighed.

"Qusack stopped me from reprimanding her yesterday in the presence of everyone, Niko. He belittled me, and he said it was on your orders," She said, and I sighed.

"You were not trying to reprimand her mother; you were trying to bully her because you could," I said, and she frowned. "Is that all you can pick from what I said?" She asked, and I nodded.

"Tell me what she did to you that made you ask her to kneel and want to slap her," I asked, tears streaming down her face.

"Her father k\*illed my mate. I am alone because of them," she said in tears, and I realised why her pain was d\*eeep.

"But that wasn't Aliana's fault," I said, and she shook her head.

"I can't like her, Niko. I can't tolerate her knowing who her father is," She confessed to me, returned to sit on the chair, and wept.

"You can and you will. I need you to make m y life easier; Please try. I do not expect you to like her, just ignore her for now," I pleaded, and she got up.

"I can never like that s\*lut. When you become King, She would have no choice but to move on," She said, and I knew what she was planning.

"That is motivation enough for me to help you, Niko," She said, and I smiled at her. She hoped my kingship would leave me no choice but to end my relationship with

Aliana. She was right if I were a coward, but I planned to surprise everyone in that regard. 2 "There is a community meeting coming soon. I want you to come with me and identify me as your son and Mathia's son. I need to debunk whatever story Frered\*ic\*k wants to tell," I said genuinely, asking for her help, and she smiled.

"How can I say no to you," She asked and smiled.

"I will follow you to that meeting and face the bastard," She said with rage that I knew the enmity between them ran d\*eeep.

I just hoped my ambitions won't be caught i n the middle of it.

It wasn't long after my mother left that Gabriel linked me. He informed me that Snow hunters were advancing into Riverhead to attack and take slaves. I was mad and ready to teach them a lesson. My home and people weren't free for all.