

BLOOD PURPLE



"I'm not just a princess, I am a warrior"

ASHLEY NEMER

BLOOD PURPLE
Book One of the Blood Series

Ashley Nemer

BLOOD PURPLE
Book ONE of the Blood Series

Copyright © 2013 by Ashley Nemer

Cover design: Tracey Weston

Book Design: Ashley Nemer

Editor: Katia Vodin

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced except small excerpts for review purposes without the expressed written consent of the author. This includes any reproductions by forms including but not limited to electronic and mechanical.

All characters inside this book are works of fiction from the author and any resemblance to a real person is purely coincidental.

ISBN-13: 978-0615798486

ISBN-10: 0615798489

*A product of the
Art of Safkhet
Published July 2013*

Authors Note

Thank you all for purchasing Blood Purple. My world is something that means a lot to me, and to share it with you brings me more pleasure than you could know. This book came to formation with the help of a few individuals. Their love, support and input helped create these amazing characters. Thank you for everything! Tony, you are my rock. Laura, you have always helped support me, and I'm thankful you are my sister. Ann, you were always there to give me guidance and medical knowledge; without you I don't know that Nikole would have been able to survive, haha. Teri, it's because of you this dream came to life and though you I found my inspiration. Aunt Pam, you were the best cheerleader I could have. You five made everything possible. I want to say a special thanks to Mahmoud Sanjak who helped with the authenticity of the Arabic Script in this novel. You all are truly amazing!

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the men in my family. Each of them has helped shape part of me and who I have become. Specifically, this book is to my loving father and amazing husband, two men whom I could never live without.

Table of Contents

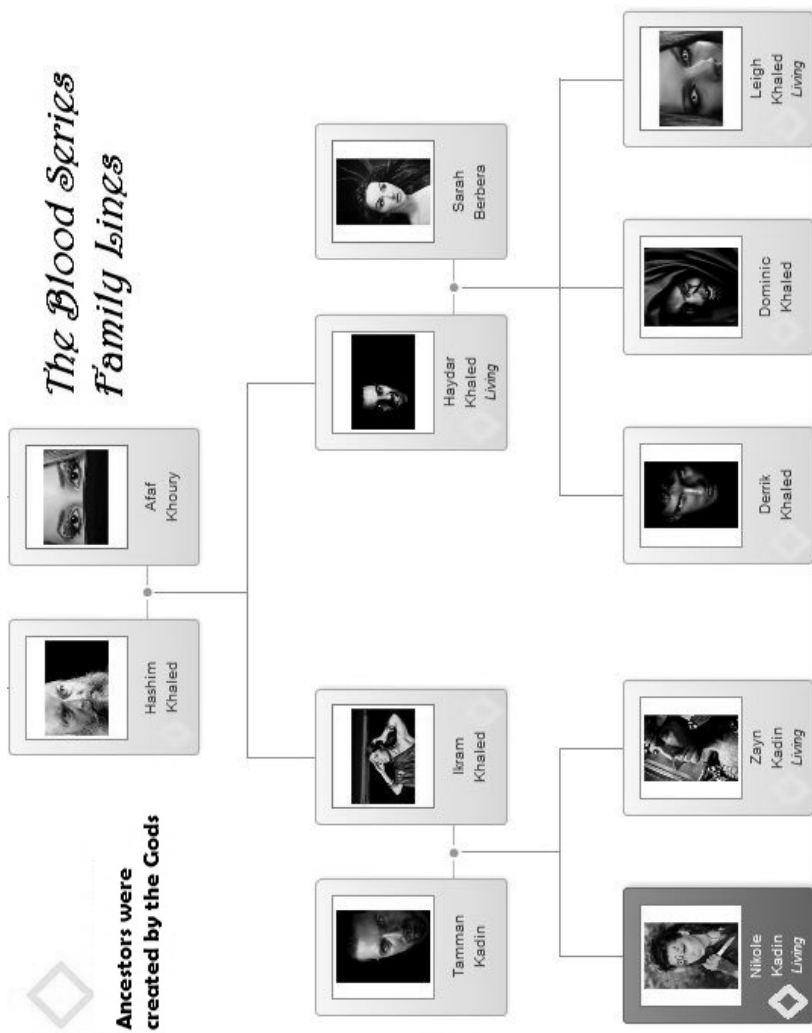
IN THE BEGINNING.....	1
PROLOGUE	5
CHAPTER ONE	8
CHAPTER TWO	21
CHAPTER THREE.....	26
CHAPTER FOUR	29
CHAPTER FIVE	33
CHAPTER SIX	36
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	39
CHAPTER EIGHT	44
CHAPTER NINE	50
CHAPTER TEN.....	54
CHAPTER ELEVEN	59
CHAPTER TWELVE	63
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	66
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	70
CHAPTER FIFTEEN	74
CHAPTER SIXTEEN	78
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.....	81
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN	83
CHAPTER NINETEEN.....	87
CHAPTER TWENTY.....	91
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE	95
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO	100

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE.....	103
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR.....	107
CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE.....	111
CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX.....	115
CHAPTER TWENY-SEVEN	119
CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT.....	124
CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE	128
CHAPTER THIRTY	132
CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE.....	136
Glossary of Terms, Characters, and Historical Events or Locations	141



**Ancestors were
created by the Gods**

The Blood Series Family Lines



ARABIC TRANSLATIONS
USED INSIDE OF THE TEXT

Abb- The formal use of the word 'father'
Baba - The informal use of the word 'dad'
Omm - The formal use of the word 'mother'
Mama - The informal use of the word 'mom'
Gedi – Grandfather
Siti – Grandmother
Ebn' – Son
Bent- Daughter
Hafeeda –Granddaughter
Hafeed -Grandson
Akh – Brother
Okht – Sister
Amm – Uncle
Amma - Aunt
Bent Amm – Niece on Father Side
Ebn' Amm - Nephew on Fathers Side
Bent Amma - Niece on Mothers Side
Ebn' Amma - Nephew on Mothers Side
Bent Amty - Female cousin from fathers side
Eben Amty - Male cousin from fathers side
Shebeen – Godfather
Shebeena-Godmother

IN THE BEGINNING

Everyone assumed the war in the Middle East was fought over oil and power, but only one of those assumptions is correct. Behind every powerful figure there is someone pulling the strings, someone forcing a hidden agenda. The Middle East is no different. That is where everything started. Long before the monarchs of Europe and the pharaohs of Egypt, Christ and Moses, there lived the Algula.

The Algula are a vampire race that went undetected by humans for thousands of years. Created by Gods they were built to be bigger and stronger than humans, however they were not indestructible. The Algula experienced unnaturally long lifespans but were not immortal beings. When they went up against each other in battle they were as vulnerable as humans are against one another. Most of the Algula Ghul warriors didn't live to see old age, rather they died in battle.

Their king was powerful and knew no equal. Being the strongest meant no one would challenge him or question his rule. These were the times of calmness, when humans were safe. Hashim, the destroyer of evil, ruled his people with a firm hand and harsh punishment. He kept the peace of his subjects while keeping the humans oblivious to their existence and power.

He was married to Queen Afaf, whose name meant "one who is pure and loving." The Algula cherished their royal family; their service to their people was unquestioned and unfaltering. Queen Afaf bore King Hashim twins, an ebn` and a bent. Fertility wasn't something the Algula had luck with. It was dangerous for them; the survival rate for a mother and her young was about thirty percent. Some believed having twins was a sign from the Gods, agreeing with the way the Algula were living their lives.

There was a prophecy once told, that the end of their existence would come from two powers at war, the animal and the hunter. Some Algula historians say the two powers were related, others say they were nemeses. No one knows for sure, the translation having been lost with the generational transfer of stories and the loss of their dialect.

Hashim's ebn', Haydar, had the spirit of a lion; it was somewhat fitting that his name meant "King of the forest and ruler of all." He was headstrong and ruthless, with no self-control. Haydar was careless with his actions and that was what worried Hashim the most about turning his people over to him. He was afraid if he left his ebn' in control, wars would start out of jealousy and greed. Haydar's quick temper got him into fights with those he was around on a daily basis. Hashim tried teaching him to hold his tongue, but the lessons never took, always ending in a fight.

Hashim's bent, Ikram, was known for her generosity and hospitality. She was always sacrificing for the Algula people and made sure they had what they needed for survival. King Hashim elected to pass the throne to her and thus the start of the royal rivalry. Ikram and Haydar would forever be enemies and so would their descendants. While the human population based their history on the two rival houses of Ishmael and Isaac, the Algula based theirs on Ikram and Haydar. Everyone had to pick a side; they just prayed they picked the right one.

King Hashim ruled the Algula for 4,500 years, during this time there were few wars. The humans continued to fight among each other, but the Algula allowed them to live in relative peace, free from their influences. On the night of King Hashim's death, Ikram was crowned Queen and given Hashim's people to protect and lead. Feeling slighted, Haydar vanished into the night, not caring what happened to his family. While the change of power occurred, the humans were experiencing a rush of Maronites into the present country of Lebanon. After the revolutions started in the Middle East, it is said that Haydar escaped to England. The remaining Algula stayed in the mountains, away from the influx of humans.

Present day Zahle, Lebanon is where King Hashim's body was laid to rest. Queen Ikram showed hospitality toward these human Maronites and decided they could help the Algula progress. The peace of the two races lasted just over 100 years, flourishing until

BLOOD PURPLE

around 636 A.D. The humans had a war among themselves. The Muslims and Christians fought to the death, killing each other and destroying the land. Word got back to Queen Ikram that her akh, Haydar, and his generals were behind the wars, pressuring the humans to fight by corrupting their weak minds and natures, turning them against one another. Queen Ikram sent her Ghul mercenaries out in search of her twin. Their orders were to bring him back alive.

They pursued all possible sightings, looking for Haydar for nearly 1000 years; he was always one step ahead. His keen vision of war helped him lead the humans to numerous victories, taking over different cities and invading country after country. He enjoyed leaving blood baths in his wake. Haydar stayed away from the mountains, knowing his okht and her loyal subjects took refuge there. He wanted to handle her personally.

Queen Ikram married Tamman, an Algula male known to be of great strength. Their first-born, an ebn' they called Zayn, was known for his mesmerizing beauty and his tenacity. As the first born, he would take his omm's place on the throne one day. Queen Ikram and King Tamman bore a second child, Nikole, who was known for her desire to fight for her subjects and ensuring the honorable are always victorious. Their children were always getting into the Algula's affairs from a young age, trying to learn how to one day lead. The two wanted to rule together, splitting the responsibility and the power. Zayn and Nikole knew each had value and strengths the other might be deficient in. They agreed to always work together and combine forces, therefore, their best traits would always lead their people.

In 1777, Zahle, the town in Lebanon in which the royal family resided, fell to an invasion. Haydar's men led by his children, stormed through the mountaintops, killing Queen Ikram and King Tamman in their home. Haydar licked their blood from his hands and relished in their screams. Zayn managed to save Nikole. They fled the country searching for a safe heaven. The Algula people were in shambles with no one to lead them. While escaping, Zayn learned from a Spanish sailor about The New World and the Colonies. Zayn made his people leave the Middle East with him and travel to the New World. He hoped this would be a good place to start over and rebuild what they had left of their honor.

Their father's emir, Nasir, the commander, traveled with them. He maintained ties to the Algula community while protecting the

royal heirs. They lived like nomads for a while, not wanting to place roots for fear of being discovered before they were ready to reclaim their lineage. In 1861, Haydar found them staying in the American colonies. They had formed a union with the Americans and were helping New England with the industrial revolution. Haydar moved his forces into the state of Georgia and enlisted the help of its leaders.

In an attempt to capture his amm, Zayn rode with General Sherman during the fall of 1864. He was there the night they burned Atlanta to the ground. Haydar swore he would destroy his bent amma and eben amma along with the pathetic humans whom they were helping. Zayn's alliance with the humans turned out to be stronger than anticipated while they fought a very bloody war. Eventually the North prevailed and slowly the rest of the Algula migrated to The New World. After proving himself a leader during the battle, Zayn ascended the throne to rule in his omm's place in the spring of 1890. He took over command of the troops as they established their homes in the mountain ranges like they once did in their homeland. As North America developed, Zayn and Nikole settled in the Rocky Mountains, starting to lay down ties to the community and to each other.

The Algula population still fights among one another. Haydar uses his following to disseminate drugs and create violence near Algula compounds in an attempt to make Zayn and his people flee Colorado. These tactics used reminiscent of what took place in Zahle so many years ago.

PROLOGUE

ZAHLE, LEBANON 500 A.D.

“Afaf, please go get Ikram. I need to perform the ceremony before...” King Hashim started to cough up blood while speaking. “...before I die.”

Queen Afaf took her husband’s hand and brought it to her lips. She placed a soft kiss on his rough skin before rising to get their bent. The king knew his minutes were numbered and that he must declare his successor. His bent’s heart was pure as gold, her will strong as nails. She never wanted anything more than she earned and never took from others. His ebn’, Haydar, however, was power hungry and aggressive. Haydar would bleed the people dry if it meant more money and power for him. His greedy appetite was never sated.

“Abb, abb.” He heard his beautiful bent as she came running through the threshold of the room. Ikram, his pride and joy, held everything he could have wanted in a successor. Her eyes turned the purest shade of green as she let her emotion work up. She was always generous with her love and righteous in her decisions. She was the best child an abb could have. Hashim placed his hand on her face, wiping the tears away. Her beautiful brown hair was shimmering in the light, “Ikram, my bent, it’s time, we must perform the crowning.”

She blinked away the tears that formed in her eyes. As she shook her head she said, “No, you can’t die, not yet. We still need you and there is so much to do.”

“I raised you right; you are ready to take on this responsibility. You are the best heir I could have asked for. The people love you and you love them. You will be a great ruler, far better than I.”

Queen Afaf walked into the room a few moments later; she was carrying something Ikram didn't recognize. It was a red cloth package that she handed to King Hashim who placed it in his lap. "Ikram, it's time. Please kneel before me."

She stood, straightened her dress, wiped the tears from her eyes, and looked to her omm. Queen Afaf beamed proudly at her bent and gave her an approving nod. She realized this would be the last time she was a princess. She was going to be taking on the responsibility of the world.

Ikram bowed her head and dropped her right knee to the ground. She placed her right hand on her left knee and her left hand across her heart.

"Do you, Ikram Khaled, promise to Honor, Protect, and Serve the Algula people to the best of your ability?"

"I do, your highness."

"Do you, Ikram Khaled, promise to be loyal to them above all others?"

"I do, your highness."

"Do you, Ikram Khaled, promise to rule with integrity and respect, for yourself and those around you?"

"I do, your highness."

King Hashim removed the red cloth and took the crown out. It was decorated with diamonds and emeralds. The green was the same shade as her eyes. He held the crown above her head and said, "By the power I hold, I turn over my rights as King. I willingly give it to you, Ikram, my bent." He placed the crown on her head. She looked up at him. She took his hand and brought it to her lips, kissing his royal crest one last time.

"Thank you, abb," Ikram whispered.

"Queen Ikram, I know you will do me proud."

She slowly began to stand while her abb laid back in his bed and coughed some more. Afaf, now the Queen Omm, came and sat on the bed next to him. She placed their hands together and softly started to sing to him a calming melody. The two women stayed there, stroking their king's arms, loving him during his final moments.

Breaking the serenity of the moment, the bedchamber doors burst open. The peaceful serenity the women had created turned ice cold. Haydar looked at his family, his okht wearing *the* crown.

"Her, you gave it to her!" he shouted. "How could you not even

BLOOD PURPLE

tell me? This is wrong. You, cheated me out of my throne. She is NOT the heir... I AM!"

"Haydar, please calm down. Your baba is dying and he needs his family, all of his family, here to see him off," the Queen Omm told her ebn'. Haydar walked to the bed and stared his abb in the eyes. "I hate you and I hate everything you are. You let the idiot humans control us. WE are the stronger race and WE deserve to rule this world. I hope you burn!" The women gasped, "HAYDAR!" at the same time. Hashim raised his hands to silence everyone.

"Haydar, my ebn', I know you feel slighted, and I know you are hurting. The Crown and all of its responsibilities belongs to your okht; she is your queen now. It's that attitude you possess right there; it's the reason you could never be a successful leader of our people. You are selfish and greedy. Now, I expect you to honor my dying declaration. You will fight for your okht, and you will be a loyal subject. You are the Prince, and that's what princes do."

Haydar gazed at the three of them in the room. His eyes turned crystalline violet in color, and anger flushed his face red. Standing, he looked to his okht. "Ikram, I denounce you. You are not my Queen, you are not my okht... you are nothing. From this moment on, we are enemies, and I will not rest until I am the rightful ruler." Haydar turns his back to his family and stormed out. Afaf wiped away the tears rolling down her cheeks. She felt her heart breaking.

"Ikram, you must be strong, you must be cunning, and you must never let him become ruler." Hashim choked out his last words while slowly passing on. Afaf and Ikram lay on his chest, both crying. Abb, husband...king, gone from this world, leaving their house divided.

CHAPTER ONE

PRESENT DAY

She sat back in the booth, watching the groups of people as they came and went. This was what she enjoyed, observing the different behaviors. The whole concept fascinated her. No one ever acted the same as their neighbor. The best part of this night was that it was the eve before her test. She'd finally convinced her akh, King Zayn, that she was able to fight in their military alongside him. He'd always had this foolish notion that she would be hurt, killed, or worse, captured. He worried too much. She was a warrior by blood and training, come tomorrow she would prove that to him.

"Hey Nikole, can I get you another?" she heard a familiar voice ask. Glancing over to him and smiling, her tongue licking the inside of her teeth, as was her habit when he was around her.

"Hey Kevin, yeah, I think I will. Nice crowd of people here tonight. I like that they're keeping you busy."

Kevin regarded the crowd and smiled. "Yeah the club is finally picking up and holding strong. You and Adara helped make that happen. Hey, where is she?"

Nikole shrugged. "I felt like being alone tonight. Tomorrow's the big day, and I just wanted to come for a few hours and relax, clear my mind."

"Alright, well enjoy your night, and I'll make sure no one bothers you. Break a leg tomorrow. You know where to find me if you're hungry later or need anything." He gave her a smile as he walked off.

She watched him go back to the bar while she finished off her drink. A waiter brought her another one while she slowly perused the

BLOOD PURPLE

crowd. She saw a man off in the distance that caught her eye, tall, dark hair, olive skin. Normally, that would've been just her type of guy. Tonight however, she was not looking for a chase. Finishing her second drink, she decided it would be best to head home. "Gotta prove Zayn wrong," she thought, "I'm capable of thinking rationally and without emotion, like a soldier."

She started to leave when she felt someone touch her arm. She turned around and saw it was the guy she'd just been thinking about.

"Hey there, can I buy you a drink?" he asked with little formality.

"No thanks, I'm leaving. Maybe some other time." As she smiled to him she realized that he was not just a man, but an Algula. One of her subjects, this made her body cool instantly. Feeling less alarmed she turned and walked out the door to go home.

She lay in her bed that night, thinking of all the different ways Zayn used to tease her when they were growing up. Hell, who was she kidding? They still fought like they were kids. Why he thought she couldn't protect herself, she didn't understand. She had the same training he did! If it hadn't been for that one time, this wouldn't even be an issue. She closed her eyes and fell asleep. She dreamt about that moment she'd really messed up.

"Nikole, no!!" Zayn yelled as she fell from the ledge. Running, he tried to grab her hand as she gripped the side of the mountain. "What the hell are you doing? You are going to get yourself killed!"

"Shut up, Zayn, and just help me up. Gods, you always complain. I'm fine see? Just hanging around!"

Zayn pulled her away from the edge of the mountain. "What were you thinking, chasing after that man? You don't know the terrain... you WERE going to get yourself killed!"

"I was not, I just lost my footing, that's all, and it can happen to anyone. I'm not dead, and I would have been fine even if YOU hadn't shown up. You cannot control me the entire time, akh. You have to let me fight my own battles."

He shook his head at her. "Absolutely not. You will not be fighting any battles. You're to stay a princess; you will never be in the military."

She punched him in the shoulder, angry with him for making such a statement. "How can you do that? You know I am meant for more than just being a princess!"

Zayn grabbed her by the arms. "Enough, woman! I've given my orders. Now, you can continue to train, but you will not fight. I think you proved today

that you are reckless and make foolish decisions. Back home you go. NOW!"

Heading home with Nasir, she sulked the whole way, not wanting to admit she understood where her akh was coming from. "It isn't fair; you know I'm just as good as him. Abb thought so. Why can't he just give me a chance?"

Nasir put his hand on her shoulder as they walked, letting her cry in silence. He knew she was too proud to ever admit when she was wrong. Reaching the door he looked at her, the woman she had turned into. He remembered when she was born and was proud of the woman she had become. "Nikole, you know I love you like my own bent, so when I say this, please keep that in mind. You are strong willed. You don't admit when you're in need of help and you are too prideful. Learn to temper those emotions and maybe we can broach the subject with Zayn in the future."

Nikole gave him a hug, his embrace calming her some, but she was still furious. although she knew he meant well. Kissing him on the cheek, she headed off to her chambers.

Nikole woke up groggily, pulling away from a dream...no, a memory that had taken place one hundred years ago. They never let you live things down around here. Looking over at her clock she groaned. Damn! Late again! Getting out of bed she saw there was a note left under her door. Retrieving the cream colored paper, she read it, eyes sparkling as they took in the handwritten note from her akh.

Nikole,

We'll meet at 1 pm to test your skills. Four military members and I will be in the field with you. It will be a war simulation, and you will have one chance to beat us. Take all five of us down and you will earn your place in the military.

Good luck, my dearest okht. I know how bad you want this. Remember what baba always said, you have to outsmart the opponent. It's not always who is strongest that wins but who is quicker on their feet.

See you soon,

Love

Zayn

She smiled at her reflection in the mirror; her day had come. It was time to prove everyone wrong.

Darting her way through the trees after firing off a few rounds

BLOOD PURPLE

at the men chasing her, she ran between the trunks and jumped over logs. She started a zigzag pattern, dodging the bullets as they flew by her head. She knew they were filled with paint, but she wanted to get this right. She was going to prove to Zayn she could be in the army and fight to protect their people. Biting off a curse, she stumbled and fell on a trip wire that cut up her leg. Kneeling down taking the first aid kit out of her pack, she dressed the cut. Shit! She heard the men coming, they were a mile away, and she KNEW they were going to smell the blood and find her. Getting up, she started to run again, looking for a place to take cover. Stopping and looking around, she spotted a hollowed out tree. Leaving her blood on some rocks to mislead them, she hid in the tree and began to plot her plan of attack. She checked her gun, noticing that she was out of ammo, and reloaded quickly. Lowering herself to the ground, she waited for the men to come follow her path.

“I can smell her; she’s here. Spread out and get her. She isn’t going to win,” Nikole heard Zayn tell his men. He said he was looking out for her best interests, but maybe he didn’t think she could protect herself. He always said his biggest fear was losing her, just like they lost their parents. Hearing a twig snap, her attention came back to the competition at hand. The first man approached her line of sight so she positioned her gun and aimed, grinning when she shot him in the chest and he pretended to die, falling to the ground.

“1 down 4 to go,” she thought, watching two more men come up through the tree line. Readjusting her aim, she fired and tagged each one in their inner legs. It would hit the femoral artery and they would bleed out if this weren’t simulation. Feeling smug, she mumbled, “2 more to go, Zayn and Nasir.” She could smell Zayn’s scent. Hearing twigs breaking just outside of the hollowed out tree, she felt her akh’s presence. Zayn’s leg made its way in front of the tree. She waited till he moved forward. She had to be sure to focus on not thinking any thoughts, so he couldn’t mind link with her. She slipped out from under cover she put her arms around his body, knocking the gun out of his hands, disarming him completely. He grabbed her shoulder from over his body, pulling her to the ground, and slammed her body on the dirt.

Extending her leg, she kicked him in the chest, pushing him back against the tree. He laughed, grabbing up his knife and pointing it to her in a threatening manner, “Little Okht, I told you, you cannot best

me. Why don't you give up?"

Snarling up at him her fangs dropped; she could feel them pulsating. "You have not beaten me yet, Zayn. I am the better warrior!"

Getting up off of the ground and moving to a fighting position, she signaled him to come forward. He charged as she dropped to her knees, just as his legs hit her shoulders. She lifted him up with her back, flipping him over her body. Grabbing at his knife while he is in the air and holding it to his throat, she pinned him to the ground. "Can I join the army now Zayn?"

Hearing a trigger pull, she felt the ball hit her back and the wet paint dripped from her clothes. Nikole groaned as she realized what this meant...

"Not so fast Nikole, you forgot there were 5 of us, not 4. You're unsuccessful." Nasir's deep smooth voice said with a cocky tone.

Her face flushed at his admonition. She took Zayn's hand, pulling him off the ground before turning and looking at Nasir. "That was a cheap shot and you know it. I am just as skilled as every one of your men out here today! It's not right that you are not letting me fight."

"Everyone else out here knows how to count, Princess; you forgot. We can't let you out on the battlefield knowing you might forget out there."

She scowled at Nasir's words as she walked off, shouting at them, "You both can go to hell!"

Nikole entered her bathroom, stripped her clothes off and tossed them into her hamper. As she walked to the tub, she caught a glimpse in the mirror. Her brown hair was full of leaves and her skin covered in dirt. Why couldn't she just enjoy normal things girls do like getting her nails done and shopping? Fighting the emotion, she tried to not get upset as she turned the water on hot, letting the stream start to mist on her hand. Once the water reached the right temperature, she stepped in, standing under the stream. The water ran down her body, washing away the filth. Its warmth engulfed her, helping to calm her nerves. Rubbing the soapy washcloth together in her hands then across her arms, the soft cotton dragged along her skin as it pulled the dirt away. Her mind drifted to the fight. Stupid! Why couldn't she remember to count? "Damn it, I know better!" Laying her head in the steam, smelling the dirt that ran out of her

BLOOD PURPLE

hair, she grabbed the shampoo and started massaging it into her scalp.

“I know I will prove my point. I am not just a princess; I am a warrior. I control fire and can fight better than most Ghuls in the army.” She shook back and forth, working the soap through her hair, washing it out. Finishing up, she stepped out and pulled the towel off its peg to run over her body. Drying off and looking in the mirror again, her olive skin was clean, hair shining, the brown complimenting her eyes. She wrapped the towel around her and hopped up on the counter. She brought her right hand up to her face, staring at her fingertips; she mentally lit one on fire and watched the flame dance around the different fingers, playing with the flame like her siti Afaf taught her to do when she was a child. Nikole had only been around her a hundred years, but her siti helped her through her development of magik. She’d taught her how to play with the fire and how to control it, making it powerful and intimidating. She remembered looking into her eyes as she made the flames bigger with just a thought. Siti Afaf could mesmerize everyone. Nikole’s hair glowed and shimmered as the flames cast a shadow over it, onto the white walls of the bathroom.

Hearing the clock chime seven pm, she blew the flames out and hopped off the counter to dress for dinner. She did not want to see Zayn tonight. He was just going to gloat that she lost the simulation. He would, of course, conveniently forget that he himself had been taken to the ground and held at knifepoint. Slipping into her blue jean capris and a sleeveless blouse, she stepped into her shoes. She dried her hair and styled it accordingly; she was going to go out tonight and blow off some steam. They had been here long enough that she had a few people she could call up to enjoy a night on the town with, but only one she could call a true friend. Maybe that’s what she needed, more friends, not an akh. After grabbing her cell phone and sending a text message to her friend, asking her to meet at the local club, Impact, she stowed the phone in her pocket and headed down to face that infuriating akh of hers.

Making her way down the hall, she noticed the painting on the wall; this caused her to think about her parents and what wonderful Algula they were. They would have liked what Zayn and Nikole had done with this home and what they were trying to do with their legacy. Her attention was pulled back to the hallway when she heard

Zayn moving around in his office. She tried slipping passed his office undetected, but he always knew when she was near. “You know little okht, if you stopped and thought about it, I am doing you a favour,” Zayn said as she tried to pass his office door.

Walking into his office, she shook her head while grinding her teeth. “No, you actually are not. You are making me want to leave and start after Haydar on my own.”

Zayn stopped writing and set his pen down, looking at her as he felt his anger flaring inside. She noticed his eyes start to shine as they usually did when he was mad. “If you leave me, I will send everyone after you. You won't get far no matter how many of my men you take down. You stay away from him, Nikole. That's final. He took our family from us; I will not let him take you too!” Pushing his chair from the desk, Zayn stood and came toward her. She could smell the anger on him. Most people were scared when his eyes started to glow like they did now, the yellow shade his eyes portrayed being so rare.

She stuck her chest out toward him, refusing to back down. “One day you are going to regret not having faith in me. Wait till that day comes, because the ‘I told you so’ will be one hell of a pill for you to swallow. I am going out. DO NOT come after me, Zayn!” Storming out of his office and down the hall, her fire dancing agitatedly along her arms, she could hear him cursing. Slamming the front door behind her, she slipped out into the night.

Moments later, she felt her phone vibrating in her pocket, distracting her from the road. She looked at it, noticing a text from Adara that read she would be at the club. Relief flooded her; at least she'd have company tonight. She let herself smile as she ran her hand over the dash of the Mustang, feeling it purr under her touch as she revved the engine. She was a beauty, shiny yellow with black pinstripes down the side of it. She went 0-60 in 5 seconds flat. Nikole dropped it into 5th gear and flew down the highway. It was time for her to drink off this fight and ignore her overbearing akh. Taking the road that passed Nasir's house, she looked at it, remembering how he bested her earlier. Punching the gas pedal down, she made her way out of the city limits and out from under her akhs thumb.

The club was packed, hardly an open spot to be seen from the road. Luckily there was valet parking at this club. She pulled up to the

BLOOD PURPLE

front and tossed her keys to the main attendant, smiling at the bouncer as he let her pass the long line and cut in front to enter the club. Her eyes took a second to adjust to the lighting, smiling as she passed the different bartenders she knew. They motioned to her, trying to signal her over to them. Stupid humans, thinking fang banging was the cool thing nowadays. She made her way upstairs to where the elite members spent their time, finding a seat before signaling the owner her way. He would make a delicious snack if there were not so many people, maybe later she would corner him.

“Hey Nikole, you’re here early tonight. Want the usual?”

Nodding at him, she grinned. “Thanks Kevin, and go ahead and keep them coming. I think it will be a long one tonight. I’m meeting Adara here, so send her my way when you see her.”

“Yes ma'am. Let me get your rum and coke right away. Did the test not go well? What did your akh have to say?”

“Well, it’s crap, Kev. I’m really pissed off. I swear that akh of mine tricked me; I’m not sure how, but I know I had them! I don’t want to talk about this now; it’s too upsetting. Maybe later we can meet up and well...” She smirked at him. “Just send Adara my way when you see here, will ya?” She got up and moved to a booth, located in the sectioned off area and away from the crowd. Most of the people up there were from the upper society families and were good about minding their own business. Occasionally a straggler would make their way up and Zeus, the upstairs bouncer, had to escort them out. She thought about Zeus, laughing inside. He got his name because he had a lightning bolt tattooed on his arm and liked to act like he was God. His bark was far worse than his bite though.

Nikole turned her head toward the familiar voice that was coming from the top of the stairs. Adara! She always liked to make an entrance. Kevin met her at the stairs and escorted her to the booth while dropping off Nikole's drink. Adara looked to Nikole then down at her drink. She turned to Kevin, placing her own drink order before looking back to Nikole. “Did it again, didn't you, fight with your akh?”

Nikole nodded, taking a long drink.

“When are you going to learn you are never going to get him to agree to let you help? You are just going to have to beat him at his game, show him who is in charge. Just because he is the oldest doesn't mean he gets to rule you. It’s the 21st century, and if the

humans have equal rights, so should the Algula.”

Nikole let out a laugh when she heard Adara’s bluntness... that was why they got along so well; Adara never sugar coated shit.

“Regardless of the humans, you know he is our king and we are all sworn to obey, as much as you and I think it is ridiculous. Besides, I don't want to talk about him, not right now. He has my blood boiling so hot that I am going to need to feed tonight to maintain my calm.”

Kevin brought Adara her drink while Nikole signaled for another one. “Nikole, that's why you need a steady guy, so you don't have to hunt. We have been over this; there is a benefit to having someone reliable when you need nourishment.”

Nikole’s fangs start to salivate. “Adara, we have also discussed the joys of the hunt and the adrenaline rush not knowing the outcome. Besides, Kevin’s busy tonight or I would just ask him. It’s been a few weeks since I fed and I need to tonight anyway. I think I need the thrill of the chase to burn off this excess energy.” She finished off her first drink as Kevin came back with a second round for them both.

Adara looked at Nikole giving her a small frown. “And why are you even drinking? I thought you gave that up, said it was a filthy human habit.”

Nikole ignored her and took her straw, swirling it in the fresh rum and coke before her. “Did you come tonight just to bust me up, or are we going to have some fun?” Nikole heard Adara sigh as she took a drink.

“Do you have someone in mind already, or are we just going to play it by ear like always? I saw some humans downstairs at the bar; a couple of them were pretty hot.

A wide grin covered Nikole’s face, her tongue running over her teeth as she looked in the direction of the bar. “I think the fellows at the bar will be sufficient for helping us on our quest tonight. I have not had a good hunt in weeks. Besides, that one in the blue was here last night, offered me a drink. Might as well take him up on it.”

Taking her cue from Adara, they sauntered over to the edge of the bar, eyeing the two males sitting on the other side. Adara smiled at them, while Nikole casually ignored the attention it was drawing; they pretended to laugh to each other while showing off their fangs. Their pheromones were seeping out, causing more of the men to notice

BLOOD PURPLE

them. Nikole took a strand of her hair, twirling it around her finger and staring off at the wall, keeping an eye on the males out of her peripherals. She noticed them stand and start to come towards them. Nikole tapped Adara's hand, indicating that the two men were taking the bait. Leaning over, Nikole whispered, "Don't look now, but tall dark and yummy are walking this way; hunting should be this easy every night."

The two girls laughed together as the tall one smiled at them. Nikole batted her eyes and turned toward him while his friend spoke. "Hello Ladies, I am Dominic and this is Derrik. We couldn't help noticing you two beauties sitting here without the company of a male. Mind if we join you?"

Nikole smiled at Derrik and motioned her hand to the chair beside her. Adara stood to shake Dominic's hand. "Aren't you a cute one?" Nikole heard her say and laughed inwardly before focusing on Derrik and continuing to play with her hair, twirling it around her fingers smiling at him.

He looked down at the beautiful woman and smiled, "You nervous, Precious, or do you always eye the men with desire?" He said while ordering another drink.

"Have we met before? Do I know you?" Her curiosity was piqued by the title he just used. "You do not look familiar."

He shook his head, taking her hand and kissing it before placing his other hand around it. "I offered to buy you a drink last night and you blew me off. Other than that, no my lady, I have not had the pleasure of your company before."

She ran her tongue across her teeth as his words dance in her mind. "My name is Nikole, and do they usually work on girls, those lines of yours?"

He let out a small laugh as he took a sip from his drink. "I am not in the habit of coming onto women, but you were eying me from across the bar, and I felt I owed it to you to show you what those eyes can do to a man."

Holding back a laugh, she slowly brought her drink to her lips and took a sip, thinking about what he said. Looking at the mirror behind the bar, she saw Adara and Dominic hitting it off and moving to one of the back rooms. Thinking to herself that this was just getting easier and easier, she turned back to Derrik. "Would you like to go for a walk outside?"

He stood, leaving her hand in his. “I have the perfect spot, Precious. Come, follow me.” Walking out of the bar Nikole sent a smile to the bouncers as they headed toward the tree lines.

They walked along the edge of the building and then turned in the direction of the trees. She could smell the animals, the life, and the excitement. “Do you enjoy nature, Derrik?” Walking into the tree line and hearing him follow behind her; she paused to smell the different scents in the air from the array of animals around.

“I do enjoy hunting wolves; I like the chase. Would you care to join me?” Derrik approached slowly, taking his jacket off and hanging it on a branch. “I think hunting sounds like a great idea, Precious, and maybe later we can find something tastier to hunt together.”

She turned her head back, eying him over her shoulder. He seemed safe, so she dropped her guard. “Maybe, if you’re lucky.” She took off into the forest, running against the wind, catching the scent of a few deer and some bears off in the distance. She felt Derrik come up from behind, his presence overpowering against hers. He suddenly shifted directions and started heading east. She adjusted her pace and followed him, catching the scent that he was following. It was definitely a human; she could smell the evil on him.

Their running came to a slow jog as the scent of the humans overwhelmed Nikole’s mind. She could hear their hearts beating fast. “Derrik, do you smell that? There are some men causing trouble. What do you say we go and teach them a lesson?”

He looks over his shoulder at her. “Tell you what, Precious, why don't you let me handle them and bring your dinner to you.”

Nikole shook her head listening to his cockiness. Maybe she should tell him how unattractive it was. “Derrik, I am capable of taking down a human man. I am not a weak girl. You don’t know what kind of woman you’re dealing with.”

He started to laugh, taking his hand and grasping her shoulder lightly. “Precious, you misunderstand me. I just want to give you something nice, not make it seem like you can't do it. I have faith that you are one powerful Algula.”

Moving in front of him, she flashed a fanged smile. “Tell you what; if you can catch me, you can see just how powerful I am.” She rushed away and into the back alley where three men were attacking someone at knifepoint. Walking down the side of a building and

BLOOD PURPLE

seeing one of the men pull out a gun and aim at the victim, she could feel her hands get hot, the tips of her fingers igniting. She felt the fire start to rise up her hand.

“Precious, you can't burn them.”

Jumping at the sound of Derrik's voice, she said, “Oh no? Watch me.”

She stepped out into the light. “Let the man go.” Walking up to the criminals smiling, her fangs dropped and the fire on her arm accelerated. Seeing them backing up letting the victim go and beginning to run, she rushed to the leader and picked him up by his neck; the fire from her hands burned his skin, the smell permeating the air. She threw him against the wall, grinning as she heard his bones crack.

“Nikole!” Derrik shouted as he ran up to one of the other men, sinking his fangs into him and ripping out the man's throat. Nikole laughed while walking up to the leader who was scrambling against the wall. His eyes dilated with fear; she could smell it pouring off him. Growling, she approached him, then sank her fangs in his neck and started to feed on him. The blood flowed from his vein into her mouth, the sweet metallic taste of it filling her senses with the smell of rust. She could hear Derrik behind her, attacking the third guy and smelled his arousal from the fight. The adrenalin from taking a life was a natural aphrodisiac to them. Her food went limp in her arms and started to feel cooler as she drained the last few drops from his veins. Tossing the remains onto the concrete she went and grabbed Derrik's first victim and put him on top of the leader. Derrik tossed the third body into the pile while Nikole concentrated on the bodies. She ignited the bodies with a flick of her wrist.

“Now, what were you saying about me catching you?” Derrik said as he wrapped his arms around her waist.

Laughing, Nikole flashed back to the woods, the sound lingering in Derrik's mind. She rubbed her scent along the trees as she walked by so he could track her later.

Derrik walked along the forest. He thought it was a myth, the royal family being in the States, let alone Colorado, but she had the eyes, the violet eyes, and she teleported. He shook his head at the realization running through his mind. He was with *the* Princess, not just a typical woman but his cousin. What was he going to do? He walked down a trail, a smile touching his lips as he caught her scent

on every tree. Traveling down the path she took, he vowed to find her again.

Flashing back to her car, Nikole hopped in, realizing Adara might still be at the bar, so she sent her a text message telling her to call in the morning. Kevin was out in the parking lot; she stopped beside him and rolled the window down.

“Hey Kev, that guy I left with? Derrick? Do you know him?”

Kevin paused before he started to talk. “Nikole, I would avoid him; he’s trouble. I hear someone is hunting him. The guy he was with, those two are deadly. You don't want to get wrapped up in that. Promise you will be careful.”

She laughed as she shook her head while smiling. Nikole thanked him for everything before they said their goodbyes. Pulling out onto the open highway, she dropped into fifth gear and took off. With the wind in her hair and adrenaline still rushing through her body, Nikole whispered to herself. “Derrick, Derrick, Derrick.... Mr. Deadly, I think I will be getting to know you better...”

CHAPTER TWO

Slapping at her phone, thinking it was her alarm, she groaned as it kept ringing.

“Damn, who the hell is calling me so bloody early?!” Picking it up, she saw it was Adara and wondered why she wasn't asleep.

“Hey, why are you not asleep?”

“I need to come over, Nikole, right now. I was given a note and instructed to hand deliver it to you right after sunrise.”

Hearing how shaky Adara's voice was, Nikole's skin turned to ice. “Someone gave you a note? What the hell...what kind of note?” Sitting up in bed, she rubbed her free hand against her forehead, feeling the morning hangover start to set in.

“That guy you were with last night, he found Dominic and me and told me I had to do this no matter what. Now, can I come over?”

Nikole let out a sigh. “Yeah, come on over.” Hanging up the phone, she got out of bed and headed straight to the bathroom to wash away the lingering effects of the night before.

The smell of eggs frying and bread toasting floated through the kitchen as Nikole prepared breakfast. Her mind was racing over the man she'd met last night. Could she have been wrong by thinking him safe? A soft tap at the side door followed by the click of it opening had Nikole looking over her shoulder as Adara popped in, wearing the same outfit from last night.

“Look at you; did you have fun with Dominic?” she asked, laughing as she applied butter to her toast.

The red flush that crept over Adara's cheeks showed her embarrassment. “Oh, hush. I know you went out with this guy.” She

waved the note around in her hand. “Why did he have me give you this?”

Taking the letter from her hand, Nikole set it down. “I don’t know. We went hunting; I flirted and teased. Nothing to require love notes the next morning.”

Staring down at the paper Adara said, “Open it up. Let’s see what he has to say.” Taking it out of the tan envelope, Nikole spied the formal lettering of a noble family.

نیکول،
 أعلم بأنك أميرة جنسنا. وكنت
 أعتقد بأن وجودك هنا سائمه.
 في الواقع لم يكن أحد يعتقد بأن
 أخيك وأنت قد ستقرا في
 أميرنا، ناهيك ولاية كولورادو. أنا
 متأكدة من أنك ستسألني عن
 ولدينا أريد أن أقول لك بأنني
 مرتوتة لإحدى العائلات النبيلة
 أسامى للخارج لتنفيذ أوامره.
 أعتن أن ترينني مرة أخرى.
 فأنا أعرف بحيرة لا تبعد كثيراً عن
 هنا. رجاءاً أن تقابليني هناك
 غداً مساءً بعد الضروب

She picked up a hand-sketched map that fell out as she unfolded the letter. Her breath caught as she looked at the language of the old country written in formal penmanship.

Adara looked over her shoulder in shock as Nikole read. “Can

BLOOD PURPLE

you read that? I have not taken lessons in the old language.”

Nodding, Nikole read it twice and set it down. “Here, I will read it to you.”

Nikole,

I know you are the Princess of our race. I thought it was a rumour that you were here. No one thinks you and your akh would actually settle in America, let alone Colorado. I am sure you will check up on me, so I wanted to tell you, I am a mercenary for one of the noble families. I travel carrying out his orders. I hope that you will see me again. I know this lake; it’s not too far from here. Please meet me there, tomorrow night at sunset.

Till then, Princess

Derrik

Adara and Nikole sat at the table in silence for a bit until her friend piped up. “What are you going to do? He knows your identity and he is a mercenary. You have to tell Zayn. He needs to know your safety is compromised.”

Nikole shook her head. He would be furious if he knew she was recognized. “Adara, you cannot tell anyone, you hear me! No one but us can know this. Zayn already doesn't trust me to take care of myself; this will just prove him right if he realizes I was careless enough to get spotted. He will lock me up and make it so I have no freedom.” She placed the folded up letter in her pocket. “This is our secret. Promise me.”

Adara looked away as the stressful tension grew. “Fine, I promise.”

She stood and turned to leave. “But if something happens to you, I'm telling him. End of story.” Without another word, she left, the screen door shutting behind her.

Alone again, Nikole headed back to her room, studying the note once more. Tomorrow night. Sunset. He wanted to see her again. Omm was right; hard to get really does work. Lying on the bed, she put the letter to her nose. His scent reminded her of the forest after a downpour, light and crisp, her favorite smell. She pulled out the sketch of the map and noticed that the lake was next to Garden of the Gods; it must be Valley Reservoir. Closing her eyes, she brought his image to her mind. He was tall, over 6' foot. Hard muscles thickened his large frame, easily weighing in at 220, and he moved as swift as the wind. Shining brown hair set of a magnificent pair of

deep, hazel eyes. Opening her eyes, she placed the letter back in her drawer and curled up in bed, hoping to sleep some more.

Looking through his desk, Zayn attempted to find the papers to allow Nikole into the military. He wanted to surprise her and make it official. He realized the best way to keep her safe was to have someone with her at all times. "Where did I put those fucking papers?" He tossed a stack on the floor, getting angry at his lack of organization. Feeling pressured by the stress, he got up and poured himself a drink. Hearing a knock on the door he sighed, knowing it was going to be Nasir. All that man did was worry. "Come in." He turned around from the bar table and to his shock he saw Kevin, Nikole's friend. "Well this can't be good. Come, have a seat." Kevin bowed his head. Zayn could feel the man's nervousness. "Just spit it out Kevin. What's wrong?"

Kevin looked up at his King, "Nikole met this guy last night. I tried to warn her away from him but..."

Pure anger laced Zayn's tone. "Who did she meet?"

Kevin backed the chair up a few inches. "Derrick."

Zayn didn't even feel the glass in his hand break in his grip. "YOU let her around him! I agreed to let you be in business if you protected her from the people who might try and kill us! KEVIN, this is unacceptable! FUCK! NASIR, GET IN HERE!" Pacing back and forth, Zayn reached for his knife in his desk and slipped it into his side holster. The door opened, admitting Nasir. "Take Kevin away, and then get the riding team ready; we have a mercenary to hunt."

Sitting in the kitchen, hearing the commotion outside in the hallway, Nikole got up and walked into the hallway. She saw Zayn load his gun, knives in his holsters. "Zayn, where are you going? What's going on?"

He turned to her, frowning. "Nikole, go back in there. This does not concern you." He turned around and headed out of the house. She saw Kevin and Nasir walking out the back door and realized Kevin must have told him. "Zayn, no, you can't go after him!"

Zayn stopped and spun around to stare at her, his eyes bleeding to his golden yellow shade. "Do you know what kind of male that man is, Nikole? DO YOU? He is a mercenary."

"I know that, Zayn, he told me, he said he works for a noble family. I didn't tell him who I was; he figured it out! I promise."

BLOOD PURPLE

Zayn let out a sharp laugh. "I suppose he does think he works for a noble family. His employer is Haydar...." Spinning back around, he left without another word.

Hearing the front door slam shut and the cars starting, Nikole got her cell phone out and called Adara. Maybe she had Dominic's phone number and he could get a hold of Derrik. Pacing back and forth, she couldn't take it. Hanging up, she sent a text message instead, explaining what happened. Hightailing it back to her room, she dressed to hunt on her own. Zayn wasn't the only one who knew how. Grabbing her knife and slipping it into its sheath, she slid on her leather fighting pants and shirt before she slipped out of the window and headed down the side of the house.

"I can't believe she led him right to us. I thought you had people watching her," Zayn said, moving through the forest. They had found their hunting grounds earlier in the night.

"Nikole made it easy for him to find the house; she marked every tree along the fucking path. What was she thinking??"

"She was fooled, Sire. We both know she would never knowingly put us in danger," Nasir said as they pushed through the trees, stopping at the outskirts of the town and stumbling onto the dumping site of Nikole's kill.

"She is showing off her Magik too. I can't take this; she is out of control! She is putting us into unnecessary danger, and she needs to realize this is unacceptable." Zayn's anger boiled as he punched the brick wall next to him. Seeing a crack form along the structure, he cocked a smile and walked back towards the fences. "Clearly they are meeting up again, which will be a trap. Nasir, have your men tail her, and when you see him, bring him back alive."

Flashing off to the lake a day early, Nikole scoped out a site to hide and wait. *I'm going to catch this mercenary and find out why he was following me and why he picked me up in the bar.* Seeing a hiding spot off to the south, she moved there and set up the overnight essentials. Feeling the breeze on her skin, she settled in for the next twenty four hours. Finding a nice piece of wood, she pulled out her knife and began whittling a figure, concentrating on the details, making the image of a beautiful wolf while passing the time.

CHAPTER THREE

Going through his things, looking for his missing knife, Zayn heard a knock and called out harshly for whomever it was to enter.

“Sire, she is gone. She must have left when we did. No one has seen or heard from her in a day.”

Glaring at his servant, anger filled him as he pictured Nikole with Derrik. “YOU find her NOW and bring her here. Call all her friends; see where she would be staying. Do NOT let him get away with her!” The servant turned and left, trying to think of where to look or who to call. He heard a loud crashing noise inside the office. It sounded like something had broken. He opened the door. “GET OUT!” He closed it fast as a paperweight started coming toward him. He got out his cell phone to inform Nasir of what just happened when he realized something. Adara. She was just here!

Nasir pulled into Adara’s driveway, looking around for a sign of someone being home. Sliding from the car, he quietly shut the door and approached the house. Feeling foolish that he didn't think of this sooner, he knocked on the door. The door opened. “Adara? I am Nasir. I am sure you know who I am.” He watched her face go white and detected her heartbeat picking up speed. “You have nothing to be worried about, please let me come in.”

Opening the door for him, she stepped out of the way and walked to the living room. “Is Nikole ok?” Nasir stalked over to her and looked her down, trying to show the seriousness of the situation.

“Where did she go with him? I have to find her before he kills her.”

Adara's eyes shot open, fear flashing across her face. “Before who kills her?! What happened?!?” she yelled out.

BLOOD PURPLE

“We know she went to see Derrick. We know you came to see her and were with her at the club. Where did he take her? Don’t fuck with me. His majesty, doesn't want to bury his only okht. Tell me where they are!” He watched the realization hit her, the worry and panic in her eyes.

“The lake! He made me give her a note; it said they were going to meet at the lake tonight at sunset. I can help look for her. I don’t understand what’s gone wrong.”

Nasir got his cell phone out and started to text the new information to his men, “Adara, Derrick works for Haydar and he is a mercenary. You and everyone you love need to stay away from him.” Nasir then left. He needed to see how many lakes were in the area...

Hearing twigs break off in the distance, Nikole looked out of her hiding spot and saw him walking toward the dock, his tall body, shining brown, the way he moved with each step. She sat back, thinking about what to do. He claimed he didn't know who she was. She needed to be cautious and not fall for any tricks. Her stomach churned with confusion. Checking her weapons, she put them back in their holsters and flashed behind him. “Hello Derrick.”

Turning around at the sound of her voice. He saw she was in her leather, feeling his heart start to pick up the pace. “Princess, you look wonderful.” Moving to give her a kiss, she backed up. “What’s wrong?” he said with a confused look on his face.

“You told me you worked for a noble family, yes?”

He nodded at her. “I did, and that's true. I knew you would check up on me.”

“You failed to mention the 'noble' family was my amm, the one who wants me dead!” Stepping toward him, she felt her body start to warm, her eyes starting to flash between brown and violet. “You were sent to kill Zayn and I, weren’t you? How could you act like you didn't know who I was? You played me for a fool, and now I will kill you for that.”

“Nikole, you don’t understand. Yes, I was hired and work for your amm, but I was not going to kill you, nor will I. I didn't know you, and I didn't think you were in Colorado Springs. You have to believe me; the other night, it wasn't a trap. I didn't know who you were! I was going to tell you everything tonight, I promise.”

Walking towards him, she forced Derrick to move back closer to the water, feeling her hands starting to ignite, the flames working up

her arms. “You WERE sent to kill us! Say your last prayers now!” Reaching out to him, he grabbed her arms and pushed them over her head.

“Princess, stop, please. Let me just talk to you. I am not going to kill you or anyone you love, please. Nikole..”

“Let. Go. Of. My. Okht!” A booming voice erupted from behind them.

She smirked at Derrik. “Oops, looks like my akh is smarter than you. Time to meet your death.”

“I am not going to hurt her, Zayn!” Derrik threw her over his shoulder before disappearing with Nikole safe in his arms.

Throwing back his head, Zayn growled, “Nasir! What the fuck! I thought we were the only family that could teleport? Where did he take her?!”

“Sire, we will find her. We found this place on limited information. We WILL find her, and she is strong; she can defend herself.”

CHAPTER FOUR

Zayn lay with his head down on his desk, thinking about Nikole and what happened to her. The feeling he'd had while he watched her vanish... Derrik had been so close and within his grasp and now, gone. He needed to find her; he needed to bring her home. He couldn't lose another person he loved. He had promised to protect her, always. His mind was racing, thinking of all the different things that could be happening to her, the torture, and the possibility of them killing her. He felt the urge to drown himself in whisky. Grabbing up the flask he kept in his desk drawer, he lifted it to his lips, the metal cool against his hot skin. Nikole had given him this flask as a gift, shortly after they moved to Colorado. He knew this because they were on the slopes learning how to ski. She' handed it to him right before she pushed him down a hill backwards on skis. He couldn't help remembering. She had even had it engraved for him. Written on the front it said, "Akhs, A Girl's Best Friend." He ran his fingers over the inscription as he read the scribbled words. Feeling the tears well up, he closed his eyes, trying to hold them in, and thought back to the day she was born.

"Ikram, you have to push! The baby is almost here, just one more push!" The midwife said to his omm. He could hear her, she was screaming and cursing. The words coming out of her mouth were words he had never heard from her before. His baba was running around frantic, yelling at all the servants.

"What is Zayn doing in here? This is no place for the boy. Take him away."

"No, I'm 115 years old; I can be here! I want to be here to see the birth. Plus, my omm could die!" Refusing to be removed he stood off in the distance, keeping steady watching over her. He'd only heard about childbirth, never

witnessed it on his own. Most women died, it was rare that any life, let alone omm and child survive. It was during that thought that he heard it, the piercing sound of a baby crying, then someone saying, "It's a girl!" He watched them place the baby in his omm's arms. He saw the tears running down his omm's face.

Slowly and with caution, he walked to his omm's bedside, looking down at the little creature, covered in blood and utterly disgusting.

"Meet your okht Nikole." He couldn't help but feel his body warm at the sight of her, the soft pink skin, and the noises she was making, what this now meant for him. He turned to his baba and knelt before him; he spoke the words passed down from Warrior to Warrior. "I pledge my allegiance to thee, for this child will be protected, with mine own blood and life. No harm shall come to her and no enemy shall covet her. With this I so swear." Kissing his abb's ring sealing the oath he pledged to his okht. He meant every word; no harm would come to her.

He felt his omm's eyes looking upon him while he was kneeling on the ground. As he looked over to her she extended her hand and grasped his. Zayn slowly squeezed it, not sure of how to act around a babe. "Congratulations Omm, she is perfect."

"Come Zayn, hold her. She has your special eyes, I can tell." He was confused because they were still brown; no color had set in yet. How did she know she had his eyes? He felt his heart start to race when his abb, King Tamman, placed his hand on Zayn's shoulder. "Give her to Zayn; let him hold his little okht." His omm looked up at him. Those beautiful green eyes sparkled as she handed Nikole over. Nervously cradling her in his arms, he ran his index finger over her cheek. "Hello Nikole, I'm Zayn, your big akh. I'll keep you safe. Always."

Opening his eyes, he pushed away from the desk. Glancing at the flask, he put it away. He didn't need to drink. He needed to kill. Picking up the phone, he buzzed Nasir. "I need you, now." He hung up only to find himself pacing. Everything in this office reminded him of her. Along the wall, their two swords were mounted, their tips touching in the shape of a "V" for victory. He took Nikole's off the wall, palming the handle. She had it commissioned with shades of violet woven into the golden handle. She wanted everyone to know whose sword it was and who would wield death when she gave the final blow. Hearing the door to his office open and putting the sword back on its mount, he turned to look at Nasir.

"Do you have any progress on locating this Dominic guy or where Derrik has taken her? Every minute we sit at home we are

risking her life. We need to get her and bring her back.” Zayn went back to his desk, reclaiming his seat while Nasir sat.

“No Zayn, there has been no movement that we can tell. I didn’t know mercenaries could teleport. I thought that trait was only in the royal blood line.”

Zayn’s eyes widen at that realization. “Haydar must have had kids. That means she is being held by a fucking eben amty! Who knows what lies Haydar has fed his people over the last how many centuries?”

“Fifteen Sire.”

“Shut up, you’re not helping me! She has been gone for twenty-four hours, Nasir. How are we supposed to make light at a time like this? Prepare the troops; we are going to cover every inch of Colorado. We know they couldn’t have gotten too far; teleporting gives them a 100 mile head start, maximum. We can’t let her suffer; she needs to be home.”

“Sire, if I may...”

Zayn’s eyes start to flash to the eerie yellow. “What, Nasir?!”

“Nikole is a warrior; we both know this. Whatever is happening, she can defend herself. She isn’t helpless.”

“I don’t care if she can best every one of my fucking soldiers; she is my OKHT and NEVER should have been taken! GET HER BACK NOW!”

Nasir rose, bowing his head. “Yes, Sire.” He left Zayn scowling, his own temper frayed.

He travelled the hallway slowly, uneasy about all of the confusion that just happened. He had worked for this family for over a millennium. How could Zayn treat him like that? He helped raise him, like his own ebn! He could feel the anger boiling inside. His oath had been broken and the Princess was harmed. He walked into the library, Nikole’s favorite room. There were hundreds of books scattered around. None in order, books opened to certain pages, pencils and paper lay at every desk, notes scribbled down on hundreds of sheets of paper. He turned around, punching the wall, the plaster crumbling. A picture hit him in the head, a sketch she had done of the two of them shortly after her 300th birthday. He saw the lock of hair sealed in the glass frame. He took it, placed his palm on the glass frame, closed his eyes, and remembered a different time.

“Nikole, come back! You can’t run and fight like that. You have to have

precision. See, look, when you take the sword you have to grip it firm. Like this. There you go, now slowly start to move your arm and hips simultaneously to get the full motion." Nasir watched her learning the lines of cut.

"Like this, Amm Nasir?" Her body was fluid, taking the sword over her right shoulder and slicing through the air down to her left, her hips moving in rhythm to her strokes. Over her left shoulder and down to the right side, back and forth, she perfected the first two lines.

"That's it, Nikole. Now remember, when you are fighting you never charge with your sword while running. You always maintain firm footing. That's it. Now let's try some exercises." Together they repeated the lines of cut, this time towards each other, their swords clanging at each hit.

"Okay, okay I get it now; I can handle this on my own."

Nasir stepped back laughing, to himself. He signalled one of his men to come and face her. Watching as the guard tried to keep up, Nikole ran circles around him. Too bad she hasn't used the sword once. Out of blue the clang of the weapons chimed and followed by a small squeal. "What happened, Nikole?" He walked over to her, placing his hand on her shoulder.

"He sliced my hair off! Look!!"

A strand of her beautiful brown hair is lay on the grass. Nasir looked to his man, "She wasn't protecting her head, and I just wanted her to see how close I could get." Nasir motioned the man away, leaning over and picking up the hair. *"Here Nikole, keep this so you always remember to protect your head; it's very valuable. You never want to let your guard down. Now come on, let's get dinner. All this fighting has me hungry."*

Nasir let out a deep sigh. Nikole was like a bent to him, and now she was missing. He replaced the framed sketch and strand of hair on the table for safekeeping and returned to his walk down the hall to go speak to his men.

CHAPTER FIVE

One moment she was staring into Zayn's face, the next, darkness. What had happened? Did she flash herself away? That made no sense; why would she do that? Looking for a light of any kind she realized she was in a cell. "Hello?"

"I see you are awake, good. It's time for you and me to have a talk."

"Derrick is that you?"

"No, stupid girl, he isn't here. Now be quiet while I ask my questions." Panic started to sink into Nikole's mind. What happened? Why was she being held? Hadn't Derrick said he wasn't out for her?

"Princess Nikole, let me explain who I am, that way, when you speak, you will know how to conduct yourself. You see, your amm, Haydar has employed me to ensure your capture. We knew Derrick would find you, so all we had to do was follow him, and of course he led me right to you. My name is Hamza, and I am Haydar's lead general."

Panic turned to deathly fear as Nikole listened to this man speak. His voice was slow, his words drawn out. "Tell me where your akh is. Tell me how to reach him and I will let you live."

"I think you have this wrong, Hamza. If you let me go, I promise my akh and I will kill you swiftly, instead of dragging it out."

"Wrong answer, Princess."

At that moment she heard the noise of footsteps. The cell opened and guards started coming in, five men, all with knives and swords pointed at her throat. They pulled her by her hair and dragged her out of the cell. She kicked at the men, hit one in the groin. Another came from behind and grabbed her arm. She spun,

punching him in the throat. It was at that moment she felt the electricity soar through her body as she fell. She looked at Hamza, seeing the dark look in his eyes. It sent chills down her spine. He ordered her to be secured to a metal table. She glanced around and saw a knife set on the desk to the right and up above a waterspout, dripping drops of brown water.

She closed her eyes and said a small prayer, hoping to come out of this alive. Nikole felt his rough hands holding her head in place. There was some sort of metal object holding her eyes open her head started to buck back and forth, instinct telling her to fight. "Let go of me now!" She felt her arms starting to heat, the fire taking over her body. The metal started to burn; she could smell it. Out of nowhere, she was soaked in water. She tried to shut her eyes, but it was no use; her head was stuck and her body drenched. The flames were out. She watched as Hamza's fingers run down her arm. He spoke something in a language she couldn't understand, but she soon realized it meant, *go fetch a knife*.

"One last time, give me your akh, and you won't get hurt," Hamza said while placing the cold knife on her skin, slowly pressing the blade in. She could feel her skin slicing and see blood seeping over the blade.

"Go to hell!!!" Nikole called out, then, without a second thought, she screamed, the blade going deeper into her right arm, her muscles being torn apart and blood starting to pour out over the table. Her tears began to sting her eyes and started to flow over the metal contraption holding her eyes open. "If you cooperate, the pain will stop. Now, Nikole, once more, where is your akh?" Hamza moved the knife to her right shoulder and pressed it into her skin.

"NEVER!" She cried as he took the knife from the shoulder down to her breastbone, cutting her clothing along with her skin.

She felt her eyes changing to their violet shading. With the amount of pain she was in, they looked deep purple. Her feet started to flare, the heat from the fire working up her body, engulfing her. It burned her clothes off, the melting material scorching her already aching wounds. She screamed louder as her own body caused her more pain. Hamza turned the faucet on and the water killed her flames.

Derrik could hear Nikole in the other room, crying out in pain. His head resting in his hands, he was ashamed of what he had done

BLOOD PURPLE

and how he had lead them right to her. He didn't even know she was his eben amty. He had no idea that the infamous Nikole he had been sworn to kill and been polluted with jargon his whole life would turn out to be someone he could connect too. There was of her screaming he could listen bare listening too before he had to do something. He knew his abb; he will be killed for the betrayal. He had to go get help.

"Nikole, I'm sorry," Derrik said to her through the mental connection they could establish. He had been blocking her out the way his omm had taught him, but something inside of him needed to apologize.

He took his phone and opened it while walking outside. They were in such a secluded area no one would ever find them. They were tucked back in the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains, an hour outside of Colorado Springs. Derrik placed a call.

"Hello?" Adara said frantically into the phone.

"Adara, don't say my name, this is Derrik. I swear it's not what you think, but now it's gotten worse. Hamza showed up and they are torturing her. I'm going to text you the coordinates. Get that to Zayn. I can't get her out." Derrik hung up the phone and then sent her the coordinates. He hoped the conversation was under a minute so it could go undetected by Hamza's men. He walked back into the cave, trying to think of another way of saving her.

CHAPTER SIX

She looked at her phone, shock still in her heart. She had to find Zayn and fast. Running to her car, she got in and sped to the royal home.

“Zayn, come quick!” She yelled while running into the house.

Nasir stepped out of his office. “What is it Adara? Did something happen?”

“I need Zayn! Get him!” she shouted.

Zayn, hearing the commotion, came downstairs. “Adara did she call you? Do you know something? What’s happened?” He embraced her, his fear showing across his face.

Adara handed him her phone. “Derrick called me, told me he would text me the coordinates of where they are holding her. You have to help her; she is being hurt!”

Zayn’s eyes glow yellow immediately upon hearing this. “Who are they?”

“I don’t know. Someone named Hamza has her and is hurting her. Derrick said you have to save her. Why would he help us? What’s being done to her?” Zayn ignored Adara who was crying and in the process of a panic attack. He took her phone and hooked it up to a special device.

Nasir took Adara in his arms, trying his best to calm the shaken female. “Zayn, what is the location? Can we get there fast?”

“It’s our old training facility in the mountains, about 60 miles south of here. Bastard has her there!” He broke off as a servant came in to take Adara away while they finished their talk.

“Zayn, you know what we stored up there, what they have available to use on her.” He nodded, hearing the tone in Nasir’s voice.

BLOOD PURPLE

“Yes, I know. We need a plan. Let’s make sure everyone is ready for battle. We don’t know what condition she is going to be in when we do find her. Let’s leave in ten; we will bring my okht home.”

Nasir nodded. “Yes, Sire, I will go prepare the men.”

Zayn flashed to his office, strapping various weapons on himself, before he grabbed Nikole’s sword and sheathed it in the holster. Attaching it to his belt, he swore he would kill the bastard with her weapon; it was the only logical thing to do. Walking out of the door, he headed to the vehicles, recalling the day the sword was commissioned.

“Abb, I think it’s time I have a proper weapon. How else will Zayn ever know I can beat him if I’m always fighting with a fake sword?”

Zayn started laughing. “Nikole, you will never beat me. Not only am I older, I’m better, I’m stronger, and I’m a man!”

Nikole lunged at Zayn, knocking him down and wrestling with him. Their abb sat back laughing, watching his two children fight it out. “Children, come on, you both have the ability to beat each other. Now stop and come here.” The two kids look at him while chuckling. Nikole sucker punched Zayn when he wasn’t looking, causing him to lunge at her. King Tamman grabbed Zayn and pulled him off of Nikole.

“Now, I’ve always told you both that the way to win a fight is by using your mind, not a sword. You have to be able to outsmart your opponent to gain the upper hand. Always remember that, it’s not whose sword is most powerful or whose arm is stronger, it’s whose mind thinks faster and sharper. Now Nikole, you want a proper sword do you?”

“Yes, one with a golden hilt, with violet strands mixed in.”

“Purple! Nikole, what kind of warrior has purple in her sword?” Zayn teased while standing up.

“I will Zayn! It’s not stupid. That way, when I am out fighting, the enemies will know who is coming after them. Princess Nikole, The People’s Victor!”

King Tamman liked the sound of that. “The People’s Victor? I like that Nikole; we shall have that engraved on the blade as well. Splendid design, my bent.”

So much time has passed since the day this was made, yet he remembered it like yesterday. Brushing a tear aside, he made his way outside to join the army to bring his okht home.

“Now, your team will take the south entrance. The King and I will take the north entrance. Remember, Derrik and Hamza we take alive. The King wants to deal with those two personally. Everyone

else, slaughter!”

Zayn stopped listening to Nasir giving the orders and explaining the plan of attack. His body was numb from the pain of being without her. Nasir grabbed his shoulder.

“Now, let’s hear from our King, the powerful, Zayn!” The crowd erupted in loud cheers then a moment later turned silent as Zayn stood.

“My fellow Algula, a tragic event has happened. My okht, your Princess Nikole, was taken from us. It’s our job to bring her home. These men will not live to see tomorrow. They will all die. We will show Haydar that he cannot destroy us. We are whole, we are just, and we are honorable. Today, when you fight, you not only fight for my okht, your Princess, you fight for your existence. We are sending a message back to him, ‘We will not quit, we will not cower, and we will not be intimidated!’ Let the blood shed begin!”

Zayn and Nasir got in the first vehicle and the procession to the training center began. “That was a good speech; the men will be pumped up, ready to fight.”

“I didn’t say that speech for them; I said it for me. I had to declare my message to my amm. I can’t imagine what he is doing to her. Hamza has the worst reputation for mutilation of any other fighter of Haydar’s. We need to be prepared for the worst possible scenario. “Don’t think about that, Zayn. We won’t be too late. We will save her.” Nasir leaned back in his seat, the hot leather against his skin. He pulled out the blue print sketch of the facility. “If I was a betting man, this is where they will be holding her. This is where we are going to go in. Are you sure you want to be there when we find her?”

Zayn looked at him with pure shock on his face. “Why would I not want to be there?” Confusion was in his voice as he wondered why Nasir would suggest he wouldn’t want to be part of his okht’s rescue.

“We don’t know her condition, and I just want to make sure you are prepared. It could be a very bloody event,” Nasir’s tone indicated his own level of nervousness coming through.

“I will be there. End of story. Until we arrive.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Hamza walked into the room with his guard, looking at *Nikole's* still body lying on the table. "Is she dead?" he questioned.

"No sir, she passed out while we were in the middle of the procedure. We were doing like you instructed and burning her body with the needles, when she went unconscious. We thought it best to come get you right away."

Hamza looked over her body, placing his fingers to her neck and feeling only a small hint of life. His lips curved up in excitement as he anticipated what was yet to come. "Good, leave us alone." He started to walk around the table, staring at her naked and bloodied body.

The room emptied out while *Hamza* continued to circle the table. He tried to decide what to do with this dead weight prisoner. Leaning over her body, he backhanded her jaw, the cracking of her bones deafening, in the silence of the room. He heard her moan in agony while she slowly came to consciousness.

"*Nikole*, I think it would be best if you just gave me what I asked of you. As soon as you tell me what we want to know, this pain will all stop." Taking his knife from the sheath on his belt, he placed the cold blade to her cheek. "I will cut your pretty little face apart. Don't think I won't." Taking the tip of the blade he broke the skin at the top of her left cheek and slowly cut lines into her face. Droplets of blood ran down her cheek, staining her flesh as he slashed her face. *Nikole's* voice was gone from all the screaming she has done and all she could do was heave a cry. Her eyes were still forced open, not even tears could form since she couldn't blink. "Come on, little Princess, just tell me where *Zayn* is so I can kill him. I promise this

will all stop.”

She slowly shook her head to the left and right, not even an inch of movement, but the answer was no. She would never give up her akh. She would always remain loyal to him, to their legacy.

Hamza was getting frustrated with her lack of cooperation, but he could appreciate the loyalty she displayed for family. He needed her to have a reason to give up something as valuable as her blood. “Princess, do you know the pain of losing your fingers knuckle by knuckle? I have this pair of pliers’ right here, and I think we can start with the pinky finger, or maybe the big toe.” He took the pliers into his hand, running the cool metal down her naked body, and then pressed the pliers to her skin above her right thumb as she lost consciousness, again.

Hamza watched her eyes dilate, the changing of the purple as her coloring burned violet. He knew she was scared; their eyes only reacted like that with emotion. He had her where he wanted her. He knew he would be able to force her now.

He cursed under his breathe and called for help. “Someone please keep her awake! How am I supposed to get any information from her if she keeps passing out? IDIOTS! All of you!” Hamza stormed off, out of the room, running into Derrik in the hallway.

“What are you doing to her?” He practically shouted “Is all that really necessary?” Hamza sneered at him; the sight of this pathetic reaction, revolted him, made worse knowing that that Derrik would one day be on the throne

“What is wrong with you? Did you become a girl over night or what? You have feelings for your eben amty there?” Hamza laughed at Derrik, his displeasure with the questioning him, evident.

Derrik balled his fists and punched Hamza in the jaw, pushed him against the wall, and began to beat on him. Hamza jabbed Derrik in the ribcage. Derrik punched at Hamza’s diaphragm, knocking the wind out of him. The men exchanged punch after punch. Hamza’s head hit the wall as Derrik’s fist struck under his chin; he felt his brain swash back and forth because of the hard hit. Hamza pushed off the wall and charged at Derrik, wrapping his arms around his waist as he shoved him into the other wall. Hamza’s body bent over around Derrik’s lower half causing Hamza’s balance to wobble.

Derrik took his elbow and struck between Hamza’s shoulder blades. Hamza fell to the ground as bones cracked. Derrik put

BLOOD PURPLE

Hamza in a lock on the ground and pulled out the handcuffs he had found in his office. Derrik secured Hamza to the pipes along the wall swiftly before anyone else came in. Kicking him in the face with his boot, he took off for the room Nikole was being held in.

Walking into the room, Derrik looked over Nikole's body, all the blood and bruises, the cuts. He cupped her face in his hands and placed a kiss on her forehead. "I am so sorry. I didn't know. I didn't..." He coughed out an apology as his heart slowly beat to the tears that start to run down his cheek. He released the eye holders then started to work on her wrist restraints. Pulling against the metal, the right one finally slipped off. He heard Nikole start to murmur. He leaned over her body, his ear coming up beside her mouth so he could hear her frail voice and he heard her breathless whisper. "Thank you." It was at that moment Derrik grabbed his own chest in pain.

He stumbled back away from the table. Unsure of what happened; he turned around seeing Dominic standing there. He could feel blood running down his body, his knees starting to go weak. He looked from his chest to Dominic, shock etched on his face. "Wha...what have you done?" The words barely made it out as he gasped for air before falling to his knees. Derrik tried to move back to the table, but Dominic kicked him back. His foot locked with Derrik's stomach, sending him toward the ground.

"Abb told me if you ever backed out of a mission to kill you. I saw what you did to Hamza and you were going to free her. You had to die. I'll tell abb that he only had one ebn' worthy of his name." Dominic leaned down, grabbing Derrik by the hair to look him in the eye. "He never loved you." He took his knife, and with one smooth motion, sliced his akh's throat, relishing in the river of blood pouring out.

Hamza came into the room after being freed by one of his guards, to see Derrik on the ground, bleeding out, while Dominic now held the knife at Nikole's throat. "Stop, Dominic, we still need her."

Dominic held back his disgust for Hamza then bowed in respect and began to leave. "Why did you kill him? He's the boss's ebn'," Hamza asked.

"I saw him attack you and try to free her. Boss's ebn' or not, he was a traitor to the cause. I am sure Haydar will not mind." It took all

the control Dominic could summon not to slice his throat. *Who did he think he was, to question him?*

Nikole laid there, listening to their conversation, wavering in and out of consciousness. Did Hamza not know they were akhs? She was having a hard time making out what they were saying; her ears were ringing from the pain and torture. She was starting to lose her senses. She began to think she could even hear Zayn in her mind, talking to her. She closed her eyes and said a silent prayer for Zayn to come save her.

“Just let me kill her already. She hasn’t told you anything and isn’t going to. We have wasted enough time here. Eventually, they will find us,” Dominic argued.

“If you want to leave, leave, but do not tell me how to run my operation. Now you are excused from this room for the remainder of the time.” Hamza barked out.

Dominic left the room, not looking back at the pitiful site he had witnessed. It was no wonder things were never finished with someone like Hamza in charge. Back in the torture chamber, Hamza grabbed the pliers from the floor after making sure she was once again secured to the table. Nikole could see him approaching and frantically tried to break the metal cuffs off of her. “No use fighting; it’s time to talk, or you will start losing body parts.”

Weakly, she tried to come off strong but in a whispered breath said, “Leave me alone, I’m not going to ta...”

Hamza slapped her face to silence her; Nikole’s head bounced off the metal table, causing her vision to blur once again.

She couldn’t see who was in front of her, but she could tell that something was going on. Seeing two shadows along the wall, moving around as if wrestling, Nikole thought her mind was playing tricks on her. Hearing a noise and odd commotion in the room, she was unsure of who was actually fighting.

Nikole lay there, trying to focus her eyes, but all she managed to see was a blur of a man moving. The next thing she knew, someone was touching her and getting on top of her. She couldn’t move and didn’t recognize him; the panic rose in Nikole as she thought someone else was going to hurt her.

Nikole’s vision came back into focus as she saw the man free her arms and legs from the metal restraints. He wrapped her in a blanket and lifted her up off the table. Who was this man carrying

BLOOD PURPLE

her? He was unbelievable, his swiftness and precision. Surely he would be able to keep her safe. “Who are you?” she said, right before she passed out.

CHAPTER EIGHT

“Nasir and I will take the front with half of the troops, the other half take the back. Remember, no survivors but Derrik and Hamza. Let’s roll!”

The men broke up into groups, grouping off in fives. Walking up the mountain, they all knew to watch for the land mines that Zayn installed before they quit using the facility as a training camp.

“Nasir, it looks as though someone has been driving through here. Have a soldier follow those tracks and see where they lead,” Zayn said with gun in hand and Nikole’s sword at his side. Moving through the brush he began to have flashbacks of the escape in 1777.

“Come on, Nikole, move it. We can’t stay,” Zayn told her while pulling on her arm. “Mama’s dead. We have to run; she said to save ourselves. Come on!” Nikole’s tears streamed down her face, her omm’s blood on her clothes and skin. She stood there frozen. Zayn came from behind her and pushed her out the door. “Come on, Nikole, Mama said to run; we have to. Please, let’s go.”

“Zayn, what happened? How did this...”

Zayn took a few seconds to hold his omm in his arms. He embraced her and let her cry into his chest. He stroked her hair, trying to calm her, but she was gone. He saw Nasir from the corner of his eye and called to him. Nasir had as many of the people gathered as he could at the end of the hallway. Together they walked out of the castle and left their home.

The group made their way across the bridge, when suddenly a child screamed. Everyone’s attention turned in the direction the child was pointing. Nikole and Zayn let out a cry. Nasir dropped to his knee. Hung from a tree, his body torn apart, was King Tamman. Nikole ran to him, wanting to save her abb. With Zayn behind her, they realized as they got closer nothing could be done. He was gutted, his organs spilled on the ground. Nasir came and forced Zayn and Nikole

BLOOD PURPLE

back to the crowd. They pushed on their journey, both embracing and crying.

“Nikole, we will get our revenge. I swear it. Haydar will pay for this betrayal.” Nikole nodded and continued in a trance as they all walked across the mountains. The underbrush crunched beneath their feet; the smell of the trees floated on the breeze. They reached the end of the trail and started to descend into the city. It was then that they saw the fires. The whole town was on fire. Humans were on fire, their houses, and their possessions. It was total chaos.

Nasir led the Algula around the city, out into the terrain of the country. “We need to head for the ocean. There is this ‘New World’ I have heard about. We should travel there. Put as much distance between him and us as possible. We can come back later to seek revenge. Right now, we have to rebuild our people.”

Zayn nodded, not fully listening. He was still focusing on the horrific images of seeing his parents slaughtered.

A journey of three days got them to sea. Nasir prepared five ships, enough for everyone to travel. They loaded up the ships and departed for The New World. It was there, on the ship, that Nasir handed Zayn a letter from the King.

زَيْنُ،
 إِذَا كُنْتَ تَقْرَأُ هَذَا فَأَمَّاكَ وَأَنَا
 قَدْ تَوَفَّيْنَا قَبْلَ تَوَلِّيكَ الْعَرْشِ.
 نَاصِرٌ وَأَنَا نَاصِسْنَا هَذَا، وَأَنْتَ أَنْتَ
 تَسْمَعُ لِنَصِيحَتِهِ. سَوْفَ تَعْرِفُ
 مِنْ تَصَرُّعِ جَاهِزًا لِلْقِيَادَةِ بِنَفْسِكَ.
 لَقَدْ وَافَقَ نَاصِرٌ بِأَنْ يَعْطَاكَ كِيَانِيَّةً
 وَسَوْفَ تَحْمِيكَ أَنْتَ وَنِيكُولُ.
 رَجَاءُ بِأَنْ تَحَافِظَ عَلَيْنَا. فَأَنْتُمْ
 سِنْدًا لِبَعْضٍ. لَا تَجْعَلُوا الْفُرُوقَاتِ
 تَبْعَدُكُمْ عَنِّي بَعْدَ. فَكُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ
 حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْ تَبْقُوا الْمَمْلَكَةَ
 حَيَّةً. فَأَمَّاكَ وَأَنَا نَوَيْتُ بِكَمَا نَعْلَمُ
 بِأَنَّكُمْ سَتَنْهَوْنَ رُؤْسًا عَظِيمًا.
 حَتَّى تَحْكُمَ أَنْتُمْ الْإِنْسِي
 الْبُلُوكِ

"What does the note say Zayn?" Nikole asked half-awake half asleep.
 "It's from abb," Zayn told her while wiping away his tears. "Here, I'll read it to
 you."

Zayn,

If you're reading this than that means your omm and I have died before you
 were ready to wear the crown. Nasir and I have discussed this, and I would hope
 you listen to his advice. You will know when you are ready to lead on your own.
 Nasir has agreed to treat you as his own ebn' and protect you and Nikole. Please

BLOOD PURPLE

take care of her. You two have each other. Never let differences keep you apart. You will each need the other to keep the kingdom alive. Your omm and I believe in the both of you, and know you two will make great leaders. We love you both.

Abb

Coming back to the moment, Zayn shook his head, trying to clear his mind, stay focused on the mission. “We are here, Sire,” he was told by one of his soldiers. “Let’s go,” he told Nasir.

They blew the door open to the front of the training center and moved cautiously around the corners. There was blood all over the floor. They kept searching, opened every door and looked in every room. “Zayn, come quick!” Hearing Nasir call for him, he ran across the hallway to the room Nasir was in. Bursting through the doorway, the stench of blood overwhelmed him. There, lying in a gory heap, were Derrik and Hamza.

“What happened here? Where is Nikole?” Zayn said, looking around, confused and worried.

“Sire, I don’t know. You can tell she has been here. The table has been used, there are strands of her hair still here, and the burn marks on the metal I am sure are from her.

“FUCK!” Picking up the table and throwing it against the wall, Zayn snapped. “She couldn’t have disappeared. Check this whole place from top to bottom. No one leaves until we until we find her!” Zayn’s temper was flaring at the thought of his okht not being there. As he walked past the walls, he exploded in anger, punching holes along the hallway as he passed. He needed to get out of there; the sight of the blood was too much to handle, and the fear of not knowing where Nikole was became unbearable. He summoned the water from the pipes and it began to flow through the halls like a river washing away the blood and the dead bodies. His eyes flared yellow, swirls of black moving back and forth in them while he watched it all run past his feet and out of the building, down the side of the mountain. Hours passed, and there was still no sign of her. Nasir convinced Zayn he needed to return home. The men packed up to leave the facility. Zayn was too upset to think. He walked around in a daze. He didn’t even remember making it down the mountain and into the car. “I failed her, I failed my parents, and I just failed,” he said, putting his head in his hands and weeping. Nasir lead the way back home, and when they arrived, Zayn walked up the stairs, passing everyone who was watching.

Sitting in the back of the room, Adara's cried, knowing her friend was in trouble. She saw Zayn walk to his office. Slowly she made her way past the crowd of people and up the stairs, passing the guards who had come to know her presence was welcome in the King's home. Knocking on the door she heard, "Come in." Slowly she pushed the door open and saw her King sitting on the ground by the window. He looked up at her and motioned her in.

Sitting next to him, her back against the wall, she placed her hand on his, resting on his knee. "She wasn't there, huh? Did he lie to me?"

Zayn slowly shook his head no. "I think she was there; she just isn't now. Derrik was killed, so was Hamza. There is no sign of her at all." He felt the warmth of her hand on his. Slowly, he leaned his head on her shoulder, needing her company.

"Hopefully she is safe; maybe she got out and is seeking shelter somewhere. We can pray for her safe return." Adara slowly caressed his arm with her left hand. Trying to show him the comfort he desperately needed.

"Thank you for coming; you didn't have to."

She shook her head at his words. "I didn't want to be alone either." Sitting there together in seclusion for a while, they comforted each other as they each cried in silence.

A knock on the door woke them both up. They had fallen asleep. Looking at the time, they saw that about two hours passed. Zayn cleared his throat. "Come in."

Nasir came in and saw the two of them sitting on the floor. He bowed his head reverently. "Sire, the men have returned. There is no trace of her. The track you found led to an abandoned vehicle at the end of the mountain. Right now, we have no leads." Zayn nodded, dismissing Nasir.

"What are you going to do, Sire?" He looked at her, moving strands of her matted hair off her face. Her yellow eyes sparkled from the tears still pooling in them. He had never noticed her beauty before. He'd always dismissed her since she was Nikole's best friend. "Call me Zayn, and I do not know."

Zayn stood, looking at Adara's yellow eyes, looking back at him. He offered her a hand and helped her to her feet. Their bodies were so close together, the friction was evident in the room. He made a move, leaning down, kissing away one of her tears. "We will get her

BLOOD PURPLE

back. Please join me for dinner; I could use your company.” She nodded at him, and then followed him to dinner.

CHAPTER NINE

He carried her through the mountains, around the trees, and down the trails. His cabin was tucked away, not visible from the main trails. Her body was covered in dried blood. He couldn't tell how old the wounds were; burn marks, knife cuts, scrapes, and bruises marred her beautiful skin. He didn't know where to begin dressing her injuries. Opening the cabin door, he walked in and took note; nothing looked like it had been touched. He always checked to make sure he hadn't had unwanted visitors.

Slowly walking her to his bedroom, he gently laid her down. Her heartbeat was light, her breathing shallow. Going out to his storage shed and grabbing a pail, he brought it inside to the bathroom and filled it with warm water. Collecting a washcloth and some soap, he took the pail and went to the bed. Sitting on the edge, he started with her feet. Dipping the rag in the warm water and lathering some soap on it, he wrung it out and slowly started to clean her skin. Inch by inch the blood came off; her toes revealed her olive skin.

He worked his way up her body but hesitated at her thigh. He'd seen her naked on the table, but this was different, more intimate. He took his shirt off and decided to drape it over her lower half. Her legs almost completely cleaned, he counted the number of burn marks, 34 in all on her two legs. He retrieved the first aid kit. Taking out the burn cream, gauze, and tape, he returned to the bed. He applied cream to each wound and placed gauze over it, securing it to her body.

He moved to her well defined stomach, making sure the fabric covering her more intimate areas was still in place. He had chills across his arms as his fingers grazed over her skin. She was

BLOOD PURPLE

perfection. He had never seen a finer body. She had gashes all over her, some of the cuts going right to the bone. He couldn't begin to understand why they would cut her so badly. As he tended to her wounds his mind couldn't quite wrap around the torture this woman had gone through and he couldn't help but wonder if she was involved in something illicit.

He moved to her arms. Her beautiful arms were cut deeply, muscle was showing and it looked like the wounds were also burned. Working slower on this than the rest of her body, he gently removed the dried blood. She was going to need stitches, and lots of them. Moving to her shoulder, he slowly moved the shirt down some. He saw the cut from her shoulder to her breast. He sucked in his breath at the sight... Her skin destroyed and mauled. Cleaning it off, he carefully worked on the other arm.

Her body now cleaned, he looked to her face. Her hair was soft as silk, a rich brown color. He began removing the dirt and blood from her face, the cuts on her cheek not looking as bad as the ones on her body. He left her to go look for his medical supplies. He wasn't sure if he would have enough; she was going to need so many to tend to all of her wounds. Sitting back on the edge of the bed, he started to stitch up the wounds on her arm. He could picture how she would look once she healed. Two hours later, her body was cleaned and her wounds tended to. He found her one of his old oversized tee shirts and worked it down onto her, keeping her covered to the best of his ability. He grabbed a pair of socks and put them on her feet to keep her warm. He tucked her into bed, pulling the sheets around her, securing her properly.

He let her sleep; clearly she needed it. Going to the kitchen, he rummaged around and found some soup. The cool nights of the mountains could be hard on some, and he wanted to make sure she was comfortable when she woke up. Now he just had to figure out who she was.

Her mind was racing. Why couldn't she get out of here? She screamed and yelled but no one could hear her. "HELLO!!!"

It was like she was trapped in her body. She tried to open her eyes, to scream out, but nothing. Her voice was lost, and the rest of her wasn't cooperating either. Exhausting herself completely, she drifted off into a dream.

"Come on, Nikole, you can do it... Think fire!" her siti told her, as she

waved her hand in front of her to show her how fire can dance.

“But siti, look.” Nikole held her hand up in front of Afaf’s face. “My fire is broken; nothing happens.” Nikole closed her eyes and thought FIRE but nothing happened. Her little face began to crinkle, the tears starting to form. “Siti, I’m broken. I don’t work!”

Afaf laughed at the sight of her hafeeda Nikole whimpering. “Calm now, Nikole, you will get it. You are only five. Why, I was much older when I learned how to control it. Maybe next year.”

Afaf heard a little growl come out of Nikole. “No. I want fire NOW” Without warning Afaf’s skirt caught fire. She quickly moved to put it out, while still laughing at her hafeeda.

“Well, leave it to you, little stubborn Princess, to make fire so young. Now you must not ever burn your siti’s skirt. Especially her favorite one.”

Nikole laughed, clapping her hands. “See, Siti, I made FIRE!”

Hearing the commotion, Ikram and Tamman came in the room and gasped at the sight, the Queen Omm’s slightly burnt clothes, their bent laughing and clapping, and the servants hiding.

“Omm! What did she do to you?” Ikram said, walking over and picking up Nikole.

“Well, she wanted to learn how to make fire, so we made fire. Didn’t we my little Princess?”

“FIRE!” Nikole called out, and one of the servant’s shirts burst into flames. Nikole laughed and clapped. “Abb, FIRE!” Tamman’s body froze as nothing happened. Looking around, everyone was relieved he didn’t combust. Tamman came and picked up his baby girl. “No more fire, Princess, not till you’re older.” They all look around at each other, laughing.

“You know she has strong abilities. Five is very young to start controlling elements. We will have to train her, make sure she knows right from wrong, and make sure she doesn’t burn down the home,” Tamman said, laughing with a bit of pride in his voice.

“I’ll take care of her lessons. As the only one with the fire ability left around who knows how to harness the power, it’s my job,” Afaf declared.

Ikram ran her hand over Nikole’s arm. “Nikole, make sure you don’t set anyone on fire, okay?”

Nikole looked at her omm and smiled. “Yes Mama, no siti on fire I know.” The adults all laughed. “Yes, because siti is the most important of all!” Afaf chimed in.

The man watched her body. She hadn’t moved in hours. If her

BLOOD PURPLE

chest wasn't rising up and down, he would think she had died. He pulled the covers back and checked the wounds. Everything seemed to be healing. Tucking her back in, he noticed something he hadn't seen before. Leaning down, he realized her cheeks were wet. She was crying. He stepped back away from her body and moved to sit in the chair next to the bed. He wondered if she was in pain or if she was just crying.

CHAPTER TEN

They sat at the table in silence, looking at each other, no one moving very much. Zayn looked at Nasir from across the table. Both were pale in complexion; both looked like they were about to snap. “No one has brought back any intel on her? Nothing at all?”

Nasir shook his head slowly. “It’s like she vanished out of the facility. We didn’t see any blood trails, nothing. If she walked out of there then there should have been some tracks leaving the facility.”

Adara slowly ate her peas, trying to decide if she should speak. “Have you thought of maybe a tracker? Maybe someone who’s had her blood recently can locate her?” Both men looked at her in shock.

“Why didn’t we think of that before?” Zayn said as he put his fork down and looked at Adara. “Do you know who has fed from her?”

Adara slowly nodded at the two men. “Her and Kevin, they kind of have been, well... known. If anyone has, it’s him.”

“The bar owner? Seriously, my okht has been with him?!?”

“Yeah, I know. He’s her usual when she isn’t in the mood to hunt. Want me to go ask him?” Adara offered.

“No, I will be going there myself. You can come if you would like, but I want to see his face when I ask him and inform him she is missing. We are going right now.” Zayn pushed away from the table, grabbing Adara’s hand and pulling her with him. “Nasir, we will be back. Standby for further instructions.”

Zayn and Adara made their way to his car. Quickly, they pulled out of the driveway and drove to Kevin’s club, Impact. “How long have they been, well, using each other?”

“I’m not sure; I know it has been for a while. I was the one who

BLOOD PURPLE

told her she needed someone steady so she didn't always have to hunt. I know the other night when she met Derrick she was in a hunting mood. Had she just listened to me, none of this would have happened. I should have pushed her harder. I was a fool for thinking she would be okay hunting every time she got angry. I just hate myself for not forcing her."

"You know this is not because of you, right? None of this is your fault. It's mine. I yelled at her the night she went to the club. Did she tell you about that?" Zayn asked.

"She said you two had something, but she didn't get into detail. She just wanted to drink and hunt." Adara looked out of the window while speaking, not wanting him to see the shame she felt. They exited the highway and pulled into the club. The parking attendants scrambled to attention when they saw their King. A trusted few at the club knew their identity, mainly for Nikole's safety. Zayn stormed through the front doors and headed upstairs, Adara chasing behind him.

"Everyone downstairs," Zeus bellowed when he saw the King approaching. The patrons scattered as Zayn and Adara walk to the bar.

Kevin came up, a bit intimidated, and looking rather confused. "Sire," he said, bowing his head in reverence. "How may I assist you tonight?"

Zayn looked around to make sure everyone had vacated the area. "Have you and my okht exchanged blood in the past?"

Kevin looked from the King to Adara, confused as to why they would both be there, or that they were here together, and why they would care about this. "Yes your highness, we have in the past. Have I offended you?"

Zayn let out a low growl. "Have you and my okht exchanged blood in the last week?" Kevin started to shake his head slowly. "It's been about two weeks, Sire, since Nikole and I..." the King put his hand up, stopping Kevin's sentence.

Zayn turned to Adara. "I don't think it will work; it's been too long. Are you sure there is no one else?" Adara looked up and started thinking of all the men the two women had associated with in the last year.

"Excuse me, Sire, what is this about? What isn't going to work?" Kevin asked starting to worry. "Is Nikole alright?"

They both ignored Kevin and continued talking among themselves. Kevin was furious; he slammed his hand down causing a few glasses to fall off the ledge and break. “Excuse me, what the fuck is going on with Nikole?”

Silenced, they both turned and looked at Kevin, Zayn clearing his throat. “The night she was in here last, you remember she met someone, Derrik. He kidnapped her.”

Kevin looked at them in shock. Adara spoke next. “They tortured her, and now we can’t find her. She is missing. We need someone to track her.” Adara noticed Zayn’s eyes, the yellow flakes starting to appear. This conversation wasn’t helping his mood. She placed her hands on his shoulder, trying to calm him down.

“Let me try and track her. I know it’s been two weeks and that’s a long time, but I have to try and help. We are friends,” Kevin begged.

“Your help will be useless. It’s been over a week. You know we cannot track anything beyond that time. If my soldiers couldn’t find her than there is no point of you trying,” Zayn said as he turned to leave while Kevin came from behind the bar and jumped in front of Zayn putting his hands out onto the King’s chest.

“Stop, I can help. You have to let me try. You have to!” Kevin pleaded. Zayn looked at him with a cautious glare. “She means something to you?” he asked. Kevin nodded, his pain evident. Zayn acknowledged his feelings. “Come at the break of dawn to our house. We will all leave together. Let’s hope for her sake you can sense her.” Zayn took Adara’s hand and pulled her out. “Don’t be late.”

Back in the car, Adara looked over to Zayn. “What do we do if he can’t find her?”

Zayn placed his right hand on her left hand, squeezing it in comfort. “We have to pray that he can.” They sat in silence for the remainder of the trip, their hands still grasped together. Pulling into the driveway Zayn softly spoke. “Thank you for accompanying me, this would be that much harder if I were doing this alone.”

“It was my pleasure. Um, Zayn, it’s getting late. I should probably head home. Will you keep me informed of what happens?”

Zayn thought for a moment. He didn’t really want her to leave. “You can stay in a guest room here if you like. That way you don’t have to come back in the morning. It’ll make things easier on you.”

Adara hesitated at the offer, unsure of how to react and what to

BLOOD PURPLE

say. "Oh, yeah, sure, that would be great. Thank you."

"Come inside. I'll show you the spare room. It's right across the hall from mine." They got out of the car, both nervous about the conversation that had just happened. Walking up the staircase in silence, Zayn brought her to the room directly in front of his bedchamber. Looking at her, he said, "Anything, anything you need, dial *3 and they will help you. I'm at *1 if you need something from me." He took her hand and placed a kiss on the back of it. "Good night, Adara, and thank you again."

Adara shut the door to the room she was staying in; she wasn't quite sure what to make of anything. Her best friend was missing, maybe dead, and she was staying in her house and getting friendly with her akh, the King. Something didn't feel right about this. She stripped her clothes off, folding them neatly, and put them on the dresser. Climbing into bed, she noticed the sheets. They were so soft, like Egyptian cotton. Laying her head against the pillow, her mind wandered as she drifted off to sleep. The last image she remembered was Zayn's face.

The sun crept up slowly over the horizon. Zayn and Adara paced back and forth in the foyer, waiting for Kevin to arrive. Minutes ticked by in what seemed to take forever. "Where is he?" Zayn questioned.

"I am sure he will be here shortly, Zayn."

"If he doesn't get here..." the doorbell rang, cutting Zayn off. They raced to open it. Kevin stood there, ready and willing to go hunt for Nikole.

"Nasir, it's time. Let's roll out," Zayn said, turning to Adara. "I want you to stay; I don't want you getting hurt. I will keep you updated on anything that happens."

Adara thought to protest then bit her tongue; she was a guest and had no choice. Nodding, she said, "Be safe, you all. I'll be waiting." She turned and walked off, passing Nasir on his way in.

Nasir watched her walk out of the room and looked to Zayn. Ignoring what he was seeing play out, he spoke up. "Okay, let's go; we don't have much time if this is going to work." Loading in the cars, they headed back to the mountains.

The trip to the facility was traveled in silence. Kevin couldn't stop his mind from racing, all the different things he might see, or that might happen to Nikole. They had been friends going on almost

60 years and occasionally lovers. Kevin felt in his gut that something bad was going to happen. Lying back in the seat, he closed his eyes. He could see Nikole's beautiful hair flowing over her shoulders, her smooth skin with the golden tan.

"Hey there, what can I get you tonight?" Kevin asked the woman who just sat at the bar.

"I will take a Martini, dry."

"Coming right up." Kevin mixed her drink not taking his eyes off of her. "Are you new in town?" he asked, pushing the martini across the slick counter to her.

"No, but this is the first time I've been here. I'm Nikole, what's your name Mr.

Bartender?"

He smiled at her, liking the sound of her voice, its soothing nature. "It's Kevin, and I'm more than a bartender; I own this place."

Blinking back the memories, Kevin turned and watched the mountains. So much time had passed since that night. He should have told her how he felt long ago. Now she might be gone forever and he may never have the chance to tell her the truth about his feelings. "We're here," he heard Zayn say. He thought to himself, *it's show time.*

Getting out of the car, they hiked up to the facility as Kevin focused on feeling for Nikole. He closed his eyes, breathing in the air, let his mind clear, and tried to follow his instinct. He could smell something, taste it in his mouth. With his eyes shut, he started walking, following a trail. He led Zayn and Nasir through the building, stopping in the room where Nasir found her strand of hair. "I can't sense her past this point." He let out a sigh. Zayn and Nasir looked to each other, frowning.

"You sure you can't feel her past this spot?" Nasir asked.

"No, it is as if everything has been washed away, no trail or anything." Zayn cursed and walked off punching a wall. "SHIT, Nasir!"

Kevin felt like he had missed something but sat back quietly.

"Okay Kevin, thank you for trying. The King and I appreciate your help. Let's get you home."

As they headed back to the house, Zayn realized the chances of seeing his okht again were getting slimmer.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Dominic watched everything play out on the monitors. Who was that Zayn and his minion had brought up to the facility that morning? Dominic made note to figure out who and what he was and his role in all of this. He looked familiar. He would have to retrace his steps over the last week. His plans were coming together. There were a few hiccups in the beginning, but it looked like it would end better than his original plan.

Killing his akh was the best decision he'd ever made. He should have taken him out a century ago. Now that he was out of the picture, he could focus on taking over his abb's regime. It was a nice surprise to see the blonde had invaded the facility. Now he didn't have to kill everyone himself. He wasn't sure who he was but didn't care; he got rid of Hamza for him. This situation felt good for Dominic. Haydar told him to sit back and not get involved so as far as abb was concerned; Derrik messed the whole operation up from the beginning.

His cell phone rang just then. "Speak of the damn devil and he calls." Flipping it open, he answered. "Abb, we have a problem." Dominic smiled as his plan started to unfold.

"What do you mean we have a problem? I thought they had the girl?"

"They did have the girl; Derrik fucked it up." He mumbled under his breath "as usual."

Taking a breath he said, "He grew a heart and placed a call to the King for help." Dominic smiled, looking at himself in the mirror, his abb was a fool and so easily manipulated.

Haydar let out a growl hearing his ebn' refer to that lesser being

as “King.” He ground his teeth as he said, “What happened to Hamza? He isn’t returning my phone calls either. What’s going on out there? Do I need to fly out and take care of things myself?”

“Hamza was killed.” His tone was casual, indifferent.

“WHAT?! How was he killed? He is my best fighter! Dominic, what are you NOT telling me?” he shouted, fierce and lethal.

“Hamza let his security become lax, and someone broke in and rescued her.” Dominic took the knife out of his pocket. Twirling it around, the tip pressed against his palm, little droplets of blood leaking out from the penetration.

“Dominic, you’re telling me that one of my ebn’s is dead, my lead general is dead, the girl is gone, and all I have to show for this operation is that you are still around?”

Dominic didn’t like the question, implying that he wasn’t much of a consolation prize. “Yes, Abb, that’s what I am saying.”

“You have 48 hours to fix this mess, or I am coming out there, and I will kill you myself for allowing this to get so fucked up.”

Dominic heard nothing but a dial tone then. That did not go quite as he planned. He’d succeeded in getting his abb riled, but he had not anticipated him being *that* upset with him. For all Haydar knew, he was innocent in this mess. Dominic turned to re-check the monitors. He needed to figure out who this mystery man was. Rewinding the footage from yesterday, he watched as this man entered the room and methodically took out each guard. He watched him come up from behind each one, his knife slicing their throats, his hands cracking their necks with ease. The man moved stealth like from one room to the other. He had to have had military training. Dominic watched on the screen as the blonde broke into the torture room. He came up behind Hamza, getting the upper hand quickly with a blow to the neck. Dominic marveled at their skill. The way Hamza countered and fought back. It looked like the mystery man was cut across the cheek. That should leave a scar, might help in identifying him later.

Watching the final blow, he saw the mystery man stab Hamza in the kidneys, or what looked to be that general area, taking him to the ground and leaving him for dead. Dominic looked closer at the monitor; he noticed how easy the metal snapped free. Zooming in he saw the cause; the metal was being heated by something. “I’ll be damned, he controls fire too. Well isn’t this just perfect?”

BLOOD PURPLE

Dominic was told the last people alive who controlled the fire element were within the family; clearly his abb's information was wrong. He walked around his room thinking about this new development. Maybe he could capture them both. He needed to learn to control his powers. He could make the stranger teach him. Dominic's mind started racing at the possibilities.

He realized he had gotten farther this week in over turning his abb's control than any other attempt. His last efforts were still being laughed at. He remembered how he fought with his abb about wasting efforts with the humans. It was supposed to be an easy operation, but no, the Americans had to fuck it up.

"Abb, why do you even bother with the oil? We don't need it. What good is it to have useless power? Just kill them all and do what we want," Dominic told Haydar.

"Dom, listen, you never know when these resources are going to be needed. We need to keep the foothold here. Saddam is easy to control, you just show him money and he thinks it's the best idea. Trust me; if Zayn is in America, they are going to need the oil to do anything over there."

Dominic continued to disagree. "We are wasting time, men, and money. If we want the crown, we have to strike where it hurts them most."

Haydar smiled at his ebn'. "Trust me; this will hurt them."

Dominic was unhappy with his abb's plan to use Iraq as the weapon of choice in his operation. Dominic searched for a way to prove his abb wrong; he headed to America to start laying his influence on that presidential administration.

Dominic laughed remembering how easy it was to convince Bush that Saddam was the man to take down. Fall of 1989, Bush couldn't have been more excited about discussing Saddam and his Kuwait issues. Humans are all idiots, easy to manipulate if money and power are involved. He did understand some of the fun his abb had playing with Saddam like a toy. He thought back to that summer on August 2, 1990.

"Son of a bitch!" Haydar bellowed. *Dominic and Derrick came in from the other room.*

"Abb, what's wrong?" Derrick asked.

"Those fucking Americans are invading! Who the hell do they think they are? King of the fucking world? Now this is going to set us back years!" Haydar stormed about the room looking for things to throw. *"We have to kill them all, nuke the whole fucking country."*

Dominic held in his laugh. "I told you, abb, the Iraqis are nothing but a headache. Look what we have to do now."

"DOMINIC IF YOU ARE NOT GOING TO HELP LEAVE!" Haydar screamed.

"It's like taking candy from a baby some days," Dominic said out loud to himself.

No wonder in the last 200 years the world had turned into a shit hole; humans had lost their self-respect. At least in the 15th-19th century, men fought for a cause, now it was just money. Dominic stood up, put his suit on, and ran his hands through his hair as he looked in the mirror, making sure he looked presentable. He looked down at the monitors where he paused on the face of this new stranger. "Hm, Zayn, who did you bring into the facility?" Pouring himself a quick drink of scotch and taking a sip, he remembered where he knew that man from. The club. He left his room in search of this new player, someone new to manipulate.

CHAPTER TWELVE

She hadn't moved, not a finger, a toe, nothing. It'd been over twenty-four hours; she should have shown some signs of consciousness. Walking over to the bed, he ran his fingers down her arm, looking for any sign of response. Nothing. He picked up her wrist and checked for a pulse, the faintest of beats being detected. He set her arm back down and went back to the storage room. Opening the storage cooler, he pulled out two pints of blood --and brought them back into the house. Gathering up the IV drip supplies as well, he headed back to the bedroom.

He looked over her arms for a vein large enough for the needle to safely stay in. Not seeing one on her left arm he moved to the right. On the inside of her bicep he felt a good vein, one that was large enough to handle the needle. Hanging the bag of blood on the headboard he hooked the line up to it. He then sterilized her skin. and put the tourniquet in place. Gently slapping the area a few times to get the vein to show, he carefully inserted the needle into her arm, The blood coming back into the syringe assured him it was a good vein. He took the IV line, attached it to the needle and the blood began flowing in. He taped the line down to her arm and put it back next to her side.

Looking down at her he noticed tears had dried on her cheeks. Wetting a wash cloth with warm water, he applied it to her face, softly cleaning away her tears. He noticed her eyes had started to open slightly. He could see the light violet shade sparkling though. He thought to himself, "What are the odds that she also controls fire?" He reached his hand down and brushed a strand of hair out of her face. "Wake up my sleeping Algula; it's time to join the rest of the

world.”

While Nikole was in her comatose state, she couldn't communicate with anyone. All she was left with were her thoughts. She could hear a voice off in the distance, one she didn't recognize. Why couldn't she wake up? She opened her mouth to make a noise but nothing happened. This person didn't act like he heard anything she was trying to say. She tried to concentrate on Zayn, seeing if she could establish a mental connection to him, calling out, “Zayn, please hear me. I don't know where I am. Please come save me. I'm sorry I didn't listen to you. Zayn, please...” She knew it was useless; he wouldn't hear her. She knew the chance he was within 10 miles of here, wherever here was, was one in a million. She hadn't thought about her abb in a long time, after seeing him gutted when they fled their home, but right now, right now, all she wanted was her abb to hold her and tell her everything was going to be ok.

She ran out of the castle and through the field, laughing and pretending to soar through the air. King Tamman watched from a distance. The sight of his little girl carefree and full of life brought a smile to his face. Nikole ran to the tree on the outskirts of the castle walls. She started circling around it. Tamman wasn't sure what she was looking for. He slowly started walking in her direction to see if he could help her with whatever she was doing. He stopped when he saw her put her foot on the trunk of a tree.

Her little hands gripped for something to grab onto. Her arms wrapping around the trunk as she pulled herself up, trying to climb up the tall tree. Tamman could hear her grunting and growling, forcing herself to move inch by inch up the large tree trunk. He laughed to himself, proud that she wormed her way up. She got about twenty feet off the ground when all of a sudden he saw a squirrel coming down the trunk, headed right for Nikole. Tamman heard her scream and watched her start to fall. Her little arms flailed as she fell flat on her back.

Tamman's heart shattered when her cry broke the tranquility of the day. He jogged over to her side and picked her up in his arms. Her little head tucked into his chest, her tears flowing down her cheeks. “It's okay, Princess. Don't worry, we all fall and hurt ourselves.”

Her tiny little face looked up at him, the violet in her eyes sparkling. “Abb, I got scared. I should be strong and tough like you, but I fell.” Her little world was shattered. Tamman engulfed her in his big arms. Holding her tight, he cooed at her, calming her, soothing her worries.

“Nikole, baby, everyone falls; everyone gets scared. Even I get scared. I'm

BLOOD PURPLE

scared that one day I won't come home to you, Zayn, and your omm, scared that one day I will fall and not be able to stand, but you have to push through that. You are only eight; you will have many times in your life that you fall. You have to just believe in yourself. Promise me you will always believe in yourself. Never fall and lay there. Always fight. We are Kadins, fighters. We never give up. We never give in, Nikole."

She batted her eyes, wiping her tears, and looking up at her abb. "Do you understand baby girl? It doesn't matter how many times you fall, as long as you stand back up and fight."

She nodded her head and wrapped her arms around his neck. "Yes Abb, I get it. I always stand up." He set her back on the ground and pointed to the tree. "Let's go climb that tree. You can ask for help, but never quit. Come, we will climb it together."

He saw more tears running down her cheeks. He checked to make sure the IV was still secure and no bruising had started. He took the washcloth and slowly cleaned her face again. He didn't understand why she was crying. The pain should be better now that she was receiving blood. He looked at his watch; four hours had passed since he started the IV. "Come on, wake up. Please." He brushed his thumb across her cheek and he noticed that she twitched. "That's it, come on, respond. Wake up."

Slowly she started moving her eyelids. Blinking away the tears, she looked up into the stranger's eyes. Turning her head, she looked around the room, trying to understand what and where she was. Nothing looked familiar. She tried to speak, but nothing came out. Her throat hurt from the screaming she'd done. When she began to panic, the stranger placed his hands softly on her shoulders, making sure to touch the spots that did not have any skin damage.

"Shh, calm down. You are safe. No one is going to get you here. No one knows where you are. My name is Alec and you are staying in my home.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Zayn woke up from his sleep. “Nikole,” he called out. Nothing, silence. “Nikole!!” He knew he heard her voice, maybe he had been dreaming. She sounded like she was in pain, calling out for help, his worst fear coming to life. Looking around the room, seeing the daylight breaking through the blinds, he realized he had finally slept. Sitting up he saw the time. He couldn’t believe how late he’d slept. Going to his closet and changing into a more suitable outfit, he left his room in search of news.

On his way out of his room he stopped for a moment, looking at the door to the room Adara was using. He wondered if she was still in there, if she was able to sleep. It felt weird wondering about her when Nikole was missing. He should be focused on his okht, not his okht’s best friend. He moved closer to the door, running his hand over the wood. Should he knock? He should leave her alone. What was wrong with him? He needed to go searching for Nikole, yet he wanted to be here, with her. He slowly tapped his nails against the door, waiting for an answer.

“Come in,” Adara called from the room. He slowly opened the door, peeking his head in, he saw Adara lying on the bed. Taking a deep breath he pushed the door all the way open and walked in. Basking in her beauty, Zayn became aroused and his need became wanting. He knew what he wanted to do with her, knew how good it would feel and how much he needed the comfort during this time. Gazing over her body, his eyes focused on her lips, soft full lips. He should leave, just turn around and walk out of the door. There wasn’t a logical reason why he was here. She was Nikole’s best friend, but he felt drawn to her, her body, and her smile. Looking at her, lying on

BLOOD PURPLE

the bed, relaxed and calm, he started to speak.

“I, uh, I came to see...” He was unsure of what to say. She was just lying on the bed in white cotton top and cut-off jeans.

“Sire, did you need something?” Zayn’s attention snapped to the side. One of the servant girls was standing in the bathroom. He adjusted his body language and moved his hand to hide his erection from the view of the servant. “No, I just needed to see Adara for a moment. I’ll come back later.” He nodded to her and turned to leave.

“Wait, Zayn, can you stay a minute?” He turned at the sound of Adara’s voice. Slowly he moved forward. He looked over at the servant and motioned her out of the room. He waited to speak until she left.

“I hope that you slept well. Is there anything I can get you, Adara?” Zayn moved to the end of the bed, taking a seat at the foot and resting his back against the bedpost. Adara sat up, folding her legs underneath her body.

“I didn’t get much sleep. My mind kept, well, drifting.” She looked him over, trying to decide if she wanted to speak with him about what she thought about all night. Zayn could tell she was holding something back, but what?

“I thought I heard Nikole’s voice last night. Actually, it woke me up. Clearly I was dreaming, but it seemed so real. She seemed scared. I just didn’t want to be alone after waking up to that,” he told her, hoping if he opened up she would too. “I panicked this morning when it all happened. It seemed so real, like she was here. I just keep thinking, what if she is right around the corner and we keep missing her? I could never live with myself if I found out that was true.”

“I’m sorry, I am sure that was very hard waking up like that. Are you okay, do you need anything, Zayn?” Looking at him with worry in her eyes, she moved to the middle of the bed, reaching her hand out to touch his face lightly. He leaned into her touch, her soft fingers on his cheek. “I know you love her, and I know you need her home. We will find her and bring her back.”

“I just wanted to wake up with someone to lean on. I woke up and looked around and felt completely alone.”

“You don’t have to be alone, Zayn. I’m here for you through all of this. I won’t leave your side. I promise.”

He took her hand in his, stroking her soft skin with his thumb. “That means a lot to me, that you would do that, stay here with me.

Are you sure that you don't need anything. More clothes maybe?"

She shook her head. "No, someone already brought me a couple changes of clothes, but thank you. Have you eaten, Zayn? You look a bit pale..."

He felt his need grow at the mention of eating. "I am a bit hungry."

Adara looked at his complexion and took a breath before speaking. "May I offer myself to you, my liege?"

His eyes met hers; he could feel the pounding in his fangs as they extended down his gums. "Are you sure? I mean, we have people for that, you don't have to."

Adara pulled back. "You don't have to. I was just..."

Zayn cut her off before she finished her thought. "I would love to feed from you." Her golden eyes looked at him, desire evident.

He moved up the bed to her, inhaling her scent. His hand rose to her cheek, the pad of his thumb skating over her soft skin. He could feel his heart rate speed up. Opening his mouth as she tilted her head to the right, leaning onto his hand, he dropped to her neck and licked her vein. He could hear the blood running under her skin. His fangs scrapped along her flesh and in one swift movement he penetrated. Her blood spilled into his mouth, the warm sweet taste of her mixing with him. His eyes rolled back in his head as he savoured every drop of her. Adara's hands traveled up his arms and down his back, pulling him to her, holding him tight. She let out small moans as he pulled from her. Her body wanted her to respond to the desire he was causing. Closing her eyes, she pictured them together, becoming one. Feeling him retract his fangs and licking the wound shut, she sighed.

With his lips covered in her blood, she couldn't resist kissing him. Tasting herself in their kiss made her mad with need. Her tongue pushed in, and finding his, they danced together. Zayn wrapped his arms around her and pulled her onto his lap. They both got lost in the moment, lost in the need and companionship. She finally broke the kiss after seconds turned to moments and moments turned to minutes. "Zayn ... I..."

There was a loud knock at the door and they both jumped back. Wiping his mouth, he looked at the door. Adara let her hair down and covered her neck with it.

"Come in"

BLOOD PURPLE

Nasir opened the door and took in the scene just for a second. “Sire, we need you downstairs. Please, if you could come.”

Zayn stood quickly and followed Nasir, but before he stepped through the door, he turned, looking over his shoulder at Adara, and bowed his head before shutting the door behind him

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Dominic left his hotel and pulled into the parking lot of Impact, noticing only two vehicles sitting out front. That was a good sign. He needed alone time for what he had planned with this new person. Exiting his car, he grabbed his black bag from the trunk and walked around to the back of the building. Finding the employee entrance shut, he jiggled the handle, locked. Setting his bag down he unzipped it. Reaching inside he fumbled through the items, moving past the rope and tape. He pulled out a leather pouch. Kneeling on the ground, he took the lock-picking set and started working on the door. Hearing the pins release inside, he turned the handle, and the door slowly opened. Putting his kit back in his bag, he picked up his things and stepped inside.

Softly shutting the door, he took a pair of gloves out of the bag and slid his hands into the tight fitting leather. He reached into his side pocket and pulled out his knife. Walking down the hallway into the back of the club, he slipped through the kitchen and around the wine storage. Hearing footsteps approach, he hid in the shadows as a big man walked in carrying a case of beer. He watched as the man opened the cooler and started putting in the bottles. Dominic quietly snuck up on the man, taking the knife and unsheathing it along the way. He could smell the man's sweat from working in the heat. Disgust built inside Dominic from being that close to filth. Three feet behind him, Dominic stood, ready to strike. He took his left hand and stepped closer, then, covered the man's mouth with his hand. As he pulled him tight to his body, the man started to resist, striking his elbows into Dominic's ribs. Kneeing his victim's right leg, hitting the common peroneal nerve with his right knee, the man buckled.

BLOOD PURPLE

Dominic's right hand came up to the guy's throat with the knife. In one fluid motion the knife penetrated his skin, as Dominic slit his throat from left to right. He lowered the body to the ground, blood spilling out from the neck. He patted the man down, looking for a weapon. Finding a colt .45 stored at the small of his back, he grabbed it. Putting the man's shirt back in place, he noticed the lightning bolt on his arms.

"Fools, always trying to play God."

He grabbed his bag and headed out onto the main floor. Looking up the stairwell, he decided to start there. Taking two steps at a time, he climbed in silence. His two hundred and thirty pounds of muscle swiftly gliding through the air. Looking over the lip of the stairs, he saw the man behind the bar. The same man Zayn brought to the building. Waiting for him to turn his back, he moved to the bar and hopped over the counter. Pulling out the Colt .45, he pointed it at the man's head and pulled back the hammer. The sound echoing in the silence

"Do as I say or you die. Turn around slowly."

Kevin's body stiffened before he started to turn, his mind racing, trying to figure out how to get out of this situation. "What do you want?"

Dominic took his right hand, gun in his grip, and struck Kevin across the face. "Did I say speak? Now move to a chair. NOW!"

Kevin started to back up out of the bar area till he found a chair at the nearest table and looked up at the dark man. Dominic dropped the bag on the floor next to Kevin's feet. "Open the bag and get out the tape."

Kevin moved his head down to stare at the bag then back up to the man. Hesitantly, he reached down, opening the bag. He fumbled around until he found the roll of duct tape. The sight of the other items made him sick to his stomach. Setting the duct tape on his lap, he looked back up at Dominic.

"Wrap your legs and one arm to the chair with the tape." Dominic instructed. Kevin did as he was told, taking his time trying to think of a plan. While Kevin was busy taping himself to the chair, Dominic reached for the bag and pulled out the rope, knives, and gag. Dominic looked back to Kevin. Seeing his body semi-secured, he grabbed the rope and tied down Kevin's free arm then wrapped the rope around his body and chair, securing him in place.

“What is your name, and how do you know the King?” Dominic asked as he moved back to the bar where he spread out his knife collection.

The clinking of them sent chills down Kevin’s spine. With his heart racing, panic set in. “My name is Kevin, and the King’s okht is a customer of my bar. That’s it.”

Dominic picked up a knife and a sharpener. He ran the knife over the sharpener as he enjoyed the sound that the metal on metal was creating. He stalked toward Kevin with a menacing look in his eyes. “You know how I know that you are lying to me?” Dominic brought the knife up to Kevin’s face, running it over the sharpener before pointing it at his nose. “I have video footage of you and the King in the building where the Princess was being tortured. Now, what would the King be doing with a little bar owner if you were not someone important?” The knife sliced across Kevin’s left cheek as Dominic laughed.

“Let’s try this again, Kevin. How do you know the King? And remember, I’m the one with the knife.”

Kevin stared at the end of the knife, beads of sweat running down his forehead. Kevin shifted his eyes to the stairwell, praying for Zeus to come up. Dominic looked over his shoulder then back to Kevin. “Looking for your friend? Well, he is dead on the floor in your storage room. It’s just you and me. Now talk!” Pressing the knife to his cheek, causing blood to drip onto the knife, Dominic gave a mad grin.

“Nikole and I have exchanged blood. The King was hoping I could track her, but since it had been too long I was useless.” Kevin lowered his head in shame. He had just betrayed his king and his friend and his lover.

“Now, are you sure that’s all? You’re not keeping something else from me?”

Kevin shook his head no. He felt sick to his stomach. “Good.” Kevin looked up at him, trying to figure out what he is going to do with him. “Will you let me go? I gave you what you want.”

Annoyed with the situation, Dominic laughed at Kevin and lowered his head to Kevin’s eye level. “You people really are fools. No, I’m not going to let you live.” Kevin made a noise of protest when he felt the blade on the right side of his neck, being pulled across. His mind flashed to Nikole, her taste, her smell, and her

BLOOD PURPLE

touch. "I'm so sorry Nikole." He felt his death coming; he didn't get to die a hero, a lover, an abb. He died alone, as a coward, his greatest fear. Kevin's head fell forward, the blood pouring from his throat.

Dominic searched Kevin's pockets and found his cell phone. Opening it and checking out the call history, he saw Zayn's name and sent a text message to the King.

"Kevin's dead. You're next."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

She opened her mouth, trying to speak. Nothing came out; her eyes were showing her panic. Turning her head, she saw she was hooked up to an IV. Taking a moment for her skin to feel her clothing, she realized she had nothing on from the waist down. Her eyes shot back to the man's, narrowing. She felt her face flush at the realization he must have stripped her. She started trying to move, but felt a rush of an extraordinary amount of pain. Alec realized she was starting to panic. He placed his left hand on her right shoulder. "Please calm down. I really am not going to hurt you."

Alec took his fingers and placed them on her wrist checking for her pulse rate. "Your pulse is much stronger than it was. This is a good sign." He checked the dressings on her arms then turned and left. She watched him, unsure of what had happened. Why wasn't she home if she was saved? Was he good or bad? She watched him come back in the room with gauze and what looked to be ointment. Alec sat on the edge of the bed, his body facing hers. She looked into his eyes and didn't see evil, but she still didn't trust him. Watching his hands move to her arms and removing the dressings, her eyes got wide when she saw all of her stitches. Looking from her arms to him frantically, she tried to make noise.

"Please calm down, I'll explain everything. I used to be an EMT in the military, so I have had training on taking care of the injured. I stitched up your wounds and dressed them. I've been tending you for about 24 hours. I started giving you blood about four hours ago when your pulse didn't raise over time." He noticed her eyes dilate in fear. "Don't worry; I know you are one of the Algula." Her heart slowed down and she closed her eyes in relief. "I have given you, so

BLOOD PURPLE

far, one pint of my blood. I will be replacing this bag when I am done tending to all of the wounds. Hopefully tomorrow you will feel like yourself again.”

She slowly breathed in and out, absorbing everything. His blood, she didn't know how she felt about that. She thought she should just be grateful he'd saved her life. She watched him work methodically. His touch was light, and he wasn't hurting her. He switched to the other arm and repeated the steps. Finishing up on her arm, Alec looked to her chest. “I need to work on the wound that is across your chest. May I please move the shirt?” Nikole slowly blinked, understanding that if he was going to attack her, he would have already.

He slowly lifted her up and pulled the tee shirt, making sure to keep the covers over her body. Nikole was nervous about exposing herself to him. Granted, she realized if he wanted to take advantage of her, he had plenty of opportunity to do so. The edge of the tee grazed up her back. She could feel the chill passing her skin as the cool air of the room touched it. He took his left hand and pulled the covers around her body, covering her as he pulled the shirt over her right shoulder exposing the wound. Laying her back down, he tended to the dressing. He never took his eyes off of the wound. She watched him, his demeanor. Once he was finished, he returned her arm to the sleeve and slowly lowered the shirt back down. He helped her adjust back into the bed, making sure she was comfortable.

“I suppose you want to know what happened and how you ended up with me.” Nikole nodded her head slowly, it hurt to move her muscles, but she was relieved that she still maintained some control. He kept talking, not even looking at her but putting away his supplies. “The people who took you captive were using my building, and when I saw they were trespassing, I went to investigate. That's when I heard your screaming. I went to see what they were doing and I found you in the bloodiest state imaginable.” He stood up and went to retrieve the second pint of blood. Coming back into the room he swapped the empty blood bag for the full one and hooked it up to the IV.

“I took them out one by one. The one who was torturing you put up the biggest fight. He gave me the cut right here.” Alec pointed to his cheek, showing her the scar that was starting to form. “When they were dead, I got a blanket, wrapped you in it because your body

was naked, and brought you back to my place. You were unconscious for the time you were with me. I gave you the blood I had in storage when I thought you were going to die. I hope that your wounds will be tolerable tomorrow. After two pints of my blood and rest, you should be able to start to move.” He looked down at her, lying there helpless and trusting. “I wish I knew your name. Then I could notify your family that you are okay.”

Alec moved the chair he was sleeping in closer to the bed so he could sit and give her some space. “Do you want to see if you can do any motor skills?” Again, she gave a slow nod of approval. Taking her right hand in his, he asked her, “Okay can you move your fingers?” Nikole focused on her hand, willing her fingers to move while praying to her inner self that she wasn’t damaged forever. She looked at him desperately; she couldn’t tell if they moved. “Come on, you can do it, move them.”

Nikole felt the tears start. She couldn’t move her fingers. He watched her eyes as she blinked and tears started to travel down her cheeks. He realized she couldn’t move. He put her hand back in the bed. “It’s okay; they will move tomorrow. Why don’t you go back to sleep? The blood will heal you faster if you’re asleep.” Looking into her tear filled eyes; he could feel her pain, the sadness she was expressing. “Get some sleep. Tomorrow will be a better day.” He turned out the light and sat back in his chair, hoping she slept.

Nikole looked up at the ceiling, small shimmers of light flickering off it from the other room. She closed her eyes and tried to sleep. Her mind raced, reliving the experience. What was it she heard before Hamza came in; Dominic and Derrik were akhs? A thought popped into her mind, Adara. Dominic knew where she lived. Oh dear Gods, what if he went after her next? She had to fix herself. She couldn’t stay like this forever. She had to warn someone. “ZAYN! ZAYN, HEAR ME! PLEASE GODS, PLEASE!!!!” Over and over she screamed his name. Nothing, no response.

Opening her mouth to speak, nothing but air came out. She couldn’t even call out for help. She could feel the pillow she was laying on start to dampen from her tears. She laid there crying for an hour, wearing herself out enough to finally sleep. She just couldn’t understand why this man, Alec, would take care of her and risk his life to save her if he didn’t know who she was.

Getting out of his chair Alec checked on Nikole to make sure

BLOOD PURPLE

she was asleep. When he noticed that her crying had stopped, he made his way into the kitchen to pour himself a drink. He would wake her up tomorrow, hopefully after a better night's sleep. The blood her body had received would have rejuvenated enough that she could start to move. That way he could get her out of here and back home.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Closing the door to Adara's room, Zayn looked at Nasir who extended a cell phone out to him. Zayn looked down at the screen and saw the message.

"Kevin's dead. You're next."

Zayn looked at the message, confused. "I thought at the facility everyone was dead. Who sent this? Is there another one out there?"

Nasir shook his head. "I am not sure. We just got this, and I wanted you to see it first. Derrick was dead at the facility, but I am sure Haydar could have had other mercenaries working for him."

Zayn looked up at Nasir. "Have we checked to verify this is true?"

"I assumed you would want to be there when we go, so I have the men ready to head to the club and some to go to his home. Just waiting on your go," Nasir explained.

"Let's go. I don't want people to know about this, that it's related. I don't want them to think that, just because they are associated with us, they are going to die."

"I understand, Zayn. I haven't told them what it's in regard to; I just have them ready to move out. The Ghul are not foolish enough to fall for that propaganda anyway." Nasir motioned for Zayn to follow him. They moved down the stairs and out to the training grounds. Zayn saw two groups of eight lined up against the cars. He signaled to the men, and they quickly got into their vehicles. Zayn and Nasir got into the last one that headed for the club.

"I really hope it isn't true. I know him and Nikole were sort of close," Zayn said. "I want to know what he would want with Kevin. He doesn't know anything."

BLOOD PURPLE

“Well, whoever is doing this doesn’t know that, so they must have thought there was reason to attack him.”

The convoy pulled into the parking lot of Impact. “There are two cars out front. One of those has to be Kevin’s. Let’s take half around back and half through the front.” Nasir nodded to Zayn and radioed in the orders.

“Nasir, let’s take the front. The other team can take the rear.”

They moved to the front door. Nasir tried to turn the handle, but it was locked. “He must have used the back door because there is no sign of a break in here.”

Zayn watched as one of his men burst through the door, opening the club entrance. Walking over the threshold, Zayn led his men inside. Nasir signaled the men to break off and start searching for bodies. Zayn walked around the first level of the club in search for a sign that there had been trouble.

“Sire, come quick,” one of the men called from upstairs. Zayn and Nasir ran up the stairs and stopped when they saw what the Ghul had found. Kevin was tied to a chair, his throat cut and his blood pooled everywhere. Nasir walked around the bar and over to the corner, careful not to step in the blood. He saw Kevin’s arms and legs tied with rope and duct tape. “Maybe he didn’t tell them what they wanted to know and that’s why he is dead” one of the Ghul said.

“Your Highness, you are going to want to see this down here,” Zayn heard one of the lieutenants say. Feeling his gut start to turn, Zayn left the upstairs and headed to the location he was being beckoned to. Zeus was dead on the floor. Nasir came up from behind Zayn, running his hand through his hair, taking in the situation.

“This isn’t good, a lot of our people come here and this is going to scare the ones that were there for the 1777 attacks” Zayn told him.

“I know, Sire; we will get someone on this for damage control. Let’s head back home, because I want you out of the public setting where we can keep you under proper protection.” Zayn nodded to him in agreement while turning and walking for the front door. Zayn stopped at the entrance of Kevin’s office. Opening the door he walked in and flicked the lights on. Just as he thought, security monitors. “Nasir!”

“You okay, Zayn?” Nasir asked as he walked in, seeing what the King had spotted. “I’ll have my guys on this right away.”

Zayn gave his approval then left the room. “Let’s go, Nasir. The

Ghul can stay and take care of this.”

Walking out to the car, the two men entered their vehicle and proceeded home in silence. Pulling onto the property, Zayn broke the silence. “You think that’s what is going to happen to Nikole?”

Nasir hesitantly replied, “I don’t think so. I think they still want something or why else move her then come kill a friend of hers. I think she is still alive.”

They walked into the house, uneasy about the events that occurred. Zayn made his way up the stairs. “I’ll be alone for the night, Nasir. Come and get me if you gain any developments.” Nasir watched Zayn climb the stairs at an even pace. He knew the King was torn up inside. He had to find a better way to handle this.

Entering his room, he slammed the door, watching a picture fall off the wall, shattering the frame. He walked over to his chair and slumped in it. Looking to his right, he saw a picture of Nikole and him at his birthday celebration 10 years ago. He felt like the pain was breaking his heart. His omm always told him there is no shame in crying when it’s about ones you love. He loved his okht and wanted her home.

Adara heard the door across the hall slam shut. She wanted to go help him and be there for him. Why did she care so much? It made no sense to her. She decided she had no choice; she had to go check on him and see if he was all right. She left her room and stood in front of his door. She raised her hand, about to knock when she thought she heard something. Leaning against the door, she could hear him; the King was in his room, crying. Backing away from the door, she just stared at it. If he wanted someone to witness this, he would have come to her. She turned and headed back to her room.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Dominic watched from across the street as the Ghul frantically looked for clues outside of the club. He laughed to himself at how easy they were to outsmart. He turned his radio to FM 89.2 so he could listen to the transmitter he'd planted inside Kevin's club. Hopefully he could pick up on their next plans. Just when he thought he wouldn't hear anything useful, he heard shouting.

"Nasir!"

"You ok, Zayn?"

"I'll have my guys on this right away."

"Let's go, Nasir. The Ghul can stay and take care of this."

He wondered what it was that made the King yell for his Ghul guard. He turned the radio off; the recording device would pick up anything else. He watched as Zayn and Nasir got into their car and drove off. Putting his car in gear, he pulled out and decided to follow them.

Passing the streets of Colorado Springs, he started to recognize some of the names. The chick from the bar lived two streets over. Deciding on a detour, he turned down her street and drove to the end of the cul-de-sac. Grabbing his black bag, he got out of his car and headed to her back door. Looking around her house and inside the window of the bathroom, he noticed no alarm indicators on the windowpanes. Hopefully she didn't have a system installed. Setting his bag down and getting out his lock-picking set, he opened her back door.

Walking in through the kitchen undetected, he noticed that all the lights were off except for the bedroom. Slipping his leather gloves on, he grabbed his knife and made his way to the front of the

house. Looking around the doorframe to the bedroom, he saw a camouflage jacket sitting on the chair. Thinking to himself that is an odd style for a girl with class to wear, he tried to listen for movement. He heard the steps of what sounded like boots. On full alert now, he backed into the shadows and waited for the person in bathroom to appear.

Dominic heard the toilet flush and saw a shadow being cast on the ground. He noticed that the figure was different from what he remembered Adara's being. Peeking around the door, he recognized the Ghul uniform. With the Ghul's back turned to him, he was able to sneak up behind him. Taking the butt of the knife, he hit the Ghul in the back of the head, right over the spinal cord. The brunt of the force sent the Ghul to the ground as he lost consciousness.

Dominic picked the unconscious body up from the ground and carried him over to the table in the dining room; here he secured the body so there was no room for escape as he reached for his knife. Dominic felt the twinge of hunger set in as he realized it had been a while since he last ate. Walking into the kitchen, he saw an apple on the counter and grabbed it. Walking back into the dining room, he pulled up a chair and began to cut slices of the apple to feed himself. He watched intently, waiting for the Ghul to awaken so he could begin his torture. The Ghul started to stir, letting out a small moan before pulling against the rope trying to get free. "Hello, my name is Dominic, and you and I need to chat."

The Ghul's eyes opened, and for a split second he was confused, before he realized he was tied to the table. His eyes shot over to Dominic, and he watched him as the smile crossed Dominic's face. The Ghul growled, anticipating the next moments to come. Dominic sat up from the chair and ran the tip of the knife over the Ghul's calf, up his thigh, down the middle of his stomach and across his throat. "You should know this is going to hurt, and it might get a bit messy."

Dominic laughed while stabbing the knife in the left arch of the Ghul's foot and slowly worked up his leg. The sound of the victim's muffled screams through the gag soothed Dominic as he dragged the knife up his body. The blood started dripping on the table, running down the end and spilling onto the white floor. Dominic cut the Ghul up limb by limb; he wanted the King to know no one was safe.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The sun shone through the cracks of the blinds, waking Nikole from her dream state. Her eyes weak and sore from crying all night, she tried to turn her head to the right to see if he was still there. Surprisingly her body did what she wanted. The sunlight gleamed off his golden blonde hair; his smooth, white skin appeared to shimmer in the light. His cheekbones, his arms, his chest, rose and fell with each breath.

“Excuse me?” she whispered, trying to get his attention. “Hello...” He didn’t even move because her voice was so soft. Turning her head to the left, she looked around the room, trying to take in all of the surroundings. She moved her fingers; she felt the sheet next to her leg move. Her fingers were working today. This was good. Feeling the sheet start to bunch in her hands, she cracked a small smile. She could do this; she could sit herself up. She tried to move her arms. Her muscles ached and screamed at her as she bent them at the elbow and started to apply pressure on them. She winced at the pain. Maybe she was trying to do too much too soon.

Feeling the need to keep trying, she wiggled her toes and she watched the sheet move at the end of the bed. She wasn’t paralyzed by fear; she could do this. She needed to be able to get up; it was more important than anything else. She focused on her right leg, mentally telling it to bend, letting out a tiny scream at the pain soaring through her body. She was determined to sit up. Planting her right heel in the bed and bracing her palms on either side of her ribs, she pushed on all three limbs, even as the pain seared her insides. She screamed even as she felt her body moving.

She sat up two inches and lost control, dropping her body back

on the bed. “Damn it!” She let out a long deep breath. There had to be a way to get his attention. Turning her head to the side, she looked at him again. She looked at him again, trying to recall if she had seen him before. Did he know who she was? Surely not, if he had he would have called Zayn, wouldn’t he? She let out another breath and heard a small noise. “That’s IT!” she thought. Puckering her lips together and blowing, she heard it, a whistle. Her spirits soared as she licked her lips two times, took a deep breath, and whistled as loud as she could.

Alec shot up in the seat on full alert. Looking around for danger, he realized she was awake.

“You’re awake. Well, how are you feeling?”

She smiled at him, relieved that she could communicate this time and she wouldn’t have to stay in bed forever. “I am feeling better,” she softly said.

“You can talk.” Alec smiled down at her. “That’s great; I am Alec by the way.” He dropped his hand to Nikole’s and gave it a small squeeze.

“I am Nikole.” She breathed in deeply; relieved she could actually be heard.

“Nikole, you have been severely injured. Do you remember us talking about it yesterday?”

She shook her head. “Not really, only something about me being really hurt and in bad shape. The whole thing is a blur.”

Alec looked over her dressings, inspecting the wounds to see how much they had healed. Going to the bathroom and bringing out materials to place new dressings on her arms, he pulled up the chair close to her bedside and started to work. “Well, I am a former EMT for the military. When I retired I bought this land from the King. I have installed security monitors all over the mountain, and when I saw someone in my building, I went to investigate.”

She quietly listened and watched his methodic attention to detail as he cleaned her cuts and burns. “You bought all this from King Zayn? Did you tell him someone was using the building?”

He shook his head at her as he put more ointment on her arm over the stitches to reduce the possibility of a scar. “No, I didn’t call him; I didn’t think I had to. Do you have family looking for you?”

She turned away, tears starting to swell in her eyes. “I do, and Zayn is my akh.”

BLOOD PURPLE

Alec froze as he heard that. He glanced up from his work and met her eyes. The King's okht? "You are *the* Princess Nikole?" She nodded slowly looking at his reactions. She tried to speak but he cut her off. "I need to get you home right now. I am sure they are looking everywhere for you."

She wanted to speak but stopped her thoughts more clear today than yesterday when she woke for the first time. She went against Zayn's orders and wound up in trouble, captured, tortured. Nikole wasn't entirely ready to face the hard ramifications of her actions. "No, no, Alec not yet."

He looked at her confused. "Why don't you want me to call and get you home?"

Sucking in a breath she whispered, "I am not ready to go back to my akh. This is entirely my fault, and I can't face him. Not yet."

Nikole felt her face flush and her emotions started to take over. Her tears ran down her face and she fisted her hands. The pain in her heart was far worse than her body. "I never should have gone after Derrik alone. I went against my akh's wishes. He....He was right. I was foolish, and now look what I have done. I almost died, and Zayn would have been all alone forever because of me. I can't see him, not yet. What, what did they do to me?"

Alec took his thumb, wiped away her tears, and calmly started to describe what he saw. "You were strapped to the metal table with metal cuffs. Your legs were seared with something, leaving burns across them. Your arms were cut open; some bone was showing. You have a cut across your body and your face is severely bruised. When I noticed what was going on, it looked like two of your captors were fighting. By the time I got there, one man was gone and one man was dead. A third man looked like he was going to kill you, so I took him out."

Nikole looked up at him, gratitude and amazement in her eyes. "Thank you for saving my life."

"If you are the royal family, how did they get you? Rumour has it you can teleport. I never saw Zayn teleport when I fought in his military."

"I can teleport, and I tried, but somehow something was stopping me. The only thing I thought of at the time was they had someone who had mind control and was blocking me from leaving. Eventually I was just in too much pain to even attempt it."

He listened to her talk about what happened. The way she looked speaking of the event and her akh, the tears in her eyes, her tragic event. He couldn't help but admire her spirit and fight. "You can stay here for a bit. We don't have to call your akh just yet. Do you want to sit up, try a new position? I am sure your body must be stiff from lying like that for two days straight."

"Yes, that would be great. I tried earlier and hurt myself." He stood and pulled the covers down just a bit from her shoulders. He slipped his arm behind her body and his hand under her right arm. Slowly lifting her up, he heard her whimper in pain. She tried to hold it in, not wanting him to see her cry anymore. He adjusted her pillow and moved her hair from her face. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he repositioned the covers around her lower half.

"Is that better?"

"Yes thank you. may I have some water? My throat hurts and I think I should rest it."

He nodded and headed to get her some water from the kitchen. Bringing her back the drink, he sat down in the chair. "Would you like me to give you some privacy or would you like anything else?"

"Can you stay? Maybe we could watch some television or listen to music. I want to try and walk, but I'm tired. Maybe later we can see if I can move."

He went to his dresser and turned on the radio. The sound of Beethoven floated through the room. He then came to the other side of the bed and sat on top of the covers. Leaning back against the headboard, they both sat there, listening to the music. Nikole closed her eyes and tried to let the music soothe her soul and the pain she was feeling. She angled her body until she found his shoulder, she laid her head down letting it rest on him, finally feeling some comfort. He wasn't sure what to do, so he took his hand and grasped Nikole's. They sat like that until they both fell asleep.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Zayn woke up on the floor of his room. He had drunk himself into a stupor over the idea of never seeing Nikole again. He grabbed his head; he felt the pounding, and he could hear his heart beating loud, the sounds echoing in his mind. Rolling over slowly, he started to pull himself up on the edge of the bed. The walls were spinning and his body was aching. He still wasn't sure what happened last night. He positioned himself on the bed, propped himself against the bedpost, and noticed all of his pictures were broken.

“What the hell...?”

He surveyed the damage done to the room last night; glass everywhere, picture frames broken, even his favorite chair in pieces. What could he have possibly done to make such a mess? Looking down to his left, he saw two empty bottles of scotch. Well fuck that would do it. How could he have been so stupid? People depended on him to lead, to make the right decisions. He couldn't lose his composure like that and let others see him falling apart. Zayn looked at the time, 10 am; he needed to get up... he had decisions to make today.

He forced his way to the bathroom, each step he took, his body fought, muscles sore, limbs tight. Turning the water on, he let the steam of the heat build. Stripping his clothes off, he stepped in under the stream of water. Feeling the warmth beat on his back and his neck, he then accepted the fact that he couldn't change what happened. He couldn't fix the damage that was done. It was time to man up, time to fight, and time to find Nikole and bring her home.

Outside of his room, Adara laid her head against her door, staring at the frame. She wanted to check on him, she wanted to

make sure the screaming she'd heard last night hadn't been him hurting himself. *He's the King; he doesn't need someone checking on him. Right? But what if he does? What if he is hurt? I should check on him; he won't mind.* Adara mumbled to herself. Unable to resist any longer, she walked to the door and knocked. She waited a few minutes, nothing. She knocked again. She knew he should be up; it was too late for him to be sleeping still.

Adara slowly turned the handle and pushed the door open. "Zayn?" Looking through a cracked door, she saw glass and wood shavings on the ground. Feeling fear inside at what condition he might be in, she opened the door fully and stepped inside. She saw the destruction, the empty scotch bottles and the whirlwind of a mess that lay across the King's room. Turning toward the direction of the bathroom, she saw his silhouette reflecting off the shower curtain. She took in his body, large shoulders, slender waist, and thick arms. Oh good lord. The man was built. She just wanted to make sure he was okay, right? That was all, she kept telling herself as she took a seat in the chair behind the desk, absorbing her surroundings. She heard a small crack, and then moments later, she was planted on the floor. The chair gave out on her; looking to it she saw one of the legs had broken off entirely.

Zayn heard a crash coming from his room and shut off the water before pulling the curtain back and running into the room, knife in hand. "Adara! What are you doing in here?"

She looked up at him; basking in his naked wet body. "Zayn, I..."

He knelt beside her and looked her over; she couldn't stop eyeing his dark, olive, sun kissed skin. "Are you hurt Adara?"

She shook her head no, watching him stand as he reached for her arms. He took her hands and pulled her to him. "What are you doing in here anyway?"

Adara gulped and took a breath. "I wanted to check on you. When I didn't hear a response to my knock I got worried, so I cracked the door to look. I saw the broken glass and got worried for your safety, so I came in. There was the mess in the whole room, a total disaster, it was overwhelming. I had to sit down. And then, I was watching you...In the shower. Then the chair gave out on me. I had planned on leaving before you knew I was here." Unable to help herself again, she looked over his body, wanting to touch him. Zayn

BLOOD PURPLE

realized he was standing in the middle of his bedroom, naked, with a woman he wanted to be inside of.

He ran his hand up her arm, her neck, then along her jaw. “You were concerned for me?” He watched her nod, her lips slowly separating, and the tips of her fangs showing. She started to speak when he put his finger over her lips to silence her. “Shhh.” He looked to the bed and could see it was a mess, but there was no broken furniture on it. He started walking them toward the edge of the bed, his left hand wrapping around her, guiding her. He sat her down on the edge, looking down at her.

“How were you going to comfort me, Adara?” Running his thumb over her left cheek, he couldn’t stop staring at her lips; she colored them in a red gloss. They shimmered in the light, mesmerizing him.

“I just wanted to hold you if...” She stopped to take a breath, and in that instant, he leaned down, capturing her lips, kissing her. Their tongues intertwined against one another’s in an erotic dance, hunger blooming within them. She let her hands roam over his chest, then his abs before they slid up his sides to his spine. He pushed her back, laying her on the bed. He held his weight up with both hands planted on either side of her.

“If?” he teased while kissing down her delicate neck.

“If you wanted me to,” she said softly, leaning her head to the side, welcoming him. He let his hands run up her body, under her shirt, and over her skin. Sitting up, he pulled off her shirt, tossing it to the side, and then started to pull her skirt up.

“Yes, I want you, Adara. I have for a while.” Kissing her again, not letting her speak, he claimed her lips and slowly started to tease her entrance. Murmuring into her mouth, he dropped one hand to her ass, lifting her up, slowly taking her. She now belonged to him.

He took his hand and cupped her breast as he teased her nipple gently with his fingers, watching her face. She closed her eyes and moaned at his soft touch. Taking his mouth, he kissed the luscious mound and teased it with his tongue. His fangs scraped across her skin, sending chills down her body. Kissing across her chest, he captured the other nipple, biting on it. She moaned feeling his sharp teeth against her flesh.

Her nails running down his back, she pushed up against him, meeting him thrust for thrust. She was marking him as he took her

over and over. She watched his lips suck on her nipple, his hand still on her ass, squeezing and holding her to him. She arched her chest into him, crying out as his thrusts got quicker and harder. She let out cries of pleasure as his name slipped off her tongue.

He felt his body reacting to her need. He couldn't help the overwhelming sensation to claim her as only his. He had to mark her; he had to take her every way possible. Seeing her face flushed with color, he claimed her mouth before sitting up. Looking down at her body, he ran his hand over her chest. His strong arms reached down and lifted her up, turning her over. She looked over her shoulder at him as his fierce eagerness started to consume them both. He wrapped his hand in her hair and pulled her to his chest. He took his fangs and sank them into her neck, drawing the blood out into his mouth as he entered her.

Sucking and thrusting in alternating beats over and over, Adara panted out a cry as her hands reached up and held his head to her neck. His free hand wrapped around her waist, dragging his nails across her stomach. Her body responded to his needs as they both released. She milked him, her walls sheathing him, taking everything he had to offer. He let go of her neck and cried out, "Adara!" Seeing the blood drip down her back, he licked her clean and sealed the wound as they fell onto the bed. Tangled up in each other, they felt their hearts beat in unison.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Waking up in a cold sweat, his heart pounding and his mind racing, Dominic looked around the room. He couldn't remember when these dreams started happening, just that they had been going on for as long as he could remember. At least two hundred years. He lay back on the pillow and closed his eyes; he knew what the dream was from. He remembered what his abb used to do to him.

"Dominic damn it, what is wrong with you? Can you do nothing right?" Haydar yelled while smacking his ebn' in the head. "You are such a disappointment. All you had to do was kill her. How fucking hard is that. You're bigger, you're stronger and you're a fucking Algula!" He hit the back of Dominic's head harder; this time causing his neck to whiplash.

"Abb, I couldn't. Nothing I can do to change that. The woman was nice and I can't kill someone; I'm not like everyone else. I'm not a monster like you."

Haydar grabbed Dominic by the throat, lifting him off the ground and shaking him. "Boy, you listen to me. If you do not grow a pair of balls and take your place in this family, you will be out on the streets. You can go live with your bitch amma for all I care. Live up to your blood line! We are killers. We do not let people live. We seduce, we eat, and we kill. End of story. Stop sniveling like a baby. Derrik! Get in here now!"

Derrik came in from the other room and saw his akh being held up in the air by his abb. He knew what was going to come next, what always came next. He went to the closet and grabbed their abb's most valued possession, his whip. "Here you go, abb." Dominic looked at his akh; his arms started to flail, trying to free himself from his abb's grasp. "Stop this, abb. You have to stop; you can't do this! It's not his fault. Don't hurt him!"

Haydar tossed Dominic to the ground while he begged for his akh's safety then signaled for Derrik to turn around. He cracked the whip in the air next to

Derrick's head. "Dominic, you want to be a leader? You want to control others? You need to kiss compassion goodbye. Maybe this will show you what compassion gets you."

Dominic watched as his abb took the whip and cracked it against Derrick's back. Derrick clenched his hands, cringing as his abb whipped him over and over. "Abb stop!" Dominic yelled as he charged at Haydar. Haydar grabbed Dominic's shirt, pulling him to his chest staring him in the eye.

"Do you think I should stop?" he asked, spitting out the words. Dominic nodded and tears streamed down his face. "Derrick, take the whip now. Come over here. We are going to teach your akh how to be a man." Dominic watched Derrick approach slowly and hesitantly, both of the boys' souls breaking inside and neither aware of how to help the other. Only one of them was showing the fear they both were feeling. Haydar ripped off Dominic's shirt, exposing his bare flesh. "Derrick, you are to beat him till he bleeds on every inch of his back. If you stop, you will be next."

Dominic lowered his head. He knew his akh had no choice, but he hated him just the same for doing it. Derrick took the whip, and with a flick of his wrist, the snap in the air chilled the room as the flesh was broken and the first drops of blood were exposed. Dominic's body shivered as the pain flowed through his bones. Haydar grabbed him and moved Dominic onto the whipping post. "You aren't man enough to stand still without running are you?" Locking his hands in place, he went and sat on the couch and watched Derrick, the only ebn' he could be proud of, beat his useless ebn'. Hopefully teaching him that compassion would get him killed.

Derrick felt the tears starting to form, but he fought himself. He knew if he showed their abb any weakness, he would be next. Taking the whip and swinging it over and over at his akh's flesh, the singing sound of the whip in the air killed him as his arm started to tire. His akh couldn't stand. Nothing on his back was clean; nothing was free from blood and welts. He looked to his abb for direction. "Derrick, go put the whip up and clean yourself off. We will go hunting later tonight.

"Yes, abb." Putting the whip away, he left the room without looking back.

"You see what weakness gets you, Dominic? Pain. Nothing but pain." Dominic couldn't talk, his voice tired from the screaming and crying. Haydar took out his knife and waved it in front of Dominic. "A boy has to learn at a young age that he should always listen to his abb, so I'll leave you a memory of today... Every time you see it, you'll know I am watching, and I am always right."

Haydar took the knife and pressed it into the flesh of Dominic's left arm,

BLOOD PURPLE

engraving an H so he would always remember abb knew best.

Dominic opened his eyes, blinking two tears out as he heard the phone ring. Who the hell wanted to talk this early in the morning? Reaching over and looking at the caller ID, he said, "He really is the fucking devil."

Reluctantly he answered. "Hello, abb."

"Dominic, tell me you have the bitch locked up and in custody," Haydar said through the phone, his tone full of venom and resentment.

Dominic took a few breaths, trying to organize his thoughts. "No, I don't, but I know that Zayn has also lost her and doesn't know where she is. I'll get her, don't worry."

"Don't worry? You have never had any skills that were useful, and you tell me not to worry? You were supposed to just stay back, and I'm sure somehow you fucked this up too for Hamza and Derrik. I just don't know how. I'll be there in 24 hours. If you don't have her for me to feed on, I'll be draining your blood in her stead."

Dominic heard silence on the line. His abb always was one for the dramatic approach. He couldn't ever do anything rational. He tossed the phone, relishing how it crashed into the wall. He wouldn't need to communicate with his abb anymore. After he killed his bitch bent amty, he would kill his abb and take over the charge against the King.

Getting out of bed, he slipped on his pants then moved to the bathroom. Looking in the mirror, he saw the H on his shoulder. He slowly counted to ten, trying to regain his composure. He was glad Derrik was dead. He was a useless akh, always siding with the asshole. If they just let him do what he wanted they would have killed everyone back in 1777, but no, Haydar always had to do it his way, and Derrik always followed along. They had both blamed him, like he had control over mama dying. Like it was his fault she bled out while giving birth to him. His abb always reminded him how he was a let down from the start.

"You are nothing but a burden on this family! All you do is drain it of anything worth having. Get out of my sight. I don't want you to come home for a week. Useless fucking ebn!" Dominic looked up at his abb, not understanding what he had done wrong this time.

"But Abb, I didn't do anything. Where am I supposed to go?" Dominic ducked as a bowl was hurled at his head. He heard it break against the wall

behind him.

“She is dead because of you. You just had to be born. You have always been ass backwards. You had to come out that way. You killed my Sarah!” Dominic started crying. He looked for someone to help him, but no one was in the room.

“Abb, I’m but a child. Where do you want me to go?” He sniffled and wiped away his tears.

“I don’t care where you go, just get the fuck out!” Haydar grabbed Dominic by the collar and threw him out of the door.

Dominic heard his abb lock the door from the other side, his heart crushed. Ten years old, what was he supposed to do for a week out alone with no family?

Coming back to reality, Dominic decided the only thing to do was set a trap for his abb and Zayn, kill them both at once, then take over everything. There was no better way to take over than if both his male competitors were out of the way. He pulled out his computer to do research on the local area and where to best set the trap. He had to decide though... He knew one thing for certain; he was going to make sure his abb’s death was slow, bloody, and intensely painful.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Waking up with hair in his face and a hand on his leg, it took a minute to get his bearings. Nikole, the Princess, was laying in his bed, not just in his bed, but also on him. He wasn't used to being around others, not after the war. It had been a few hundred years since he even wanted to talk to someone else, but now he had her in his bed and draped over him. Slowly, he moved her off of him in an attempt to make her more comfortable, accidentally waking her in the process.

"Mmm...morning," she said in a cute and mesmerizing sexy tone.

"Good morning, Nikole. How are you feeling?"

She blinked her eyes open and noticed his violet-flaked irises. Smiling up at him, she froze for a moment when she realized where his hands were and that they were still in bed together. "I'm much better, but Alec, what are you doing?"

He paused for a moment, then realized that in his attempt to move her down he had positioned himself over her. His hands were placed around her body as he tried to maintain support as to not hurt her. "I, um, you had fallen asleep on me and I was trying to make you more comfortable since I was getting up, forgive me."

She brought her hand up to cover her mouth as she yawned, still trying to take in the situation. "Hey, look, you moved your arm. That's great. I bet you can walk today, if you want to try," Alec said in an attempt to take the attention off of him.

Nikole nodded in excitement. "I would love to walk. Can we try it now?" She slowly started to turn her body to get out of the bed even though he was still holding onto her. He felt her start to move,

but he wasn't paying attention, as he couldn't keep his eyes off her face and noting beautiful she was in the morning when she woke up. "Alec, you can let go; I'll be okay." He snapped back into reality, quickly releasing her, and got out of the bed himself.

Nikole was determined to get out of this bed. She moved the covers off of her, forgetting just how naked she really was. Alec sucked in a deep breath at the sight of her healed legs, sleek and splendid. Nikole's right leg moved out of bed and slowly landed down on the ground, making contact with the floor. Her toes danced along the wood flooring as she tried to get a good footing. Adjusting her body, she shifted, allowing her left leg to dangle off the bed. Alec watched cautiously as he noticed the spark in her eyes he hadn't seen before. She was excited, a true warrior who wanted to reclaim her independence.

"Do you want some help? That first step can be hard," he offered.

She shook her head no. "I have to do this for myself, Alec." She braced her hand on the bed, and with one motion, started to stand up. Both feet planted firmly on the wood, she straightened up. The smile on her face was breathtaking. Her teeth showed, fangs and all, as color came to her flesh, lighting up the room. Nikole moved her left leg and started to step forward. It happened in slow motion...Her falling. Alec moved quickly to catch her, but missed her by inches as her body hit the ground hard. "Shit, Nikole, are you okay? I never should have let you do that alone."

She pushed his hands away. "Alec, I have to do this on my own. Please."

Alec moved back, but not too much, as he watched her struggle to stand on her own. Drawing on her inner strength, she pushed herself up on her arms and braced against the chair Alec had in the room. Pulling with what little physical strength she had, she was able to move to a kneeling position. She saw the door. She was going to walk out of this room if it killed her. She looked up to Alec and smiled. "Just a bit further, no?" She laughed to herself as she brought her left leg up from under her and pushed off it. Standing and holding onto the chair, she breathed deeply and tried to take another step.

Alec moved to her side and offered a hand. "Just for support. No help, I promise."

BLOOD PURPLE

Nikole took his left hand in her left hand as she felt his body come behind her and his right hand brace her right elbow. She looked over her shoulder back to him and began to talk but he interrupted her. "I just don't want you to fall. You can do all the work; just think of me as a brace." Smiling at him, she nodded a bit before looking back to the door. She moved her right foot and slowly started to take her first steps out of the room. Alec barely held onto her as she crossed the fifteen feet from the bed to the door. As they walked out of the bedroom, she looked at his living room and kitchen. She was blown away by the design.

"Did you build this place? It's amazing." She loved how the loveseat sat facing a huge picture window, displaying a view of the lake. The woodwork and carpet coordinated, reflecting the rays of sun fill the home with warmth and light. The natural coloring, the light shades of tan and brown, mixed over the cream walls. The two of them made their way to the sofa. Alec helped her sit down on it. Her hands ran over the light brown leather. She had a hard time absorbing the sight of everything. "Alec this place...it's fascinating." He sat down beside her, watching her take in the different things around the room.

"I built this place in 1975 shortly after I bought this land from your akh. I've slowly upgraded it with the decades as more modern items became available, but it's my sanctuary. It's off in the distance, not easily found by people. It is..." he paused and exhaled slowly, thinking he needed to choose his words carefully. "It is the only thing I have left in this world that is worth caring about. I lost everything when we all migrated to the States, so this is where I hideout and keep to myself."

She knew how he felt; she had lost everything too. Moving her hand over to his and grasping it, she gave him a look and softly said, "I am sorry my amm took everything from you. You have been so generous in helping me. Can I repay you somehow?"

He shook his head looking at her; he didn't understand why he cared so much. "No, but thank you." He ran his finger over to her cheek and brushed her soft skin. Moments passed. He wasn't sure what he wanted to do. Did he take her home or keep her? There was just something about her that made him boil inside and want to burst with joy. He didn't understand what it was. He didn't even know her.

"Why don't I call your akh and arrange for him to meet me

somewhere to take you back?” He didn’t want to give her back, but he couldn’t keep her. He couldn’t have anyone else again. Not after last time. “Give me his number and I’ll call.”

She hesitated for a moment. “Can’t I stay one more day?”

“No. I don’t have people over. I told you, this is all I have since the war. I’m sorry; I’m just not used to being around people.”

She nodded, understanding what he meant. The war of 1777 had destroyed so many families. Maybe he’d lost a lover or a child? She felt a bit ill thinking of him having a lover. She looked up at him again and smiled as best as she could. “Of course, that is very rude of me. I am sure you want your home back. Thank you for taking care of me and helping me. I can never repay you.”

He could tell he’d upset her, but he didn’t know what else to do. He wasn’t used to this, used to people. He realized he hadn’t checked her wounds yet. He took her hand in his and brought her arm to his lap. Removing the bandages, he saw everything had healed and minimal scarring from the knife wounds showed. He felt some relief, knowing she would be okay. He wished he could do more for her.

Nikole, unable to predict what this man was going to do, pointed to his cell phone on the table. “Can I please use the phone? I’ll call Zayn myself.” Alec handed her the phone and watched as she began dialing. How he wished he could trust himself enough to let her stay the one more day she asked for. How he wished things had been different for him. Why did he have to be cursed with this inner demon, the ones that haunted him from that night in Zahle with Haydar? He sat back and listened to her talk to her akh.

“Zayn! Zayn, oh Gods!” Nikole cried into the phone.

“Nikole! Are you ok? Where are you?”

“Yes, yes I am fine. Do you remember the guy you sold the training center to, Alec? I’m at his place; he found me and gave me his blood.”

“Damn it Nikole, you don’t know if you can trust him. I’m getting you out of there, we don’t really know him.”

“Zayn, calm down. I am safe and I trust him.”

“The men are ready to fight and get you to safety. We will be there in no time. Nikole; I won’t lose you again, we are ready to kill!”

“No, I don’t need you to bring guns. Just come pick me up. Do you know where he lives?”

“I thought he wasn’t even in the States anymore. Last Nasir and

BLOOD PURPLE

I heard he went back to the homeland. Are you sure you are safe with him?”

“What do you mean you thought he left the country? Zayn you are talking too fast calm down. Just come and get me.”

“Okay, we will be there in a two hours. I love you, and I’m so glad you’re safe. Be careful, Nikole...”

“I will Zayn, see you in two hours. Oh and love you too!” She ended the call with her akh and looked up at Alec. “Well, Zayn will be here in two hours.”

Alec got up and walked to the window, opening the blinds. “I just got home a month ago and haven’t checked in with anyone yet. Come on, let’s clean you up and get you dressed. I don’t want your akh to think I did anything disrespectful to you.”

She stood from the couch, wobbling a bit, and started to walk slowly to the bedroom. She felt Alec come up behind her, supporting her weight. She was grateful he had taken her in, but she didn’t want to leave, and she didn’t know why.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

He hung up the phone in a slow daze. Nikole was alive. He had to go pick her up. He turned to Adara, blinking back tears he felt forming. “She is alive. She is alive!”

Adara wrapped her arms around him and pulled him close. He leaned into her embrace, his forehead lying against her neck, smelling her hair, her scent, and letting it comfort him. Adara stroked his head, letting her fingers run through his hair. “Do you want me to go with you to get her?”

Zayn shook his head no, lifting up his eyes and catching hers in his gaze. Blinking twice, he leaned into her and kissed her softly. “No, this is something I have to do on my own, but thank you. You will be here when I bring her home right?”

Adara brushed a strand of hair from his eyes. “I’ll be here as long as you want me to be, Zayn.”

He took her hand and kissed her palm. The soft skin tantalized him. “It will take me two hours each way, so I will see you in four hours.” He kissed her goodbye and got out of bed to go dress for the trip.

Walking into his closet, he looked over his clothes, thinking to himself how close he’d come to losing her. She was the only person who had stuck by him through thick and thin, always. He took a deep breath and sighed heavily. Duty, it was his duty to be king, but weeks like this made him wish he’d never born into the title. Slipping into his outfit, he walked back out to see Adara laying in his bed still. Her hair was splayed out across the pillows, her body teasingly spread out on-top of the covers. Zayn growled in excitement at her beauty. “We

will finish this later, my pet,” he said with a cocky grin before he left to make his way to Nasir’s office to inform him of the good news.

Seeing Nasir’s door closed, Zayn knocked twice, and then opened the heavy wooden door. Pushing inside, he saw Nasir staring at his computer; he appeared to be troubled by something.

“Fear not my friend, I have great news, Nikole just called, she is with Alec and we are going to go pick her up.”

Nasir’s shocked reaction was evident on his face, “Alec? I asked around about him. I was told he was still back in the home country. What is he doing back so soon? He was supposed to check in with us upon his return. Do you think he could be behind this?”

Zayn sat down, understanding Nasir’s relief mixed with doubt about Alec. “She said he saved her life and she is fine. It sounded like her; she didn’t say anything that would lead me to believe she is in danger. I want to get to her right away though. Do you remember where his cabin is? It will take a good two hours to arrive there.”

Nasir ran his hands over his keyboard and closed the picture he had open on the monitor. “I know I taught her how to defend herself, but Alec is different. He is a true Ghul. He was always out for blood, and I hate that she is there with him. Who knows what he has done to her? If you flash our way across the State we will get there faster than if we go on foot.”

Zayn nodded in agreement, but then with a twinge of sadness he shook his head no. “I am sure she is injured and can’t flash, or else she would be home by now. We have to foot this one the old fashioned way.”

Zayn stood up and started walking to the door. He heard Nasir start to move toward his side when he turned around suddenly. “I don’t want anyone to know about this. Let’s go bring my okht home, just you and me. What if we have a leak and someone tells Haydar what the plans are? I couldn’t live with myself.” Putting his hands on Nasir’s shoulder, he squeezed. “I know she is like a bent to you; I need you with me in order to do this. Come. Let’s go, my friend.”

Adara looked out of the window and watched them leave to bring Nikole home. She knew that as soon as Nikole was home things would be chaotic at least for a few days. Adara decided to go back to her house and grab a few more things that she was missing. Heading down the stairwell, she waved goodbye to the guards on staff and informed them that she would be back in an hour or so.

Heading to her car, she felt the weight of this event on her shoulders. So much happened to her; she didn't even know where to begin. She started the engine and took off, making the ten-minute ride to her house in six.

Pulling up to her house, she realized it has been about three days since she had been home. She and Zayn had been keeping each other company, and she hadn't had time alone to stop and think about things. She decided to just take some time to rest and figure out what she wanted to do where the King of their race was concerned. Turning the car off and walking up to the front door, she just couldn't help smiling when Zayn crossed her mind. Adara fumbled with her keys, trying to get them in the lock of the front door, when she heard a noise. Jumping and flinching, she turned around only to see her neighbor's cat playing in the bushes. "Get a grip, Adara. Come on," she said to herself. She unlocked the door and walked in.

She moved through her house, gathering a few items and putting them in a bag. She started to smell something foul as she moved closer to the kitchen. She paused a moment; she knew that smell. Blood. Why did she smell blood? She sat her bag down and walked around the corner. She stood there in shock as she saw the Ghul's, body cut up and mangled on her table. Blood still dripping off the glass, her floor was now red. She slowly backed up and grabbed her bag, running out the door.

Outside in the car, she got out her phone and called Zayn, but he didn't answer. Looking at the time, she realized he must have found the place where Nikole was. She decided all she could do was head back to his home to tell someone what happened. She tried to put the car into gear. Nothing happened. Adara slowly started to panic. Laying her head on the horn she put her arm around the steering wheel and began to cry. She realized she forgot to put the keys in. In her frantic state, she'd let them fall to the floor of the car. Pulling herself together, she turned the car on and drove away from her house. She had to find help. She had to tell someone there had been another murder.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Haydar received word from Leigh that Dominic had started working on his own agenda, killing people and disregarding orders. That useless, idiot always got into fucking trouble. Haydar took the chair he was sitting in and threw it against the wall. Pictures fell from the wall and shattered on the ground. Looking at the mess he made on the ground, he saw that one of the pictures that broke was his beloved Sarah. He felt his blood boil and his hands started to burn. Storming over to the photo, he knelt down and picked it up, placing it on his desk. He leaned back against the wall looking at her face, his mate, the only person who believed in him. Looking at the picture, the sketch of her face, gods, he could remember that face. He remembered the first day he met her, running away from his family, from the life they were denying him.

Lying on the creek banks, Haydar watched as the stars danced up above him. He had not seen his family in a few centuries. Getting as far away from his okht as he could, he decided it was best to head west, up to England. He wanted nothing to do with anyone and wanted as little association with the ones who betrayed him as he could manage. They were nothing but filthy liars who only wanted to use him and not reward him. Well, he would show them. Thinking about his okht, he manifested a fireball in the shape of her face above his stomach. "Dearest okht, you will die by my hands, and so will your descendants. Never will there be peace in your house as long as I'm alive." Letting the ball of fire soar through the air, he watched as it hit a tree and burned.

"You shouldn't do that you know," he heard from off in the distance. Getting up and looking around, he saw the woman lying on a branch in one of the trees.

"Oh, I shouldn't? And why is that fair maiden?" Haydar stood and started

to walk toward her, the tips of his fingers starting to tingle as his power waited to be summoned.

“My home is in these trees, and I would hate for you to have burned mine up.” She hopped off the limb and walked over to him. “What made you light the tree on fire? It had done you no harm.”

Haydar looked the woman over, not sure what to make of her. “I helped William, Duke of Normandy, in a few battles, so as payment he gave me part of the Nova Foresta. He didn’t mention that included in our deal, would be maidens who like to tell warriors what to do.”

She eyed him, looking him up and down as she tried to figure out what he was all about. “He is a foolish human male. Why even bother with the likes of him? We should kill him off. I know who was behind his attempted assassination, and I am amazed they failed.”

Haydar saw the blood lust in her eyes as she talked about her distaste for the human. How she would use him as a pawn. He had never met another like her before. She was a woman after his own heart, full of vengeance and hate. “What is your name or shall I just call you ‘Maiden’?” He watched her as she narrowed her eyes at him. He could feel his mind starting to hurt. What was she doing to him? He was forced to kneel on the ground. Fighting the urge as best he could, his body acquiesced to her will. She walked over to him and ran her fingers across his jawline.

“My name is Sarah, and you will not burn any more of my forest down. I don’t care what anyone claimed they gave you.”

He looked up at her in amazement, watching her black eyes swirl and the gold flecks form around her iris just seconds before feeling her pierce his mind. How she could control his mind... it was breathtaking. He had met his equal and he intended to keep her.

Haydar snapped back into reality when he heard the sound of someone knocking on his door. “Enter,” he barked, knowing his anger was past the point of reasoning. One of his generals walked in and started delivering the news.

“Dominic is out of control; he has started killing anyone he runs into. He needs to be stopped.” Haydar started to pace back and forth, trying to decide what he wanted to do with his soul surviving ebn’.

“We need to put him down. Schedule our flight; I’m going to kill him myself.”

Dominic walked into his hotel room and slammed the door, pacing back and forth, his body was shaking uncontrollably. How did he stop this hunger, this need? He moved his body to the bed but he

BLOOD PURPLE

didn't really feel anything. The urge to kill was taking his senses over. More, he needed more. He needed to find someone else. He felt his phone vibrate in his pocket. Who the fuck wanted him now? One moment of peace was all he asked for. He took the phone out and saw his abb, his fucking abb. He would have been better off left for dead than raised by that man. Pressing ignore on his phone, he slipped it back in his pocket and took his knife out from the bag.

He unsheathed the blade, the blood dripping from the cover to his pant leg. Running his finger through the blood, he brought it to his lips. Licking it from his skin, his body shivered at the flavour. Closing his eyes, he thought back to the kill, the man lying on the table, his screams echoing in his thoughts. Taking the knife in his other hand, he brought the tip down to his leg and pressed it into his skin. The blade started to penetrate; he could feel the cool metal entering his body. He closed his eyes, the pain taking him into a trance. He felt a soothing calmness fill his senses, when out of nowhere he heard a voice.

"My ebn', stop hurting yourself. Put down the knife; you don't need this pain." Dominic looked around the room. Not seeing anyone, he realized he must have imagined it. He started to dig the knife in deeper, and she appeared in front of him, dressed in light green silk dress with her black hair flowing down her back. "My ebn', I said to stop. Do you want your abb to be right that your life is nothing more than worthless? Set the knife down, Dominic."

"Who are you? How did you get here?" He looked at her face; she looked so much like Derrik, like the photo his abb kept in his office. "How..." He watched her walk to him, reaching her hand out and setting it on his. Her touch felt like a rush of air brushing against his skin.

"I'm here to save you, Dominic. You need to stop this. This isn't your battle, this is your abb's, and you don't want to die."

He removed his hand from where she touched him, glaring at her. "Leave me alone...my omm is dead; you're fake. I killed her; go away!" He took the knife and pulled it from his leg, standing up and walking away from her.

She drifted her translucent body in front of him, "Dominic you know I did not die because of you. Your abb is wrong for telling this to you. Stop believing the lies. You can be good and noble." She put her hands on his shoulders. "Please listen to me." He paused just a

moment before shrugging her off and walked back to the bed, sheathing the knife and stuffing it back in the bag. “Leave me alone! I don’t want you here, you left me in 1578, and if you were really my omm you would have come to me to help me the hundreds of times he hit me. LEAVE. ME. ALONE!”

He grabbed the bag and made his way to the door. Looking back at her, he growled then pulled open the door and went to his car. Throwing the bag in the back seat, he sat behind the wheel. His leg wound had started bleeding at a steady pace. Ignoring the pain, he pulled out of the parking lot and headed to the royal family’s home. It was time to finish this bullshit.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Nasir and Zayn pulled out of the house and drove in silence for an hour. Zayn watched the landscape pass by, moving down interstate 24. The silhouette of the mountains in the distance had him thinking about the past. How he missed the mountains back home, especially when he and his abb would go hunting. He and Nikole learned how to fight on mountaintops. That's why they'd settled in Colorado, so they could be reminded of home, watching the leaves change color, the skyline in late September before the chill started taking over, how the evening smelled after the first snow of the season. Nikole and he cherished these, memories. He could remember it like it was yesterday, the last family hunt. The animals gave the most challenge during a hunt, never knowing which direction they would take or how they would respond.

Looking over to Nasir he quietly whispered, "Do you think she is ruined?" He couldn't bring himself to think about what condition she was in. What she'd had to endure through the torture and pain.

"No, she isn't ruined. She is probably hurt and in pain, but ruined? Never. She comes from a long line of warriors; nothing will ever hold her down."

Zayn listened to Nasir and what he said but didn't really absorb his words. All he could think about was letting her down. He fought with her and look what had happened. She could have died because of him. Many already had lost their lives because of his decisions; Kevin and Zeus, to name a couple.

Never again would he act like he had; never would he make her feel like she had to fight alone. She needed to know he would always stand behind her, no matter what. Sitting in the car, listening to the

sound of the tires driving along the road, his heart ached from the pain, his eyes sore from the tears. Deciding to close them and let the darkness take over, he thought about what she must look like. Would she be like omm and have bruises from beatings all over her body or like abb knife wounds on every inch?

He let the sound the car made while driving down the road hypnotize him into a daze. Images of their parents' death began flashing in his mind, the blood, the pain, the agony came flooding back. Visions of his abb hanging from the tree, blood dripping down his body, his omm lying in her own blood, racked his mind. He couldn't stand the idea that Nikole looked like that too. His fists started to ball up in his lap, his anger flaring inside, waiting to be let go. Nasir looked over at him. He could tell Zayn's jaw was clenched tight. Taking his hand off the wheel, he moved it to his shoulder and gave it a firm squeeze. "Zayn, you have to stop beating yourself up over what happened. The reality is something would have happened had you both never fought. You know that. Thinking that it is your fault and this would never have happened had you done something different won't change anything. You need to just accept this and move on. That way, when we see her and bring her home, she knows it's over."

Zayn slowly opened his eyes, Nasir's words resonating in his mind, thinking about what he'd said. "It might have happened, but at least our last words to each other wouldn't have been in anger. Maybe she wouldn't have been careless had she not been out trying to prove me wrong. I know I caused this. It is my fault, Nasir, and you won't talk me out of thinking that."

They finished the rest of the drive in silence; Nasir knew that, whatever he said, Zayn wouldn't believe. He had watched Zayn and Nikole grow up, been a substitute abb for them both. He couldn't sit there and do nothing to help children he had loved like they were his own. Seeing the base of the mountain off in the distance, he knew it was only a matter of time before Nikole was safe again. Nasir parked and the two of them exited the car to begin their silent hike up the mountain.

Alec walked from the bedroom out to the living room, bringing Nikole a pair of shorts. "Here you go. This should work for your ride home." She took them from him and smiled as he turned his back to her, giving her the privacy she needed. Taking the blanket off of her

legs, she slowly edged off the couch and slipped the shorts on. Doing her best to maintain her balance alone, she walked to the other end of the couch and put her hand on Alec's arm.

"Thank you, for everything." He reached up to her hand and cupped his left one over her right one. She felt the warmth of his touch run through her hand when she realized his thumb was caressing her palm.

"You are most welcome; it was really no trouble at all." He looked as though he wanted to say something else but stopped, looking at her with a bit of longing, still keeping her hand in his. He stroked the inside of her palm and looking into her eyes.

Nikole wanted to say yes but didn't want to sound desperate. Instead, she looked up into his violet eyes. While smiling, she started to light their hands on fire, their magik essences blending together. She watched his eyes dilate in excitement as they started to form a bond. They stood there for a few moments, connected to each other in a way only the magik could allow. Alec leaned his head down, placing his soft lips over hers, when all of a sudden they heard a knock on the door. Biting back a curse, he pulled away from her. "Time to go home, Princess." Nikole was forced to pull herself together, subduing the magik she was releasing into the atmosphere to hide what had been going on between the two of them.

Alec walked to answer it, knowing it had to be Zayn. He looked back at Nikole one last time, not sure if he would ever get a moment alone with her. She nodded at him and he grabbed the handle and pulled the door open to reveal the King and his General, standing on the porch.

"Please come in, she's ready to go," Alec said as he moved aside for the two men to enter. Zayn saw Nikole, and relief overwhelmed him as she was standing and not hurt like their omm or abb. Rushing to her side, he pulled her in for a tight embrace. They held each other for a few minutes in silence. Tears had started flowing from Nikole's eyes.

"Zayn, I'm so sorry, I really..."

Zayn cut her off by shaking his head at her. "No, Nikole, it is my fault and I'm truly sorry. I won't do that again; I won't try and dictate your life to you. If you want to fight with us and be a warrior, you can. Just never go out alone just to prove me wrong again."

Nikole looked up at her akh, the one person she had loved most

in the world. She saw his yellow eyes shining bright while looking into hers. She could feel his emotion. Placing her head on his chest, she let his arms protect her and hold her as if nothing else mattered. Zayn looked over to Alec, who he noticed was having trouble watching the reunion. “Thank you for saving her life; we are indebted to you.” Motioning for Nasir, he opened the front door. “Come on, Nikole, let’s get you home. I know Adara can’t wait to see you. She will be staying with us to help take care of you during your time of recovery.”

Nikole’s eyes drifted over to Alec’s. She hadn’t really gotten to say what she had wanted to with everyone there. His blood was in her; she could feel him, feel a small part of his emotion. Why was he angry? She slowly pushed off of Zayn and tried to make her way over to Alec. Her legs not seeming to work properly; she started to fall. Moving with stealth Alec caught her in his arms, her light body but a feather in weight to him.

“Princess, you need to be more careful.”

She couldn’t help but smile up at him, his eyes... she was drawn to his eyes. “Will you come see me? Come and visit?”

Alec was taken aback by her request. Come and visit her? Where had that come from? Not wanting to upset her, he smiled and nodded. Leaning over, he kissed her cheek letting his lips brush her skin, whispering in her ear, “I won’t ever forget you.”

Zayn’s wasn’t sure he liked this scenario. Who was he to be touching her like that? And kissing her cheek? He felt his eyes start to glow a bright yellow, his protective nature starting to flare up. Growling low, he walked to Nikole’s side and took her from Alec’s embrace. The two men looked at each other, Alec understanding immediately. Bowing his upper body at the royal siblings, he backed away and watched as Zayn helped walk Nikole out of his cabin and out of his life. Forever.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Alec watched as they drove off. How could he feel so much for her after such a short amount of time? They barely even spoke to one another. Maybe it was because she was in control of fire like him, and that was the rarest of gifts. Maybe it was the fact that she had his blood in her and he could feel her emotions. She was scared. Unsure of what was going to happen. If he could only tell her how brave she was and how wonderful she looked after taking the blood. He stopped and thought about that, his blood. He thought about what it would be like to have her long white fangs dig into his skin, penetrating the barrier and sucking on him. He could feel himself growing hard thinking about it. His body automatically reacted to the thought of her possessing him in the most carnal of ways. He had to see her again. He would find a way. Alec moved out of his living room and into his bedroom to clean up the items he'd used to help Nikole heal. Seeing his pillow with her form still indented on it, he lay in his bed and could smell her, her sweetness, her essence.

He closed his eyes and brought her image to his mind's eye. He could feel her warmth in his bed and her whole body against him. Needing to feel this pleasure he started to dream of what it would be like to be with her. He was pretty sure the royal Princess would never go for someone like him, broken, hurt, and unstable. Alec opened his eyes and let out a sigh as he rolled over on his side and saw the picture on his night stand on the other side of the bed.

His wife, how could he even think of another woman when his had only been gone a few hundred years? He got out of bed and headed to the kitchen where he looked through the cabinets and pulled out a bottle of whiskey. Pouring himself three fingers worth

into a glass, he went outside to sit on the porch. His hand was on the knob when he realized that he had lost his mind. Why would Nikole even want him? Shaking his head in disgust, he moved out to the bench swing in the yard to sit and look up at the stars.

Alec nursed his drink while watching the stars in the sky shine down on him. They looked so similar to that fatal night in 1777. The city's fires had been uncontrollable. He remembered the sound of his family burning and being unable to reach them. His bent's voice crying out for him was still vivid in his memory. Taking another drink, he thought about how everything had changed since he moved away from the homeland and set out on his own. Would they be proud of him? Would they think him a coward for running away and leaving their home in ashes?

What could he have done, really? Haydar and his generals destroyed everything. He'd had to escape. He finished the drink in one final gulp then threw the glass at the tree trunk. Breaking down in tears, he fell to his knees and started to pray to the Gods that no one believed in anymore. As if answering his prayers, Mother Nature let out a loud roar of thunder, shaking the trees causing leaves to fall to his side. He took that as a sign that he could seek redemption.

He rose from the kneeling pose and made his way back into his house and then into his room. He shed his clothes and headed straight for the bathroom. Running the hot water, he stepped in the shower and let the stream of water pound against his skin, washing away his cowardly filth. Maybe one day he could be loved by another. Maybe one day he would have earned his manhood back. Alec realized that the best way to feel useful and worthy was to help keep the Princess safe. Only way to do that was to catch whoever was causing all of the deaths the news was reporting on every night.

Finishing his shower he started to head toward the bed. He stopped and realized he was about to lie in Nikole's spot. Walking around to the other side of the bed, he lowered himself and stared at her pillow. *Holding it to him didn't make him weak, did it?* He took the pillow and cuddled it. He would find a way to stop anyone from hurting her. First thing in the morning he was going back to the compound to figure out who they were.

On the drive back home, she sat in the car and just stared at the back of Nasir's head while they drove in silence. She didn't know what was going on in her mind. She had her family back. That should

BLOOD PURPLE

be all that mattered, but something felt wrong, something felt off. She was unsure of what it was; surely it was because of everything she went through. No reason for it to be anything else. But there was this unknown feeling inside of her. Where could it be coming from?

“Zayn, can I borrow your phone please?” He looked back at her from the front seat and nodded, slipping his phone into her hands. She held the light weight cell for a moment trying to gather her thoughts. Dialing Adara, she waited for her to pick up.

“Hello, Zayn, oh Gods I need you so bad!”

Nikole paused a moment and looked at her akh then shook her head, focusing back on the phone. “No, Adara, it’s me. I wanted you to know I’m on my way home. Can you meet me at the house? I think I am going to need a little TLC and I could really use my best friend.”

Zayn listened to his okht speak. Oh gods, he didn’t tell her about Adara. Feeling his stomach start to knot, he heard her keep talking. “You’re at the house already? Um, okay. Well, what? You want to talk to Zayn? Yeah... here he is.” Annoyed with things, she handed her akh the phone and sat back in the seat. What the hell was going on? She was only gone a few days and now they were best friends, such bullshit.

“A dead body? What? Adara you cannot go back there! NO! We will be home in an hour. Do not leave. Just stay in my room till I get there. Things are going to be alright.”

“Zayn, it was so terrible, the body, the blood everywhere. I don’t know how they got into my home but they did. How can I ever go back there again? After seeing the Ghul like that, I don’t know that I can stomach it even for a moment or two.”

“Adara, calm down sweetheart, it’s okay... I will be home soon.” Nikole watched Zayn hang the phone up and slip it back into his pocket.

“Something you need to tell me?”

Nasir cleared his throat; he could feel the tension building between his two pseudo children. “Nikole, there is nothing you need to worry about. Everything is okay; Adara just had a problem at her home.”

Nikole couldn’t decide what was going on, but something was different. “Why did she want to talk to you? Since when did you and her become friends? And what dead body were you talking about?”

Zayn turned to look at his okht. “Nikole, a lot happened while you were gone; a lot of people have been killed. Someone killed a man in Adara’s home. Please don’t worry about it. We just need to get you taken care of first. She is going to be staying with us to ensure she is safe.”

Nikole looked out of her window and just stared. What was she supposed to do with this information? Her gut was telling her something else was going on, and her akh was keeping it from her. Why would he have Adara wait in his room? Why not her room or the living room? None of this made any sense to Nikole. The three of them traveled the rest of the way in silence, no one wanting to speak and the tension was building.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Dominic pulled up to the house, looking up at the tall wall surrounding the mansion. The red brick cast a shadow over the car, making it unseen from the side of the road, the perfect place to hide. He opened the door and the cool evening breeze hit him hard. The smell of the mountains captivated him. Getting out, he started to walk along the wall, analyzing his options of entry. His leg still throbbed, the warm blood running down it. His mind couldn't stop thinking about his omm. Had that really been her? He knew he was worthless as an ebn', and he killed her after all. If he hadn't been born, she would still be alive, and his abb wouldn't have such hatred for him.

He heard something off in the distance, pausing to listen closely while inclining his head towards the tree line. He saw two animals a few feet away, a doe and her fawn. Lucky fucking animal to have an omm who tended to him, he thought. No one understood what it was like, killing their own omm. The failure of knowing you were letting everyone down didn't matter the age, you still fucking failed. He walked for half a mile looking for a weakness in the wall, a place to set up his attack. He saw a foot hold up ahead. It looked like an old ladder was attached to the wall. *Dominic* ran his hand over the indentations on the wall, gripping his hands in them. Looking back over his shoulder at the deer, he let out a sigh. "Fuck you, Omm. You left me to rot at the hand of my abb. Now it's time to fucking end this war."

He started to scale the wall, right hand, left foot, left hand, right foot, over and over. Reaching the top he peered over the rim. He saw the lights shining on the grounds, the dogs walking the grass

patrolling for intruders. He pulled himself up, supporting his weight on the wall.

“Dominic, this isn’t you, stop this. This is your abb’s, fight not yours.” Dominic hissed his fangs out toward the voice.

“What do you want now? I thought I told you to leave me the fuck alone, like you have my whole fucking life.” He pulled his lower half up onto the wall, looking down at the dogs walking in the grass. “You never cared about me. Why are you trying to stop me?”

Her translucent form grazed his hand then went up to his cheek, cupping it. He could feel the coolness from her form; his body yearned for love, for compassion. How could he take love and tenderness from someone who was the first to betray him?

“Dominic, I love you, never doubt that. My love for you started the moment you were conceived. I had your akh and okht for your abb but you, you were for me, someone I could love and claim as mine. You were all I wanted.”

“LIAR! All you do is lie!”

He felt the tears in his eyes form and then blinked as they started to roll down his cheek. He was such a coward, worthless and weak. Look at him, crying on a wall to his omm. What kind of man does this shit? He looked back to the mother doe, she was cleaning her fawn. *Lucky son of a bitch*. “Why are you just now showing up? Why can’t you just answer me?”

Sarah started to shake her head at him, trying to make him see. “Dominic, I am here to help you save yourself. I don’t want the only child I loved to die not knowing a parent’s love. Let me help you; let me show you what you mean to me.”

Dominic shook his head no with a flurry of anger. “It’s too late for me.”

Sarah drifted in front of her ebn’. Sitting on the ledge of the wall, he was breaking her heart. “Dominic, please listen to me, I love you and together we can fight this. Please get down from here.”

Dominic watched his omm extend her hand to him, wanting so badly to accept her and what she offered. All he ever wanted was someone to love him, someone to claim him and be proud of him. Here she was, offering everything that he’d always wanted from his abb. Could he trust her? Could he give faith to someone he dreamt about his whole life but never saw until now? Resolving that he was out of options with his life, he lifted up his hand trying to take her

BLOOD PURPLE

translucent form into his. Desperately grasping at air as the tears ran down his face, he leaned over to hug her and started to fall.

Dominic fell off the twenty foot tall wall to his slow and painful death, landing on the metal spikes covering the base of the wall around the mansion. He watched his life flash before his eyes; it was just like he heard it would be, white light surrounding his memories. His abb's whippings, Derrik's tears from listening to his akh cry over and over from the lashings, watching his okht play the piano receiving the praise from their abb he never received. Wasn't this perfect, his omm giving him the ultimate betrayal, sending him to his death?

He lay on the spike bleeding from his stomach, his head hung down and his hair brushing in the grass. He thought to himself, reflecting on all he had done for a family who never really loved him, the death he had wielded by his hands, the chaos and mayhem that transpired after he started a job. What was it for, what purpose did it serve? Was he ever valued by anyone? He tried to move his legs and push himself off the spike. Not feeling anything, he looked back and realized his legs were not moving, he tried again and as expected nothing happened. Cranking his head around looking over his shoulder, at the spike sticking out of the middle of his back he realized he was paralyzed. "This was just fucking perfect. YOU SCREWED ME AGAIN!" He screamed.

His voice alerted the dogs to someone on their property. He could hear the hounds start running. Looking up, he could see four German Sheppard's snarling at him. His blood dripped down his body as he silently prayed one last prayer that someone took him quickly. Within moments, one of the dogs latched onto his neck and tugged hard, ending his suffering.

She watched him fall from across the street. What was he doing on that wall? It looked like he was talking to someone reaching for something. Maybe this was what her abb was talking about, his unexplainable behavior. She made her way across the street, heading toward the spot Dominic climbed up. She followed in his path up the wall. peeking over the lip of the brick, she saw nothing but could hear the dogs. Pulling herself up, she looked down and gasped in shock. Her akh lay there, in pieces, torn apart. She backed down and leaned against the wall in shock. He might have been a fuck up, but she still loved him, kind of. She pulled out her phone and called their abb. She became irritated when she heard his voicemail. What could

be more important than her phone call? “He’s dead. Zayn’s dogs tore him apart.” Closing her phone and putting it back in her pocket; she walked back to her car and left the mansion before anyone caught a glimpse of her.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Nikole and Zayn sat on her bed and stared at each other in silence, the moments passing by ever so slowly. Neither knew where to start or what to say. She opened her mouth to speak, and then paused, thinking twice. Placing her hands down both side of her body and pushing up on the bed, she turned her body sideways, letting her legs fall off the side.

“How could you do it Zayn? She is my best friend.” She looked back at him, sensing his conflict.

“I didn’t mean to, Nikole. You have to believe me... I didn’t.”

“I could have been dead. I was being tortured, and you’re off sleeping with Adara. Did you even care I was gone? Did you even look?” She shook her head, standing up to brace against the nightstand. She moved to the bookshelf in the corner looking back at him.

Zayn was feeling the pain of her words and taking offense to what she was implying. He stood up quickly and stormed over to her, grabbing her shoulders and pulling her to him, making her look into his eyes. “Don’t you dare say I didn’t care or didn’t look! I was losing myself without you here. I didn’t know what I was going to do; I was losing my mind. I kept picturing our parents and their death. Adara, she...”

Nikole pulled herself out of his grip, and then slapped him across the face, her body shaking from the anger and pain. “Spare me your bullshit. If you gave a damn you would not be with my best fucking friend! You can have anyone you want, and you pick her. What is wrong with you?” Nikole started to walk in a steady pace back and forth from the bed to the bookshelf. She couldn’t decide

what she wanted to say. All she saw was them together. Zayn moved to take her arm when she started to lean one way. It was clear she was having issues maintaining her balance.

“Don’t fucking touch me,” she said, pushing him off of her. She didn’t need his help to live; she didn’t need his help now. “Why don’t you just go fuck my best friend? That’s what you would rather be doing, isn’t it? ISN’T IT!?” she yelled at him.

“NO! Nikole, stop it. I’ve been so worried, and Gods, I’m just happy you are alive. Can’t you believe me? I had everyone looking for you around the clock. Adara and I, we just happened. I didn’t mean for it, and I don’t know if I even want it, but it happened.”

Nikole braced the night stand, staring at a statue Zayn had bought her for one birthday. She palmed it and ran her fingers over the smooth texture. She heard him in the background, speaking, but she started to tune him out.

“Nikole, you’re my flesh and blood. I love you. Me and Adara”

She couldn’t take anymore. Turning around, she hurled the statue at the wall and watched it shatter. “LEAVE, JUST LEAVE!” She couldn’t understand why he didn’t get it. “Anyone, anyone but her.”

Zayn turned around, trying to hide his hurt. Why couldn’t she understand he didn’t mean anything by this? Sending her a mental note, he told her, “I love you, Nikole. You’re my only family, and I would die to protect you.” He opened her door and left the room. Nikole fell on the bed and started to cry into her pillow.

“I love you too.”

Outside her door, Zayn couldn’t help but wonder how all this happened. All he did was seek comfort from a friend during a time of need. How could she be so upset with him? Hearing a noise, he looked to his right to see Adara opening her door and stepping into the hallway. She heard it all... every last word. She could even feel his emotions, his hurt, and his anger. She had caused this, caused her best friend to hate the man she...the man she what? Had sex with? Cared for? Could there even be more there? Walking down the hall, she decided tonight wasn’t the night to figure out what happened and what it all meant. All she knew was her lover was in pain.

Zayn wrapped his arms around Adara’s waist and buried his head in her neck. Slowly, she stroked the back of his head as she felt warm moisture on her skin. Tears, the man was crying because of his

BLOOD PURPLE

okht, again. She held him tight, their embrace lasting what felt like hours.

All he could think about was how this woman who so freely and wonderfully gave herself to him had caused his okht such grief. What was he going to do? It wasn't like he could pick between the two women. Tomorrow, tomorrow he could decide what to do.

Zayn brought his head up and looked into her eyes. Gods they were perfect. He stared into the pale yellow as he realized something. He didn't care about tomorrow, because tonight he was claiming her. He wrapped his left arm around her waist, and his right arm reached down and scooped up her legs. Holding her tiny frame in his arms, he leaned over and kissed her softly. They moved down the hall and into his bedroom. Setting her on the bed slowly, letting her fall nicely onto his sheets, the mattress gave into their combined weight. Zayn looked down at her and was captivated at the sight. Her golden hair sprawled across his comforter, her tiny body beneath him. Perfection that is what she was.

"I'm so sorry, Zayn. This is my fault, Nikole and you, fighting. I should leave."

Zayn leaned over and kissed her lips, shaking his head no. "No Adara, it is not anyone's fault. We can't help what happened. She's just upset; it will be alright." He cupped her face in his hands and brushed his thumbs over her cheeks. Her skin was so soft; it was as if the Gods made her perfectly for him. He started to move his hand down her body, teasing her playfully with soft caresses and light tickles. Her laugh filled his heart as he saw her face light up each time he caressed her sides. This was what he wanted to live for, the beauty and affection of a woman like this.

Adara couldn't stop her heart from racing. All she wanted was him and that was what he was giving her. Could she be so lucky to get to keep this moment forever? There she lay in the King's arms, and all she could think about was how wonderful he looked. His eyes glowing down on her, she could feel his excitement and his need. She brought her legs up and wrapped them around his waist, trapping him there on top of her. She heard him growl, a feral sound, only something you hear from a warrior. Her body responded with excitement. Gods, she was the luckiest woman alive to be with him.

Adara leaned forward and captured his lips, his hands running under her shirt and up her back. Slowly, they undressed each other,

and with their bodies touching, they began to bond in a whole new way. Adara's body arched at Zayn's touch, his soft lips on her warm body driving them both wild. Zayn's tongue dragged across her stomach as his hands explored every inch of her skin. Her body grew feverish, the heat of her skin needing to be cooled. She reached out and cupped his face. Pulling him in to kiss her, she felt him slowly glide inside of her warm and ready body. Together they made love all night, over and over until they each had no energy left.

"I don't want you to go back to your home." Zayn told her while brushing the hair out of her eyes, playfully nipping at her jaw. He wanted her like this always.

"I told you, I won't go back home. I'm too scared to. I'll have to move."

Zayn ran his tongue along her jaw his hands dropping back down to her side. Did she not understand what he meant? He couldn't be without her, not after this. He wasn't sure how it would work, but somehow he would be hers. "No. Adara, I want you always in my bed when I come to sleep. I don't want you to leave any time."

Adara pulled her body back and off to the side so she could see directly into his face. "What? What are you saying? Are you crazy? We just started this; it's been what, three days? I can't just stop the life I had."

Zayn pulled her body back into his, kissing her lips, stopping her from speaking. "Adara, I don't want you to leave. I need you with me. I've never felt like this, and right now I almost lost my okht. I'm not going to let a moment pass without telling you how I feel. Please, give me a chance. If this bothers you so much you can continue to sleep in your room but you will stay, alright?"

Adara's face flushed with nervousness, should she say yes? Could he just make her stay? She nodded a yes; she didn't even remember telling her body to do it. Clearly her heart and mind were not on the same page. Zayn smiled at her, his fangs large and desirable. Gods, she wanted to be his, even though logic said no.

Adara tilted her head, exposing her neck; she felt his cock growing with the anticipation of the bite. Within moments he sank his fangs into her flesh, her life force being drunken in. Her arms wrapped around him, and she held him close to her as he fed. What was she doing? Was she really giving herself to their King?

Nikole could hear Zayn's thoughts, what he'd just done all night

BLOOD PURPLE

long and to her best friend. She decided she didn't need to be in her room to get better. Sitting up, she slid her legs out of bed, and with assistance from the furniture in the room, she made it to the door. Opening it into the hallway, she started to head toward the stairwell. She could smell them, their love, desire, and need. *Sickening, absolutely sickening.* Reaching the steps, she looked down the banister, gave a nervous laugh, and decided it was a better idea to teleport down, less chance of injury. Closing her eyes, she tried to concentrate on something peaceful. A picture of Alec was pulled to her mind, and she smiled at the thought of him. Feeling her body warm, she vanished from the stairs and landed in the foyer.

Looking around to see if anyone was up, she felt it safe to try and go walk into the living room. Slowly making her way inside, she saw one of her servants who quickly came to her aid. Getting settled in, she took one of the books off of the table and propped herself up and opened to chapter one. Reading, that would help calm her mind.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Leigh left her akh's death with a feeling of accomplishment. It took some work, but she finally had both of them out of the way. Her only regret was she didn't think of this 300 years ago. They both had been so easily played, easily manipulated. She looked over at the mansion where her bent amty lived, family she'd never met and didn't care for. They'd stolen from her parents what was rightfully theirs. That alone meant they deserved to die. She had heard about Zayn, his dark hair and yellow eyes. Should she care that their people loved him? No. Why would she? She was going to be a more powerful leader, wouldn't let her people live as second class citizens, hiding in the shadows. She would lead them out against the humans. Leigh knew the risks, but who the fuck cared if some stupid humans came after her? She could wipe them out in a matter of seconds. Who did they think taught them about the military technology? She supplied the humans with a vast wealth of knowledge, and she sure as fuck didn't need them dictating where and how she would live. Humans were like cattle, hers for the feasting. They bred like rabbits, not like taking a million or two out would really make any kind of impact.

"Dominic, we need to talk. Do you know what Derrik has been doing?"

Dominic looked at his akh with hesitation. "What do you mean? What has he been doing?"

"He is useless." Leigh walked around her akh circling him like prey. "He is going to try and sabotage the mission that abb sent you on. He knows how important this is and that one more fuck up and Abb will kill you. Why do you think he is so obsessed with Nikole? He wants her for himself. You cannot let him win. You have to prove to him you are the better ebn'. How many beatings did you take because of him? How many times did you cry and bleed because of

BLOOD PURPLE

his useless life?"

Dominic listened carefully to his okht. What she said made sense; Derrik WAS a prick and was acting strange. "How do I know you are not lying?"

She wrapped her arms around him pulling him into her embrace, a hug she had never shown anyone. Leaning down to his ear she whispered, "Because on our omm's death bed she made me swear to take care of you and let you rule our people. I am just living up to her dying request." Placing a kiss on his cheek she released him and turned to leave. "But don't believe me. See if he doesn't come after you in the end. You never know who you can trust."

She couldn't help but laugh at how easy it had been. Pity they were gone. Not. Now she was going to have to find new minions to toy with. Leigh pulled into the airstrip just as his plane landed. She watched it taxi to the end of the runway, coasting to a stop. She pulled the car next to the plane and parked it. Releasing the trunk, she stepped out and onto the tarmac. She could smell the jet fuel in the air; the scent always excited her for some reason. Leigh heard the hatch open and watched as the stairs from the plane fell to the ground. Haydar stepped out, his tall and muscular build taking up the entire opening of the plane. She smiled up to her abb as she walked towards the stairs, his presence always overpowering. She greeted him at the bottom of the stairs; Haydar embraced her in a tight hug. "Bent, aren't you looking just splendid? Who did you kill to get that glow?"

She smiled up at her abb. "Well, only a few humans, but that was for breakfast. Really only thing they are good for is draining."

Haydar laughed at his bent's words. She never liked the filthy creatures, just like her parents. They walked to the car, watching Haydar's guard put his bags in the trunk. He settled in the car observing Leigh's behavior, looking over at his bent. The only pride he had ever felt was for her. His other children gave him nothing but strife, but Leigh, she was a true warrior, one he could be proud of. "Did he suffer?"

She looked over at her abb and let a slow grin appear on her face. "Yes, it looks like he was alive as the dogs tore him apart; the blood splatter was very wide." She let herself smile thinking back on the memory, her worthless akh, dead. She loved him, but love wasn't everything when you were weak and pathetic. The weak always needed to be killed off. It was only because she was Dominic and Derrik's okht that she didn't kill them herself, but now, now she was

free of both of their useless resource draining bodies.

“Shall I take you to the mansion first, or do you want to meet up with our people gathering in the foothills?” Leigh asked as she pulled out onto the highway.

“Foothills, I want to see what kind of mess my idiot ebn’s made, then, my dear bent, we will extract our revenge.” Haydar pulled out an envelope from his breast pocket, showing it to his bent. “One of your akhs sent this to me before they died. I haven’t opened it yet as I wanted to share this honor with you. The man who delivered this letter to me said that your akh had been begging forgiveness to someone. You wouldn’t know anything about that, would you?”

Leigh looked at her abb, the approving smirk on his face telling her he already knew. “Derrick wanted to let the bitch go. I told him no. He begged like a little coward. I simply told him if he begged again, I would take his balls, nothing unreasonable. He was acting like a female, so I was going to make him one.”

Haydar rolled the window down crumpling the letter up and tossing it out onto the pavement. “Have I told you how proud I am of you? I still do not know how those two akhs of yours were my ebn’s with the horrible success rate they had in combat and torture, but you, my dear,” he said, reaching over and clasping her hand, squeezing it and smiling at her, “you make an abb proud.”

Leigh took them down Interstate 24, and then pulled off onto a dirt road leading to the base of the mountains. Passing through three checkpoints, she finally entered a small compound and pulled up to the cabin house.

“I like the security; good job on that, Leigh. You were always my most paranoid General,” Haydar said while getting out of the car and walking toward the steps.

“You know, Abb, Zayn and his men are everywhere, and I’m careful and keep everyone questionable out. I want to maintain the element of surprise. Besides, they don’t even know about me. Unlike the other two idiots I never let my presence be known. We will be able to come in and attack swiftly and efficiently.” She climbed the steps two by two then opened the cabin door. Silence filled the air as she entered, her men always too scared to speak right away.

“Attention!” she called out as her men jumped to their feet, the sound of hands falling to their sides echoing around. She looked out across the room, fifty men lined up for her disposal. She loved the

BLOOD PURPLE

smell of the testosterone filling the air. The power, desire, and hunger to kill always caused her to lust for battle. Leigh watched her abb walk in between the men, inspecting each as he walked by. Her men always wore properly pressed uniforms, clean shaven and hair styled properly. She refused to have anyone serve under her who didn't tend to themselves accordingly. All her men were single, childless, no strings attached. The moment they fell for a woman she kicked them out of her ranks. She turned to her abb and motioned for him to start, taking her place at the front of the lines.

“Men, we will be taking the throne back! We will be killing the last of that traitorous family. They do not deserve to rule, and they are ruining our people.” The men started to cheer as Haydar spoke of overthrowing them. “Remember, this is not going to be an easy battle. We will have challenges, and some of our akhs in arms have died, but we will avenge their deaths. My two ebn's gave their lives to the cause and now it's time to show Zayn who the true King is!” The room echoed with applause and hollering as the men cheered for victory. Haydar looked at Leigh and extended his hand to her. Walking up to him and grabbing it, he presented her to the men. “My bent and I will take our people into the future. We will wipe out the humans and rule this world.” Her men cheered for her and her abb. She knew their loyalty, their dedication to the cause. No one would be able to take this away from them. No one.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

The sunlight broke through the blinds of the living room of Zayn and Nikole's home the next morning. Nikole's eyes fluttered open as the light hit her face. She moved her neck around, loosening her body, her muscles still sore. Off in the distance she could hear servants preparing tasks for the day. Closing her eyes, she thought back to last night and her fight with Zayn. Yes, that mental connection was, at times, the worst torture created. Adjusting to get off the couch and go for a walk, she noticed that she was wrapped in a blanket. Looking around the room she saw a white rose was placed on the table. Zayn must've come and tucked her in overnight. What was he trying to do? Make up for being a total ass? He knew she had a soft spot when he did things like that. Only he could get away with that. Nikole sat up on the couch and reached for the rose, pulling it to her nose, inhaling the sweet scent. Sliding the blanket off and standing up from the couch, she started walking out into the foyer. What was she going to tell Zayn? What was she going to say to Adara? The overwhelming sense of betrayal was still too fresh and potent for any decisions to be made.

She made her way to the front door and slipped outside, letting the cool morning breezes brush over her skin, cooling down her temper. She always enjoyed the smell of the fresh air right at dawn. Stepping off the porch and onto the lawn, she leaned over, stretching her body and muscles, loosening everything up. Deciding to head around the house a few times, Nikole moved slowly at first, half out of habit for the injury and half because she was contemplating Zayn and Adara. She could feel the betrayal deep in her gut, the knot as big as a grapefruit. She had to move on and she had to get over this. Her

akh was sorry for his actions last night, showed her he was, but her mind didn't care. All he could focus on was her, HER. There had to be a better way to find comfort than this. Taking the rose and letting its smell calm her nerves, she pressed the stem to her chest as if giving it a hug.

"Enjoying my present, Nikole?" She spun around to see Alec standing behind her. Looking up into his eyes, she remained speechless as she took him in. His skin shining from the sun's rays made him look positively breathtaking.

"What are you doing here?" She couldn't believe she was looking at him.

He reached out and moved a strand of hair from her face and let a grin creep across his face. "I felt your anger and panic. I got worried about you. After about twenty minutes of it I left my cabin and headed out here. I was ready to kill whoever it was who got you so worked up."

Nikole watched him intently as he leaned in, lifting her hand to his lips and pressing a kiss on top of it. "You were worried for me? I don't know what to say..." She caught a whiff of the rose's scent. "You left this?" A light pink coloring flushed her cheeks again, thinking of him wrapping her in the blanket.

"When I arrived, your akh greeted me at the door, we shared a few words and I just knew you were cold. I haven't shared my blood with anyone in over 300 years, it was very nerve racking knowing you were in some kind of pain and not being here to help you."

She focused her eyes on his thumb rubbing her hand, the inside of her palm. Kevin had never been worried for her like this after they shared blood, yet this man she just met cared, he really cared. "What did you and my akh talk about? Was he mad that you came to our home?"

Alec led Nikole over to a bench where they sat down. He looked at her, running his finger over her cheek. "You know, some of this and that. He didn't want to let me in. He said you were sleeping, but I could feel you were cold. Finally I just pushed my way through. Your servant showed me you were on the couch, sleeping with a book. I hope you do not mind."

How could she mind? "No, Alec, thank you. That was very sweet of you to be so concerned for my wellbeing. You have done so much for me already. I wish I could repay you somehow."

Alec's hands felt good holding hers; she was enjoying his warmth. "A kiss, you could let me give you a kiss," he said to her.

She blinked up at him, smiling. "A kiss, only one?"

He shook his head at her smiling; she couldn't help but enjoy his splendor. She reached up to his face with her left hand. Cupping his cheek, she leaned in. He met her half way as her soft lips pressed against his cool mouth. Her tongue teased and guided his mouth open, brushing against his fangs, sending chills up her back. Alec let her tongue explore his mouth as his pushed against hers in a dance of seduction. Fifteen seconds went by before he released her. "Debt paid, my sweet Princess."

Her hand dropped from his face but landed on his arm, running down his bicep. "I think I like being indebted to you. I really can't thank you enough for everything you did for me."

She stood up from the bench and took two steps forward then turned back to him. "I am going on a walk, please join me." Reaching her hand out to him, he grabbed it. While standing and interlocking their fingers, they started walking around the grounds. They watched the sun rise over the mountains, the orange and reds coloring the sky.

"Do you want to talk about what had you so angry and hurt last night? Sometimes it helps to talk."

She let his question go unanswered for a few moments; a few heart beats of dreaded silence. "My akh found himself a girlfriend, and it's just not any old girl; it's my best friend. And what makes things worse is they found each other while I was off being tortured."

Alec squeezed her hand a bit as they kept walking across the lawn. "Don't you think that's good? That way you get along with your akh's woman? I'm sure the timing wasn't planned, Nikole. Maybe it just happened."

No one understood what she was going through. How could they not see what had her so angry?

"Princess, I feel your anger; please stop. I'm not trying to upset you, just comfort. I get it, you are mad that you were suffering and they were back home finding love."

She turned her head and gave him a pointed stare. "It is not love."

Alec stopped them there on the lawn and pulled her to him. Their bodies pressed against each other, his hands pressing on the

small of her back, holding her in place. "I know he loves you and was worried while you were gone. We spoke about the efforts they took to try and find you. They actually would have saved you had I not shown up a few hours ahead of them. You would have never had to come to my home even. So maybe things happen for a reason." He took his forefinger and pressed it under her chin lifting her head up. "I, for one, am glad I found you and not your akh." Alec leaned down and placed a heated kiss on her lips.

She let her hands explore his hard body, the muscles in his arms, his abs, the muscles he had running down his body. Nikole could feel his blood inside her veins, the cells heating up with his excitement like they knew it was him she was kissing. She moved her arms around his neck, her hand resting in his hair. Pulling back from the kiss, she looked up at him, smiling. "I am glad you rescued me as well." They heard the dogs coming up along the side of the house breaking the serenity of the moment. She looked over Alec's shoulder as they rushed them. What did they have on their coats? Did they get into something last night?

"Alec, does that look like blood on the dog's coats?" Alec turned around and looked at the two dogs approaching them. Walking toward them, he leaned down, running his hands over the sticky substance, and brought his hand to his nose, smelling it. Wiping his hand on the grass cleaning the blood off of it, he looked back to Nikole.

"They probably found a deer or something to eat, most likely no big deal."

Nikole started to walk the path the dogs just came from. "Let's check to make sure it's dead then. I hate to see creatures suffer needlessly." They walked a hundred feet, taking the curve of the path, when Alec saw the body off in the distance.

"It wasn't a deer." He pointed to the body by the fence hanging off the metal rod. "Dear Gods...I always hated those things, but I guess Zayn was right for installing them." Alec reached the body first, assessing the damage of the trespasser. He heard Nikole gasp when she saw what was left of the man's face.

"It's Dominic. The man who wanted me dead, the one who, who hurt me." Alec put his arm around her and pulled her into his body away from the carcass. "Come; let's go tell your akh. We don't need to stand here and look at this any longer."

CHAPTER THIRTY

Zayn leaned in and kissed Adara's cheek while watching the sunlight slowly fill his room. He could feel her stirring in his arms, the night playing over and over in his mind. He was unsure of what to do to fix the fight with his okht. He loved her but he couldn't let Adara go. Adara felt responsible for the fight. Was this what life was going to be like, the two women in his life always at odds with each other? Surely not, they were best friends. Nikole would come to reason and understand that she couldn't be mad at them. It just wasn't logical; they needed each other. She had to get over it. Zayn watched Adara roll over, smiling at him. This was a sight he wanted to see every time he woke up.

"Good Morning, Beautiful," he said as he leaned in, kissing her soft lips.

She moaned into the kiss, forgetting the rest of the world as he melted her body with his roaming tongue. "Mhmm. Yes, it is a good morning. Did you sleep well, my King?"

Zayn laughed at her comment then rolled on his back, bringing her body along with his. Her hair fell down around his face as he took his hand and brushed it out of the way. "Yes, I did. What about you? I didn't wake you up or anything when I had to get up in the middle of the night did I? I hope not."

She shook her head no, looking down at him grinning like a teenage school girl. "No, you wore me out. I slept like a rock."

Zayn ran his hand down her side to her ass and cupped it. "One sexy rock, if I do say so." He gave her a small spank, making her jump and laugh at the same time.

"What made you get up in the middle of the night? I didn't

snore did I?” Leaning up Adara shook her hair back and looked around for her clothes.

“No,” Zayn said as his hands started to explore his woman’s body as he stared up at her. “Alec showed up last night, looking for Nikole. He was worried she was hurt. Apparently he gave her some blood and could feel our fight. He ended up staying over, but he is going home today. I don’t want a stranger in my home.”

Adara looked at him with a confused expression. “What if Nikole wants him around? Are you still going to make him leave? Maybe he would be good for her. I’m sure she is going to need to feed again, and well, it’s not like you can feed her.”

He ignored her, pulling her down to him and placing kisses across her collar bone. “Mhmm, I think you need to feed.” He scraped his teeth across her skin watching as goose bumps popped up. Licking her skin and teasing her playfully, he heard her let out a soft moan as her hands ran through his hair.

“I think we should go check on your okht. She was very upset last night. I could hear you two fighting. Come on.” Adara tried to wiggle out of his hold, making him hold her tighter.

“Just give me ten minutes. I promise you won’t regret them. Please.” He kissed down her chest while she kept wiggling.

“No, Zayn, come on.” Breaking his embrace, she saw disappointment on his face and laughed. “I promise later, baby, you and I will finish this.” Leaning over, she kissed him quickly before jumping out of the bed and collecting her clothes, slipping them on as he watched her with a hunger he didn’t understand. Zayn sighed. How could he want her so badly? It was like he hadn’t lived before she entered his world. She leaned over and slipped her jeans on and he damn near died, her firm body, the muscles and curves. Completely engulfed in her beauty, he didn’t notice her laughing at him. She grabbed a pillow off the floor and tossed it at him.

“Hey, focus. My eyes are up here!” Laughing at him, she crawled back in bed and let him wrap her in his arms, kissing her with a new passion he’d never felt.

“I can’t help it, Adara. You captivate my every sense.” Adara moved out of the bed and pulled on his hand for him to join her. She tossed him his pants and headed to the bathroom to fix her hair. Zayn dressed then, quickly looked for his cell phone, and noticed he had missed a call from Nasir. Maybe he had more information on the

person who was killed at Adara's home. Adara rejoined him and they walked out of his room together. Zayn led her down to the living room where he last saw Nikole.

"Looks like she is awake," Adara said when she noticed the blanket still laid out on the couch.

"Yeah, it does. Wonder where she is." Zayn brought Adara's hand to his lips and placed a kiss on it when he heard something outside. It sounded like people yelling. "Excuse me; I'm going to see what's got everyone yelling. I'll be right back." He left her exploring the book shelves and headed outside.

"How would he have known we lived here? This is too much; I am not safe anywhere! I want to go back with you. Right now let's just leave; I don't have anything keeping me here." Nikole told Alec as they were making their way back to the front of the mansion.

"What is this about you leaving?" Zayn said as he heard them come around the corner. "You're not going anywhere, Nikole. I won't let you."

Nikole and Alec stopped at the sound of Zayn's voice. "Oh, like you have a say in this. You abandoned me three days ago while I was being tortured! I am going home with Alec. At least no one can find me there, and I can heal."

Zayn was confused at where this paranoia was coming from. "Nikole, no one is going to get you here. What are you so worried about? I refuse to let you go somewhere we don't have complete access to with a total stranger."

Alec followed behind Nikole as she marched up to her akh. "Oh, you will protect me you say. Where were you were when someone broke onto our property? Tell me that, mister King. Where were you? Oh yes, let me think, in bed with my best friend!" Nikole yelled out to her akh.

Zayn placed his arms on Nikole's shoulders just to have her push him off of her. "Nikole, what are you talking about? No one broke in! It must have been a nightmare, you're safe, I promise!"

She pushed against him. "No, I'm not. Go look at the fence line and see what the dogs found, and they killed him, one of the men who tortured me. He was here, Zayn, on our land, next to our home! I can't stay; I am leaving and going with Alec while I'm still alive."

Alec came up behind Nikole and placed his arms around her waist protectively, "Zayn, they did attack someone. I will have to

BLOOD PURPLE

check the news feed back home to verify that it is the same person, but he was definitely on your grounds. Nikole will be safe with me. No one knows where I live but you and Nasir.” Alec pushed at the small of Nikole’s back and they moved past Zayn and into the house.

Zayn reached into his pocket and pulled out his cell phone, calling Nasir while following after his okht. “Nasir, there was a break in. Go check it out. How the fuck does someone get on my property?! The dogs killed him, but you find out who was on duty, and I want him brought to me NOW!” Hanging up the phone, he walked into the house, calling out to his okht. “Nikole, stop! You can’t leave; you just can’t. Please, I can’t risk losing you again.”

Adara stepped out of the living room and Nikole turned to her. “You were with my akh when I was taken. My best friend and you were WITH MY AKH! Did you two even miss me; did you notice I was gone?” Turning to Zayn, Nikole fought back tears. “I’m leaving. It is decided. You cannot control me and it is clear you cannot protect me. Goodbye.” Nikole felt Alec’s hands wrap around her waist and then one hand slip under her legs as he lifted her into his arms and started the climb up the stairwell. She turned her head into his chest as the tears streamed down her face. Adara felt Zayn’s pain and he could feel hers. Zayn moved to her and pulled her close as they both stood in silence as the most important person to them moved out of sight.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

The door slamming shut echoed through the house. Nikole was serious about leaving, and Zayn didn't know what he was going to do about that. He didn't trust her out there without him; they had been inseparable since she'd been born. He didn't even know anything, really, about Alec. He felt Adara squeeze his waist tighter as they stood there in the foyer. Was this really what it came down to, his okht packing to leave? All of this caused because he didn't want her in the army? He supposed that's what the catch 22 was all about, seeing how things should have been but not acting accordingly at the time. Somehow he would fix this. He placed a kiss on top of Adara's head and silently prayed that she and Nikole made up soon, because he knew neither one could go without the other.

"Zayn."

He looked up to see Nasir walking into the foyer. "The man who is dead on the lawn, we did confirm is the same one who killed Kevin. We pulled the surveillance. The man climbed the wall and fell to his death. It looked like he was speaking to someone but it doesn't appear he was with anyone. I am still looking into who has been patrolling and why this wasn't noticed."

Zayn released Adara and motioned his head to the library; she smiled at him and then left the two men alone. Zayn raised his body to his full height and turned to Nasir once Adara had shut the door. Zayn stalked towards Nasir, looking down at the man who'd sworn an oath to protect this family.

"Nasir, how did someone even get this close to us? This is unacceptable. I will not allow failure to work for me. If you do not fix this, and I mean right now, blood will be shed. No one endangers

BLOOD PURPLE

my family, MY OKHT outside of MY home!” Zayn’s voice was cold as ice, fierce and determined. “You will make sure this place is secure or the next blood that will be shed will be yours. I will not tolerate it! Not even you will put my okht and what’s mine in danger. Do. You. Understand?”

Nasir stood to attention and bowed to his King respectfully. Never had Zayn taken this tone with him before, but part of him felt pride watching Zayn take charge and come into his kingdom. “Yes, Sire.”

“Good, now leave. I don’t want to see you back here till you have given me answers as to how someone could fucking get on my property and possibly take Nikole again!” Zayn turned toward the closed door and walked away from Nasir, his back to him and carrying an arrogance that last week had not been present.

Nikole and Alec walked into her room, leaving the door cracked so they could hear what was going on down stairs. Looking around her room, she started to inventory the possessions she had. She knew she could always come back for anything she wanted, but she didn’t want to have to see Zayn again for a while. Walking to the closet, she pulled out a suitcase then started to pick out what clothes she wanted. Alec came to her side and started to fold the clothes up into the suitcase neatly in silence.

Neither broke their focus as if they would get it done faster if they keep distractions to a minimum. Walking back and forth from her closet to her bathroom, she passed a sketch of her and Zayn in a small picture frame. It was done in the early 1400’s. She picked it up and handed it to Alec to pack. She might be mad, but she still loved him. Taking a final look around her room she nodded to Alec who picked up the suitcase and grabbed her hand, placing a kiss on it before they stepped into the hallway.

Zayn opened the door and slipped in, shutting it behind him. Adara looked up from her seat and saw his eyes glowing yellow, the bright shimmering color that the King was known for. She left the couch and came to him, embracing him tightly. “Are you alright, Zayn?” She could hear his heart racing from what just took place out in the foyer.

“No, Adara, I’m not. I cannot lose her again. I will do anything to keep her here and I will not allow anyone to possibly hurt her, even if that means Nasir has to go.”

Adara pulled away from him at his harsh words. She couldn't blame him though; his okht was all the family he had left. She would be the same way. "I'll be getting my things gathered and will be out within a few hours." She moved away from him and headed to the door. How had she been so naive to think he would want to keep her around? She felt his hand grab her arm, stopping her from going any further.

"What do you think you are doing? You are NOT leaving!"

She turned around and looked up at him, those spectacular eyes, the perfect olive skin, sturdy jawline. "You just said you won't let anyone hurt her, and you won't let her leave. I have to go. I've hurt her, and as long as I'm here, she won't be. I was selfish and foolish to think I could have you, to have this." She pulled her arm out of his hand and opened the door stepping into the hallway.

"Adara, I didn't mean you! I meant everyone else but you! Stop now. Adara. STOP!"

Halfway to the stairs she turned around and looked at him. "What do you mean everyone but me? You just said no one." She turned around and wiped the tears from her eyes and started walking toward the stairs. "I am not going to come between you and my best friend. Period." She started climbing up the stairs, fumbling with each step along the way.

"Adara, stop!!"

She ignored his calls; she couldn't look at him right now, not when she was crying like this. Zayn flashed in front of her on the stairs, Adara ran right into him. He wrapped his arms around her and held her while she cried into his chest. "I have to go, Zayn. I can't be the reason that you two fight. I can't do that to my best friend; I just can't." She pushed past him and as she reached the top of the stairs, she saw Nikole and Alec standing there, looking at them. Unable to face her best friend, she just lowered her head and walked into her room, shutting it silently leaving them in the hallway.

Adara grabbed her bag that was still mostly packed from her house and shoved the items of clothing she had into it. She knew this was crazy, yet she still foolishly thought she would be able to manage it. Who would have thought anything with the King of their people would be easy? He was the King and his okht was her best friend. She had to find a way to fix things with Nikole. No one deserved so much hurt and pain, but then to come home and have salt poured on

the open wound... She truly was a horrible friend. She sat on the bed for a moment, looking around to make sure she gathered everything she'd brought.

She could hear Nikole and the others in the hallway. Her stomach started churning in sickness at her actions. She rushed to the bathroom as the wave of nausea hit from the stress of this situation. She just wanted to go home and forget everything that happened, but she couldn't.

"Dear Gods, where am I going to stay?"

Zayn and Nikole stared at each other in momentary silence, neither ready to say what needed to be said. Nikole felt Alec place his hand on the small of her back as he leaned over and picked up the suitcase she'd just packed. "Let's go, Alec." Nikole stepped around her akh and started her descent down the stairs.

"You can't take her. She can't leave me, Alec."

Alec looked at his King and took a momentary breath before saying, "This is out of my control, and Nikole wants to come with me, that's all I need to know." Walking past Zayn, Alec started followed Nikole down.

Nikole looked back up to her akh; she could see the pain and hurt in his eyes. She didn't want to leave, but she had no choice. She had to get away from him, even if only for a few weeks. "Goodbye." Taking Alec's hand, she walked out of the front door. She felt her confidence fall as she pulled Alec into her, his arms wrapping around her protectively as he held her on the porch for a minute, letting her cry.

"Am I acting wrong, Alec? Should I be staying in my home?" Nikole looked up at him with her bright violet eyes shining at him.

"No, you are not wrong; you just don't want to be here. You are entitled to be wherever you want." She turned her head in the direction of the dead body that they'd found; Alec could feel her body shiver in his embrace. He was scared for her and would gladly bring her home so he didn't have to worry anymore. He forgot how intense the blood bond was. "Come on, Nikole. Let's go home, and we can figure this out tomorrow."

Zayn lowered himself on the first step of the stairs watching the door shut. His okht was gone. His heart broke into a million pieces as twice now in one week he had seen his okht vanish before his eyes. He heard Adara open her door and come up to him. "I'm sorry,

Zayn. I just don't know what else to do." She walked down the stairs and he watched the other woman he had grown to love walk out of his life.

Zayn's body became flooded with grief and anger. Nikole and Adara walking out of his house and away from his life was the last straw to his sanity. With his scream piercing the quiet, the pipes began to shake as the foundation rumbled beneath him. His stark bright yellow eyes scanned the room as water began spewing from the walls. Seconds turned to minutes as Zayn's final grasp of reality faded. He felt as though all was lost, and in that despair his rage fuelled hotter and deeper. He wouldn't hurt anyone to satisfy and calm what was inside of him, he knew that, but as he took his last look around, he let his pain consume him as he destroyed the Kadin home.

DON'T MISS, BLOOD YELLOW, NOW AVAILABLE

Glossary of Terms, Characters, and Historical Events or Locations

Terms-

Algula- Vampires who were originally settled in what is now the Middle East. They are even tempered on a day-to-day basis, but in a fight they are ruthless and deadly, and they possess psychic abilities. All family members can share telepathic thoughts with one another, and once bonded, mates use this technique to enhance their love and desires. Each family possesses something unique, different from the others. The Royal Family is known for their ability to teleport from place to place. Once their powers mature, they can carry objects and people as well. Other abilities families can possess are magik (the ability to control the basic elements), flight, mental shielding, and freezing. Some abilities are recessive and can only be triggered by a traumatic event. These abilities are rarer and can be deadly to the recipient. They are as follows: mind control, blood control (ability to control the flow in one's body), gravitational pulls, and emotional control.

Ghul- Algula warrior who serves The Royal Family, sworn to protect the innocent and maintain the peace in the community. They are born into service, passed down from abbb to son. Ghuls are the heroes of the population and honored at every public event. The leader of the Ghuls is Nasir.

Nexus- Algula term for marriage. It's when two people come together and form a union. A ritual is performed; it can be done alone or in front of individuals. For royalty, it is best to have that ritual performed in front of witnesses in the event that the lineage is challenged. The male Algula will say the following line: “(Insert female's name), I take your hand and pledge to you my devotion, my service, my fealty. Forever I shall be faithful, and forever we shall remain.” Once this is said he will take her hand and expose her wrist. He will score her vein with his fangs then pour wax from his designated candle onto it. The female Algula will say the following line: “(Insert male's name), I take your hand and pledge to you my service, my loyalty, my life. Forever I shall be yours, and forever I

shall please you.” She will then expose his wrist, score his vein, and apply her wax to his wrist. The woman will then take the ceremonial knife and cut her wrist where the wax and skin have formed, and then the male will do the same. They then press their wrists together, bonding the two of them. Typically the ceremonial candles represent something from the people or families that are being joined, either their personalities, lineage, or magik traits. Once the nexus has been performed, it cannot be undone, except after one of the parties has died.

Raheel Ritual - The ritual performed for a member of the Ghul and/or their spouse at their passing. It's the second highest form of respect that a priest can lay on a family in the time of mourning, and is reserved for those families who have fought to protect the Royal Family.

Hayah Kayema - An experimental medicine the Algula have created to assist their females with their pregnancies. It's administered as a suppository, and will help the uterus accept the embryo and the body keep the pregnancy. It is still not 100% effective.

Abb- The formal use of the word 'Father'

Baba - The informal use of the word 'Dad'

Omm - The formal use of the word 'Mother'

Mama - The informal use of the word 'Mom'

Gedi - Grandfather

Siti – Grandmother

Ebn' - Son

Bent- Daughter

Hafeeda -Granddaughter

BLOOD PURPLE

Hafeed -Grandson

Akh - Brother

Okht - Sister

Amm - Uncle

Amma - Aunt

Bent Amm - Niece on Father's side

Ebn' Amm - Nephew on Father's side

Bent Amma - Niece on Mother's side

Ebn' Amma - Nephew on Mother's side

Bent Amty - Female cousin from Father's side

Eben Amty - Male cousin from Father's side

Shebeen - Godfather

Shebeena - Godmother

az-zaġāyah or assegai - A pole weapon typically used for throwing or hurling. It's a lightweight spear or javelin typically with an iron tip at the end of some type of hard, wooden handle. This was the primary weapon used during the Islamic Conquest (ranging from 634-750) and then later used well into the 20th century in the Middle East.

Emir - A military Commander

Characters -

Hashim Khaled - King of the Algula, his name means destroyer of evil, with his family name meaning eternal. It was first recorded that his reign started around 4000 B.C. While under his rule, his subjects

enjoyed peace and prosperity, their lands flourished with crops, and their people were wealthy. He possessed the ability to fly and control the earth. His eyes turned a shade of yellow when using his powers. He bonded to Afaf in 3850 B.C. He died around the year 500 A.D. They had two children, twins, son Haydar and daughter Ikram.

Afaf Khoury- Queen of the Algula, her name means pure and loving. Her omm was a servant of the kings, and she grew up playing in his fields. She and Hashim first met at the river, where Afaf injured her leg and Hashim helped her home. The two courted for two months before he took her as his mate. She possessed the ability to control fire. She was the most cherished treasure Hashim ever laid eyes on when they met. She died in the year 1273 A.D. Her dying wish was for her two children to mend their ties, but that day never came. She had fiery red hair and creamy, white skin. Her beauty was unmatched in her time. They say her hair was as soft as silk and she smelled of lilac. Her lips were full, her eyes sultry gray.

Haydar- Prince of the Algula, his name means lion. He has a bad temper and no patience. He goes about his business with no care of his actions and lacks the control necessary to maintain peace. It is unknown who was born first, he or his sister, but he feels he is the rightful ruler of the Algula because he is male. His abb's final betrayal of him, crowning Ikram as queen, sealed his fate. He is forever compelled to fight an uphill battle until the day he dies. He possesses his omm's ability to control fire. When his emotions take control of him, his eyes turn a shade of violet. He has the ability to control the elements as his omm did. He was born in the year 423 B.C. He was bonded to Sarah.

Ikram- Queen of the Algula her name means generosity and hospitality. She was a loving ruler who tried to honor her abb's memory by ruling in a fair and just way. She worried about her brother and the death he left behind in his wake. She possessed the ability to teleport and control minds. She controlled the element of earth. Her eyes turned shades of green when her emotions took control. She was born in the year 423 B.C. She was crowned queen around 500 A.D. She was bonded to Tamman in 700 B.C. They had a son, Zayn, and a daughter, Nikole. They settled in the mountains of

BLOOD PURPLE

Lebanon where they ruled. The city is present day called Zahle, Lebanon.

Tamman Kadin- King of the Algula. His name means strength. His family name means confidence. He was the son of a Ghul who was in favor with King Hashim. The king allowed Tamman to bond with Ikram in 700 B.C. because his nobility and strength would serve his descendants well. He and his wife, Ikram, were killed during the invasion of Zahle in 1777 A.D. He possessed the ability to control earth. His eyes turned green when using his power.

Zayn- King of the Algula, his name means beauty. He is most loyal to his sister and is very protective of her. He works with his people to rebuild their community and repair the destruction his amm created. He has long, black, straight hair, is 6'7", and has yellow eyes. Built of all muscles, he looks like a fierce warrior. When he stares at you, you feel him touching your soul. He possesses the ability to control water. When he is angry, his eyes change to a rare yellow shade. It's the only warning you will have that he is going to attack. He was born in 1015 A.D. He officially took over the throne in 1890 A.D. He is not bonded to anyone.

Nikole- Princess of the Algula, her name is derived from Nikolas, meaning victory of the people. She fights for virtue and honor whenever she can. She possesses the ability to control fire. Her eyes shift to violet when she gets worked up with any emotion. She is battling to control her emotions to become a better fighter. She is learning to fight from Nasir in order to protect herself and her brother. She was born 1170 A.D. She is not bonded to anyone.

Nasir- Emir of the Ghul, his name means protector. He swore loyalty to King Tamman and promised to always look after Zayn and Nikole. He swore his allegiance to protect the Royal Family to King Tamman and Queen Ikram in 377 A.D. He helped Zayn and Nikole flee during the attacks and is teaching them how to maintain an army and rule a kingdom.

Leigh- General, daughter of Haydar and Sarah. She has worked for her abb for the last 800 years. She was born in 1212A.D. and has

been her abb's go to person for the last 700 of those years. She moved up in the ranks by viciously killing her competition in every combat she was a part of. She has the ability to control the earth. Her eyes flare green when she is emotionally stressed. Leigh is known as the Black Death because she has the ability to take out entire cities in a matter of weeks. Some say she is responsible for all the deaths in 1348-1350 when she was training and proving herself to Haydar. She is 5'10" with long legs, red hair, and olive skin and is cut like a rock. She is not bonded to anyone

Adara Malak- Daughter of Ghazi, a Ghul in Zayn's trusted army, she and Nikole met one night at Club Impact while they were both hunting the same human male; they became friends and often hang out together. She is the only close friend Nikole has, the closest thing to a sister. They have been running around together for about twenty years. She is 5'10" with long, black hair and a nice, olive skin-tone. She has the ability to control water. Her eyes turn a shade of yellow when she is using her skills. She keeps her emotions under control and is not bonded to anyone

Alec Palermo- A former medical tech for the king's Ghul when they lived in their homeland of Zahle. During the invasion of their homeland, his wife and child died as a direct result of Haydar's actions. He fled to The New World along with the remaining Algula. He was born in 1375 A.D. He is 6'1" tall with blonde hair and has the ability to control fire. He is no longer bonded to anyone.

Derrick- Mercenary, son of Haydar and Sarah. He worked for his abb for hundreds of years, helping carry out the tasks that he thought his abb wasn't man enough to follow through with. He had extraordinary strength and speed. He could control the wind, but had not mastered the art of controlling the air supply around him. He was born around 1350 A.D. and killed for his abb for 600 years. He was 6'1" with dark hair and a muscular build. He was not bonded to anyone.

Dominic - Mercenary, son of Haydar and Sarah. He worked for his abb for the last three centuries. He assisted Derrick on most of the missions over that time. He was after his brother's position in the ranks for the last two centuries. He was born in 1578 A.D. He could

BLOOD PURPLE

control the element of fire, but had not been instructed how to self-generate it because the only living relative that has this skill is Nikole. His eyes changed to violet when his emotions started to flare, but unlike Nikole, they did not stay that way, because he could not maintain the control necessary to keep the elements. He resented everything that Derrik was and hid his lineage from the world. He didn't want anyone to know who he was. He was 6'0" with dark hair, muscles, and olive skin. He was not bonded to anyone.

Hamza- Leader of Haydar's rebel forces. His name means strong and steadfast, which his personality and characteristics reflect. He was in control of the military rebellion from 1700 to 2012; his first major assault was on the city the Royal Family lived at in 1777. He was 5'9" and 300 pounds of pure muscle. He was the most ruthless of all of Haydar's men, known for his sadistic torturing skills. He devoted his life to Haydar and cared about no one else.

Kevin-Owner of Club Impact, the local hang out for the Algula. He was one of Nikole's friends. Kevin opened the bar in 1909, but only allowed Algula to enter. It wasn't until 1951 that he opened the doors to the humans. Sometimes Kevin and Nikole fed from each other; it was a mutually beneficial friendship for each of them. When they were in public, they were friendly. When they were in private they were lovers.

Sarah Berbera-She met Haydar when he left his family's residence and fled to Europe after he disowned them. They met around the year 1059 A.D. She was born in England and traveled across the world. She possessed the ability to control the mind. She had three children, two sons and a daughter. Her eyes were a midnight black with gold flakes surrounding her pupils. She died in childbirth with Dominic in 1578 A.D. She was bonded to Haydar.

History Events on Record-

Maronite Christians started forming around 500 A.D. This is when they started moving into the land presently called Lebanon.

Muslim Invasion troops from Syria invaded Lebanon around 636 A.D. They took over control of the land almost everywhere but the

mountains.

Zahle, Lebanon, in 1777 was attacked and burned, causing of damage. This happened several times in this city over the next hundred years.

The Civil War started around 1861 in The United States.

August 2, 1990- The United Nations invaded Iraq as a result of the Iraqi military invading Kuwait.

Palermo, Sicily- A city of northwest Sicily, Italy, on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Founded by Phoenicians c. eighth century B.C., it later became a Carthaginian military base and was conquered by Rome in 254-253. The Arabs held the city from 831 A.D. until 1072, when it became capital of the independent kingdom of Sicily (until 1194).

The Black Death- A pandemic which hit Europe in 1348 and lasted two years. Most scientists agree this was caused by the bacteria Yersina Pestis. It took out roughly 30-60% of the European population.

Sir Walter Tirell III - He is the infamous son of Walter Tirell II, a Norman lord. He is known for his involvement in the death of King William II of England, who was also known as William Rufus. King William's death was said to have occurred while on a hunting trip in the 'New Forest.' It is said that instead of shooting a wild stag with his arrow, he hit the king, and in a panic, he mounted his stallion, left the king, and headed to France.

William the Conqueror - William I or William the Bastard was the first Norman King of England and began his reign in 1066 and ruled until his death in 1087. He was descended from Viking raiders, and under William II held the title of Duke of Normandy from 1035 until his death. He had trouble establishing power until 1060. His son William later became King of England and was killed during a hunting trip inside of the New Forest in 1087.

BLOOD PURPLE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ashley is married and lives in Houston with her husband and their dogs, Toto and Doogie. They have been together for over 9 years and he brings her more joy than she could ever imagine as a child.

Ashley finds her strength through her family, especially her parents. They always support her in life, they push her to strive for greatness. There once was a motto that Ashley heard in her youth through her Taekwondo life 'Reach for the Stars' and that is what Ashley has always done. It was through her upbringing that the values Ashley has and display's came from. With her Parents always cheering her on in life she was able to grow up having faith in herself and her ability to conquer the world.

You can contact Ashley at the following locations.

www.ashleynemer.com
www.facebook.com/ashleynemerauthor
<http://ashleynemer.blogspot.com>
Ashley@ashleynemer.com

Be sure to check out her website for other releases and upcoming events