

“Beloved we... we must do something.” Aricia finally broke the silence in the room, all of them turning to look at their mother. “This... this cannot be left... it cannot go...”

“Unpunished!” Anja hissed softly now as she stood beside Aricia. Isabella stood on Aricia’s other side with For’mya beside her Dysea and Cirith standing to Anja’s left.

Martin turned his head and looked at the six women who held his heart and soul in their hands. He could see the set of their jaws, the determination in their eyes, and the way they stood proudly pressed against one another in complete unity. Even his beautiful For’mya, perhaps the calmest and most level headed of his Queens, even she had simmering anger in her beautiful deep brown eyes. Even she wanted justice. Reva stayed silent listening and felt the pride swell within her as all of them began to speak their minds after their mothers.

“They have... they have taken the lives of our blood!” Denali rasped angrily as Lisisa and Arduri clung to either side of his body and nodded their heads in agreement. “For power! For control! Father we cannot let that stand!”

“We did not know how many...” Doseb began to speak now as all eyes turned to him. “...How many had been killed when we left. Kesas Pengot never revealed this to us.”

“He did that for a reason.” Martin spoke looking at him. “He needed you two focused on one thing. Your survival.”

“How many Martin?” Irani asked softly.

Martin shook his head slowly. “I don’t know exact numbers Irani... and I did not ask Kesas that question when Andro and I spoke to him and Lylor.”

“It is bad though, isn’t it father?” Deion asked him.

Martin nodded his head slowly now as he looked at his son. “Probably, yes. Probably much worse than any of us can imagine.” He answered. “The numbers Chiron has shown us tell us that, but we don’t know exactly.”

“They were... they are our blood *ahva!*” Nara snarled angrily now. She was standing beside Jacina, both of them leaning almost causally against Laon’s taller form, but leaving no doubt as to who had claimed them both. Laon’s scent spoke of utter worship for both of them and that was all Nara’s family needed to see and smell to know where Laon stood in status within their family. “They must be avenged!”

“*Jainn. Pen areto!*” Deion instantly agreed with his twin. (Yes. I agree.)

“*Sy alad pen.*” Eliani was next to speak. (So, do I)

“*Una coi atle coi isquer.*” Jomann agreed standing just behind Eliani. (It is what is required.)

“I know that... I do not know as much as everyone here...” Lazar spoke now, stepping slightly ahead of Retta but still holding her hand tightly as she looked on proudly at him. “This is... it is all new to me...”

“You have the blood of our family swirling within you Lazar.” Aricia spoke again. “As does your mother and siblings. That makes all of you equal in this.”

“*Avoi.*” Gorgo spoke softly from where she sat at the head of the bed beside Reva with Dynina and Jezima around her.

“I am still learning.” Lazar continued. “But I feel it within me now, the power of the blood that flows within me.”

Loras stepped up to her son and took his hand as well as Retta's. "As do I." She said with confidence. "I feel... I feel rage and vengeance within me. This thing that has taken place... it cannot be left unanswered."

Lazar shook his head. "No." He agreed.

Doseb and Irani stepped close to their daughter and grandson. "We agree." Doseb spoke as Irani nodded her head.

"*Alvva*... you know we speak the truth." Normya spoke now. "This is how you and our mothers raised all of us to be. Blood before all else father."

"Yes, we did." Martin said softly.

"Normya is correct. We all feel it within us father, for we all have your blood within us. Mahanlo-Leonidas blood. *Staania* Reva has been... by a gift from the gods and our ancestors, she has been given back to us. The connection all of us have felt to our history father; to the very origins of the bloodline we all bear within us." Zarah spoke after her sister causing Martin to turn his head once more and look at Zarah with love in his eyes. "What has been done... no matter how terrible it may turn out to be... it is our duty as a family to see that justice is done."

Martin looked at Reva quickly, saw the support in her eyes and then turned back to his daughter. "Not everyone we face or come in contact with will have had a role in what has taken place *fenneenum*." He said softly. "You know this."

Zarah nodded her head. "Yes, I know *alvva*." She replied. "We..."

"Zarah is right." Deion spoke again now. "They think... they think they have ended our bloodline. They hold our *tenna* Kelia prisoner father! A tool to use against our people! To keep them oppressed! I say it is time to show them that our bloodline is not dead! It is time to save our *tenna* and show them that our bloodline flourishes, and we do not accept the deaths of so many of our family at their hands! We do not accept it and we will have our justice!"

Nara stepped up beside her twin and took his hand. "*Avoi*." She spoke firmly.

Martin looked at each of his children and those they called beloved mate as they all stepped forward in support and complete agreement with Deion's words. Even Taris and Anoria, the newest members of their family stood on either side of Calyb proudly and without doubt in their beautiful faces. Martin turned to look at his mother now, seeing the set of her jaw and that of Dynina and Jezima and even Dasha who stood beside Jezima. He turned his head once more to look at his queens and in their eyes, he saw the fiercest look of passion that he had ever seen before and total commitment to him and to their family. Their bloodline.

"If we do this..." Androcles' voice echoed softly in the room now causing everyone to turn and look at him. He had dropped to one knee between Carisia and Lu'ria, their hands going to rest lovingly on his shoulders. "If we do this... if we all agree on this course of action... we do this as a family. We do this as a bloodline. We target only those who are responsible for these heinous deeds and those who would support them. We do not target those who are innocent or those who know nothing of what has been done. We must be certain in our actions, for these are our people as well. There has not been a *Saan Tinate* among our people since the one Chetak swore against our grandfather, nearly twenty thousand years ago. We all know how that ended. If we do this, and I believe deeply that we must; my blood calls for even, even the Dahakoan blood within me."

Laren stepped forward now beside Dorian, Sheva and Onera, all of them holding hands. "As does ours." Laren spoke.

Androcles looked around at his family. "If we do this, then we make it known who we hold responsible and why. We rescue our *Tenna Kelia* first, and any who these people hold against their will. That must be our priority. If we do this... then... then we show no mercy, no remorse and no quarter and we make certain justice is done. And when it is finished, we leave it behind us and move forward into the future, for we have much larger concerns in the days to come ahead."

"*Mard astia*." Martin said softly with a nod. He looked around the room slowly, touching everyone's eyes for a few seconds. "This is what we have decided as a family?" He asked them. "We must be certain and all of us must agree. Your mothers and I will speak with your siblings on Manne and with Deia, Resumar and Arrarn in the next few hours, but all of us must agree." Martin touched everyone's eyes in the room, and not one set of eyes held doubt or hesitation of their course of action. Martin turned to look at Reva last. Her dark eyes were equally as bright as everyone's and he knew where he got the color of his eyes from. Reva was still holding his hand and she lifted it within her grasp and placed her other hand around his where she squeezed tightly.

"Promise me one thing. All of you." She stammered.

Martin nodded his head. "Name it *Staanian*."

"When it... when it is done Martin Mahanlo-Leonidas..." Reva spoke softly. "...You do what your ancestors intended for you to do. You bring our people back together and make us whole once again."

Martin stared at her for a long moment and then nodded his head. "That is a promise I intend to keep to you. And to them."

Reva nodded as tears slowly rolled down her cheeks. "Then let it begin." She spoke firmly. "Let it begin."

Martin rose to his feet slowly and look around the room once more slowly. "I doubt Deia or your siblings will disagree but we will ask them anyway." He spoke. "Prepare yourselves my family. The Mahanlo-Leonidas family is going to war. Again."