

The Queen waited for Passio, the stepson of her late brother Mighy, in her private conference room. She had taken care of the young warrior from when he was very young. After her brother's death thirty-two years ago, she had tried her best to raise Passio as her military advisor and worthy successor to Mighy. For years now he had been the best and strongest warrior on the planet. He was very intelligent and of very appealing attractiveness. All the more reason why he was able to climb up the career ladder as quickly as he did. He hadn't even completed the lifespan of a full century when he was elected 'Leader of Warriors' and two years ago, at his one hundred and twenty-fifth birthday, she announced him as her second in command. Endla was proud of him; proud of her family.

Hearing his footsteps, she turned around and had to smile. He stormed towards and hugged her with so much gentle wildness and strength that he lifted her off the ground. She shook her head imperceptibly. He was still young and wild, despite his responsibilities and his high position within the Empire. His long, golden hair surrounded his face, an almost lion-like appearance, extending far down his spine. Hit by the early morning sun, his smooth, velvety fur appeared sprinkled with thousands of different colours, only surpassed by the magical glittering of his pale blue eyes. Passio's smirk turned into a broad grin, exposing his long, white fangs. Her heart would always melt when she saw him like that, although in all the years of strict discipline and improving her skills, she had learned to hide and disguise her feelings well.

He took a step back and bowed slightly. "Greetings, Endla!" It was important to remember etiquette and how to deal with the Queen in public, even after the personal and stormy welcome.

"Hello, son. I heard you were very successful in hunting down those smugglers."

"Yes, they didn't stand a chance this time."

"You did well, Passio. It was about time that someone put an end to this."

"Well, it was just one ship. We think there are another two or three out there, but I'm confident that we will get those as well, sooner or later."

"I'm sure you will. However, you won't have time for this in the coming weeks."

"A new mission?" he asked in surprise.

"Yes. There is something I need you to do for me. It's a private matter." Endla was trying to find the right words. "It has something to do with what happened thirty-two years ago."

His facial expression darkened. "What's going on?"

"Do you remember the war against the R'Schaaks?"

Passio nodded. Memories of his father getting killed in the war came rushing back into his head. How could he forget? Never!

"Do you also remember that it took me a long time to intervene and take action?"

"Yes."

Endla bit her lip. "But, you don't really know what's behind it?"

Passio hadn't seen her as insecure and uncertain in a long, long time.

"No. I just thought you rather wanted to leave it to Mighy to handle harsh wars and fierce battles." Back then, his father was the First Warrior while he was a very young commander.

Endla looked deep into his eyes. "I intervened that late because I was pregnant and gave birth to a daughter."

Passio stared in disbelief, unable to make sense of what he had just heard. He had been completely unaware of this.

"WHAT?"

"You heard right. I gave birth to the heir to the throne. The next Lhig Queen." Like anyone else in Endla's immediate and private entourage, Passio knew about her mortality and everything that comes with it. Nobody would mention it in front of her to avoid upsetting her, but now he couldn't resist. "A girl? A real Lhig?"

Endla looked down. "Yes, Orgon and Media made sure that she would become a Lhig and took her away right after she was born. For her - and our own - security they brought her to a distant and unknown planet far from here."

"So, what do you want me to do?" Passio asked, still unsure why Endla was telling him all of this now.

"Two nights ago, Orgon came to me and told me that it is time to bring her back home. I have never been there."

"By the Lhigs? You are kidding, right?"

"No. We made sure that we left no tracks. We wanted to be sure that nothing was going to happen to her. For the same reason, she doesn't know anything about her real descent. She grew up on that planet the same way as their indigenous people. Orgon and Media have transmuted her that much that she even looks like these so-called humans. She's protected by a special SAWR group and one SAWR has been assigned to play the role of her mother.

Your task will be to get her, explain to her who she really is and bring her here."