

# Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 251

Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate by A E Randell

## Chapter 251 Why You Left Her

Allen had finally managed to persuade Lexi to get some shut-eye while he was there and her head was resting on his lap as he kept watch over her best friend.

He scrolled through his phone casually, checking through any notifications from the businesses and pack, and waiting for any messages from Adam.

He didn't need to wait for very long though, as about 30 minutes after Lexi had fallen asleep, Adam burst through the doors with Felix in tow.

They were both unshaven and dirty, clearly having dropped everything and sped back as soon as they had received the news.

The commotion Adam made when he burst through the doors woke Lexi with a start and they both watched helplessly as a roar of grief and fury tore from Adam's chest as he took in the sight of his mate so vulnerable and unwell, reliant on all these machines to ensure that she was still safe.

He dropped to his knees at Ann's bedside, reaching for her hand as silent sobs wracked his body and he rested his forehead on the crisp white sheets of the bed.

"Ann... f\*uc\*k... I'm sorry... I should have stayed..."

Felix stood silently in the background as Allen and Lexi exchanged a look, knowing full well that Adam's reactions to anything they said were most likely going to be emotional and irrational, but Allen knew that his job as his Beta, was to keep him balanced and help him through this.

Whatever it took.

He took a d\*EEP breath as he stood, mentally preparing himself for whatever Adam might throw at him.

"Adam, there are signs of improvement as each day passes. She's awake a little longer each day..." Allen began tentatively but stopped as Adam whirled to face him and the eyes of his wolf stared back at him accusingly.

"Where were you?" Baldur growled through Adam.

"We were with her, in the bar, Alpha. We were ensuring that she was eating adequately for the pup's sake..."

Adam laughed, the sinister husk of Baldur's fury lending a terrifying undertone that made Allen's hair stand on end and Orvar began to prepare to defend himself and his human.

"You were with her, yet she still ended up like this?" Adam said with deathly calm as he stood and bared his teeth, his eyes flashing warningly.

"We had absolutely no reason to believe that anyone would move against her yet Adam, she..."

"YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT HER!" Adam roared as he lunged, covering the short amount of distance between them at frightening speed and pinning him against the wall by his throat.

"Adam please!" Lexi yelled, racing to Ann's bedside, her heart racing as her anxiety levels began to rise.

"Adam be reasonable, there was no way to tell with the poison! We've always eaten there! Why would I suspect anything would happen when there were no warning signs?!" Allen argued as he grappled with Adam.

Felix maneuvered his way behind them to stand between the two males and Lexi and Ann as Allen and Adam crashed into the walls and furniture.

"Felix, please! Do something!" Lexi yelled over the furious growls.

"I can't, this is not my place to interfere. The disagreement between Alpha and Beta needs to be resolved by them, otherwise, it can lead to resentment.. he explained calmly as Lexi narrowed her eyes dangerously.

"Are you f\*\*\*\*\*g kidding me right now?" she breathed as Felix shrugged helplessly.

"The best I can do is ensure that you two are safe. I will step in if either of you are threatened."

"Is that right?" Lexi sneered, "Fine, I'll do it my-f\*uc\*king-self then," She hissed as she stormed over to the two males with her eyes blazing.

She reached for Adam's shoulder and pulled roughly, forcing him to turn towards her. He snarled angrily as he turned and seconds later, found himself on the receiving end of Lexi's furious right hook that connected sharply with his jaw.

He let go of Allen and staggered back a little dazed as he stared at LEXi in bewilderment.

“f\*\*\*\*\*g get a hold of yourself, Adam! Do you think your wife and pups would want you brawling in her f\*\*\*\*\*g hospital room! You f\*\*\*\*\*g male wolves are insufferable sometimes!” She fumed, her blazing scarlet eyes boring into him and rendering him speechless.

“None of us could have predicted this you selfish prick! If you want to assign blame, then take a look in the mirror and ask yourself why you left her. If this was something you foresaw, as her mate... then why did you leave her to face this alone?!”

Adam clenched his jaw as her words hit their mark.

“Lexi, it’s okay. I should have...” Allen said quietly as he reached out to try and calm her.

“Just shut the f\*\*k up Allen, okay? This is no one’s fault but the one who put that poison in her food. Any more of this f\*uc\*kery and I’ll kick you both out of this room...”

“I am her MATE!” Adam protested loudly with a look of indignation as Lexi snorted loudly.

“And? Ann and I grew up together, if you want to make this a competition you arrogant little f\*uc\*ker then let’s do that. You might have your claim to her heart and her babies, but I’ve been there since the beginning keeping her safe, and right now, you are NOT acting in a safe manner around my bestie and her unborn children!” Lexi roared furiously, the intensity of her anger making even Adam take a step back. “Either sort your s\*\*t out or I will f\*\*\*\*\*g drag you out of this room and deny you entry until you can behave like a civilized human being and not a feral beast.”

Adam looked as though he had been slapped and he grunted an apology towards Alen as he turned and stood in front of the window, the aura surrounding him still thick with his murderous rage.

“Nicely done.” Felix smirked as Lexi returned to Ann’s bedside with a scowl.

“Fat lot of help you were, f\*uc\*kboy. What good are you Alpha’s if you can’t even control your anger.” she tutted loudly.

“It’s that anger and violence that protects our people well when it needs to. The fierce protectiveness...”

“Oh Blah-f\*uc\*king-Blah. Can’t you guys just sit and talk about s\*\*t for once? I mean, I love the whole revenge thing and enacting violence on the responsible parties as much as the next person, but there is such a thing as taking it too far and reacting irrationally, you know?” She muttered as Felix chuckled.

“You sound like my grandmother.” Felix chuckled warmly as Allen moved to Lexi’s side and almost instantly began eyeing Felix suspiciously.

That was all it took for the atmosphere between them to become suddenly almost unbearably awkward.

“Allen... I don’t want our family’s past to affect the relationship between us.” Felix blurted out suddenly.

Allen blinked in surprise as he narrowed his eyes suspiciously, trying to work out where this had come from.

“I am not my brother.” He began, “I understand that this may take time for you to accept, and that’s fine. I can’t make up for what he did, but I will help you bring him to justice if I can.”

Allen nodded curtly and after a moment’s hesitation, extended his arm across the bed and held his hand out.

Felix grinned and with a small laugh of what they took to be relief, he clasped Allen’s hand and they shook firmly.

“Here’s to a new friendship then.” Felix grinned as Allen nodded and forced a tight smile.

If aligning himself with Felix meant that they could bring his bastard of a brother to justice, then he would.

For the memory of his sister, he would do whatever it took.

## **Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 252**

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### **Chapter 252 Sisterhood**

“Nice to see us all acting like grownups now... well... most of us...” Lexi smirked with a side glance towards Adam.

He didn’t bother responding and Allen shot a look towards Lexi, letting her know that she was pushing her luck.

Felix cleared his throat awkwardly.

“Aoife said that she had been having more fun with you two than she had since she had left home.” He half smiled, “I don’t know if I should be offended or happy that you two have been taking care of her so well.”

“You furballs will never understand how much a woman needs her girls.” Lexi answered almost immediately with a little laugh, “When your hormones and caveman-like urges are through the roof, then we NEED each other. It’s a sisterhood, furball.”

“I understand.” Felix said with a small smile as he c\*\*\*\*d his head, “Where is Aoife anyway? Did she return to our room?”

“Oh we’ve been sharing shifts with Ann so she wasn’t on her own. I take the night shift and Aoife does the day shift. She managed

to persuade the staff to allow us to use the room next door so she’s most likely asleep in there.”

“You’re both staying in the hospital?”

“Why wouldn’t we? It’s a bit of a trek from our quarters so being this close by means we save a ton of time. Besides, both of us have had trouble sleeping since this happened so at least we can pop through to keep each other company if we need to.”

“I see.” Felix said with the ghost of a smile on his face, “I must say that I’m surprised at the speed in which you all have bonded.”

“I mean, I don’t know why you’re surprised,” Lexi shrugged, “Aoife is an absolute sweetheart and I know I have a reputation for being a sarcastic, snarky mean-girl, but that side of me is only ever unleashed on people that deserve it.”

“Just to clarify, Felix, in case you’re struggling, calling us semi-derogatory names is a form of endearment in her mind.” Allen interjected with a wry smile as Felix chuckled.

“Got it.” He grinned, “Well, without being rude, I should probably go and surprise my wife. Although I’m fairly sure she’ll be asleep seeing as how she didn’t reply to my last message.”

“You might want to think about getting changed and showering before you drag your sweaty ass in to see her.” Lexi said with a grimace.

“Nah. She loves the filthy side of me,”

Felix quipped with a wink as he made his way to the door.

“Bit of a difference between blood and gore and travel dirt though to the type of filth she enjoys though!” Lexi sniggered as Allen massaged the bridge of his nose which only seemed to amuse her further.

Felix said goodbye to Allen and Lexi, hesitating before also saying goodbye to Adam, who could only grunt in response.

He sighed internally as he left the room and made his way to where Aoife would be waiting for him. He couldn't wait to see that excited gleam in her eyes, and feel her arms around his neck, pulling at him insistently so that he would give in to her ever present need for physical closeness.

He grinned to himself at the thought of it as he placed his hand on the handle. He would have never thought that the quiet girl who had boldly stood up to his bastard of a brother would be quite so insatiable or needy in the bedroom. Not that he was complaining though, he loved it.

As soon as he swung the door open his senses were assaulted by the metallic scent of blood in the air. His heart almost stopped as blind panic took over.

“Aoife? AOIFE?!” He shouted frantically into the darkness, the fear choking him as he received no reply.

Felix swore loudly and fumbled for the light switch that should have been right next to the door. As soon as he found it, he flipped it quickly and spun round, soon wishing that he hadn't.

He froze at the gruesome sight that greeted him before a cry of utter devastation left his lips as his legs gave way from underneath him. He scrambled across the floor to where the lifeless body of his beautiful mate lay, muttering her name like a mantra as he did so.

“No... it can't... Aoife! Baby... please open your eyes!” He pleaded, his voice cracking as tears streamed down his face.

He wiped them away furiously as his eyes took in the damage that had been wrought on his fragile little mate.

“Aoife... I'm nothing without you... don't leave me... please!” He sobbed, roaring her name to the oppressive silence of the room.

He knew, just by looking at these injuries, that there was no way that she was coming back from this. He sobbed as he traced the outline of her face and tried not to look at the gruesome mess on her neck.

“I’ll find them, my love.” Felix whispered as his gaze hardened, “I’ll find them and when I do, I’ll make them wish they had never laid a hand on you. I promise you. Even if it takes the rest of my life, they will pay dearly for taking my only love from me, and when I take my last breath to be reunited with you, I will smile, because I will know that you will be waiting.”

His shoulders shook with silent sobs as he reached forward and gently closed her eyes with his fingers.

This didn’t make any sense. Why would someone kill her? Unless...

Felix’s mind raced with potential suspects, but there was no one that wanted to see her dead here. Unless... unless Allen had decided to take his revenge for his sister’s death on Aoife.

Felix’s wolf was enraged by the mere possibility and pushed to take control even as Felix tried to calm him.

Surely he wouldn’t. There was no use trying to scent other intruders here because the overpowering metallic tang that hung in the air covered any other scent that may have hinted at the culprit.

He clenched his jaw and with a final look at his beloved wife, turned and stormed out of the room, fully intending to confront Allen and find out the truth.

It all was starting to suddenly make sense to him now. This was why Adam had been asking about his relationship with Aoife and his family’s relationship with her. He wanted to make sure that her death would cause a sufficient impact on the family. how had he been so blind as to not see it?

He had thought the probing questions and hours of discussion that they had revolving around Jasper had been purely just to see about bringing him to justice, but that obviously wasn’t the case after all.

With a terrifying crash he burst through the doors of Ann’s room, snarling wildly as he launched himself at a shocked looking Allen.

“WHAT THE f\*\*k DID YOU DO TO MY MATE?!”

## **Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 253**

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**Chapter 253 Someone to Blame**

Allen stared at him in shock for a second as the furious figure of Felix soared through the air toward him.

He just couldn't wrap his head around it. What the hell had happened in those few short minutes that he had been gone that would explain why he was covered in blood and why he was in such a murderous rage.

He managed to sidestep Felix's initial assault, moving away from Ann's bedside and trying to defend himself as Adam snarled in fury at the violence that was occurring in such close quarters to his bedridden, vulnerable, and pregnant mate.

Felix swung wildly at Allen and then at Adam as they tried to restrain him to find out exactly what was going on.

"Felix calm down! What the hell happened?!" Adam roared as he dodged a wild punch from the clearly distraught Alpha in front of him.

As much as Baldur wanted to meet his violence with violence, the cloying scent of blood that hung around Felix told him that something horrific must have happened. If it concerned Aoife, then this was an emotional response, his wolf's attempt at finding someone to blame.

This was why it was paramount for an Alpha to have a strong Beta at their side, to counter the irrational and bloodthirsty rage before it escalated, but Felix's Beta wasn't here. He was finishing clearing the few remaining rogues before he would make his way back to the Enclave.

He would have to rely on his and Allen's capabilities to control this situation before it escalated further.

"Why?!" Felix roared, "Why Aoife? Whatever feud you have with my family did not concern her!"

"I don't know what's happened, but I can promise you we had nothing to do it!" Allen ground out through gritted teeth as he struggled with getting hold of his left arm, whilst Adam worked on the right.

It was a struggle though. Felix was strong already and the rage did nothing but fuel him.

"LIAR!" He roared as he pushed them both back and stood panting heavily, pointing at them accusingly, "I waited to go and see her purely to support you, Adam, and make peace with you, Allen, thinking she would just be sleeping at this hour, but you.. .you both took advantage of that and made sure she was beyond help!"

"Felix, I can promise you that I knew nothing of this..." Adam said in a calm voice, holding his hands in front of him, fully prepared for if Felix launched another assault.



"I can promise Allen hasn't left the room with me either Felix," Lexi said softly as she stood between Allen and Adam, facing Felix with a concerned expression.

Her eyes scanned Felix's appearance, blood smeared all over his clothing and hands, and stifled the gasp of horror that threatened to break free.

"Felix..." she began hesitantly, the fear in her voice apparent from the first word, "Where's Aoife? What happened?" Felix snorted.

"Aoife is gone. Dead. Someone brutally murdered her and I cannot believe that not one of you heard a thing while you were all cozy in here. That tells me that it was one of you that did this!" He growled.

Lexi frowned.

"Felix, the doors are hermetically sealed to minimize the risk of infection. The air purification system ensures that stale air is pumped out and clean air is pumped in... there's no way that we could have heard anything, let alone smelled anything... all the rooms have individual systems. The perks of being a VIP, means you get VIP treatment."

A flicker of doubt crossed Felix's eyes for a moment before he angrily shook his head.

"Don't try to confuse me! This... no... you would have heard... she was all alone..." He mumbled to himself as he slowly began to take in what they were saying.

"Felix... this is important... tell me what happened," Lexi said softly as she began to approach him slowly.

She was stopped in her tracks by Allan, his hand shooting out to grip her arm firmly, begging her not to approach him with a silent look of warning, but Lexi twisted her arm out of his grip and smiled reassuringly.

She resumed her approach, taking it slow and steady as if she was approaching a terrified frightened animal that had been cornered somewhere.

That was essentially what Felix was right now, his wolf terrified at the prospect of being alone, his mate having been wrenched away from him, as his human part held his head in his hands in misery, crouched low against the floor.

"Felix? We need to know what happened so we can help figure this out." she tried again softly.

Eventually, Felix raised his head, glancing up at her with eyes that alternated between his human side and his wolf's side, both persona's emotions equally as haunting.

“Her body... she’s next door. I opened the door and she was there... already gone. Her throat was slit and left lying in a pool of her own blood... I can’t save her.” Felix mumbled.

Lexi swore internally and fought the urge to cry.

“Can you take us in there? To show us, Felix? I don’t want to go and see without your permission.”

“Why? So, you can gloat?”

“She was precious to me as well Felix,” Lexi hissed, “Ann too. She was probably the last remaining meaningful connection to our mothers for both of us. Why would I gloat? If what you say is true, then I want to find the bastard that’s responsible for this as much as you do.”

Felix’s gaze was still mistrustful, but after a few moments, he pushed himself up, and nodded curtly.

“Fine. But he stays here. I still don’t trust him.” He growled as he gestured to Allen.

“Then I will go with you too, so that Lexi doesn’t come to any harm,” Adam said quickly.

“I can take care of myself.” Lexi snorted,

“Maybe, but by the same token, as Consort of the Alpha Queen, I believe murders and their investigations fall under her jurisdiction. As she is incapacitated for the time being, I will step up and take on the duties that would otherwise fall to her.” Adam answered carefully.

He didn’t need to say that his presence would be a deterrent to stop Felix’s wolf from doing whatever had happened to Aoife, to Lexi when her back was turned.

Allen understood and the slight inclination of his head communicated his gratitude loud and clear to Adam.

“Fine.” Felix snapped, “Then let’s get it over with. The sooner we confirm the culprit the sooner I can take great pleasure in enacting my vengeance.”

Allen watched the three of them leave the room together and sighed. This had to be connected in some way. The poisoning of Ann, and Aoife’s death... it was all too much of a coincidence to be happening in such a short space of time but one thing puzzled Allan.

If this was designed to weaken the person the assassin was after, then just who was their ultimate target?

# Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 254

Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate by A E Randell

## Chapter 254 Coincidence

Felix led the way and as soon as the door opened, they were assaulted with the sickly-sweet metallic stench of blood and Lexi tried her best not to gag.

"NO!" Felix shouted in disbelief as he ran towards the bed, leaving bloody footprints in the blood that had pooled on the floor.

"She was right here!" He wailed in anguish as Lexi and Adam exchanged a look before venturing further inside the room.

"Felix?" Lexi asked, the unspoken question in her voice hanging heavily in the air above them.

"I swear she was right here!" Felix replied as he gestured to the bloody mess on the bed.

"I hope that rules us out as suspects in this Felix, we've been with you the whole time," Adam commented carefully as he swept his gaze around the room.

Felix looked at him with uncertainty, but even he had to admit that there was no way that Allen or Adam could have pulled something like this off.

"This... I don't remember seeing this..." Felix frowned as he reached for the dagger that lay partially hidden under the pillow, "It could have moved when I... had my final moments with Aoife though." He admitted softly, silently cursing at himself for not being more observant when he came across her body.

"It's understandable, don't think too much about what you should or shouldn't have done Felix. You were distraught. No wolf thinks rationally at the time of their mate's passing."

Lexi tiptoed carefully past them and through the congealing blood on the floor to squint carefully at the dagger. There was no way that she was removing her hand from her nose, for all the good that it did her.

"Can you not smell that?" She asked incredulously to the two males at her side. "Smell what?" Felix asked with a baffled expression, "If you mean the blood..."

"No, not that. The sulfur. Ugh! Seriously..."

Lexi gagged violently as she inhaled a large lungful of air, the taste of the blood and sulfur sticking to her airways and making everything a million times worse.

“Like with the creature that Greyson brought before?”

“Exactly,” Lexi answered nasally, fighting the urge to vomit all over the scene.

“So, do you know who did this?” Felix asked hopefully, “At this point, the first thing I want is her body back, so I can give her the send-off that she deserves. Then I’ll stop at nothing until I’ve caught whoever is responsible.” He growled ominously.

“I have a feeling that you’re gonna find the murderer at the same time you find the body, honestly.” Lexi grimaced, “But this whole scene... it’s just too much of a coincidence.”

“What do you mean? What coincidence?” Felix asked impatiently.

“Give me a break, will you? I’m trying to think in all of this stench.” Lexi snapped as she gagged once more.

While they waited for Lexi to finish gagging, Felix reached for the knife on the bed, but Adam stopped him, shaking his head warningly.

“We don’t know if it’s been poisoned or not, at least grab some gloves to handle it with.

Felix disappeared into the bathroom and emerged a few seconds later, holding 3 sets of latex surgical gloves.

“I figured we should all have a pair if we’re going to be t\*ouching things,” He shrugged quietly as he passed them out, handing Lexi a disposable mask as well, just in case it was any use.

She held her breath as she put it on and immediately pinched her nose shut over the top, at least it seemed to dull the sensation of tasting the foul odor.

“Where have I seen this before?” Felix mused as he turned the knife carefully in his hand as he and Adam examined it closely.

“There was one just like that when my mother was murdered.” Lexi said finally, as soon as she had caught her breath, “Her body was missing too.”

Felix and Adam’s gaze snapped to Lexi’s face almost instantly.

“I’ll need to speak to Papa of course, as long as you don’t mind him seeing the crime scene, but he’ll be able to tell you whether or not the similarities are as obvious as I think they are. I was only a baby when my mother was... well... when all the evidence pointed to her being murdered. Papa was never able to find her body, but there was no reason to think she was still alive.”

Adam frowned as he turned back to Felix.

“Do you still feel her? The mate bond... is it still there?” he asked, with a hint of urgency in his voice, but his hopes were dashed when Felix shook his head.

“No... I can't feel her, but I also didn't feel it when she died. I don't understand...” Felix frowned as he tried to wrap his head around everything.

She had to have died. There was no way that anyone would have survived that amount of blood loss, but surely his wolf would have felt her die too. None of this made any sense.

“Do you...” Felix paused, licking his dry lips as a sudden thought occurred to him, “Do you think she's still alive somewhere?”

Adam wouldn't meet his gaze, coming to the same conclusion that Felix had with the amount of blood that surrounded them.

“You know, I was wondering the same thing,” Lexi murmured as she narrowed her eyes thoughtfully. “Let me get Papa in here and we'll see what he has to say. He never felt the mate bond snap either when my mother died, yet couldn't find any trace of her wherever he looked.”

Felix nodded thoughtfully, his wolf eager for Lexi's father to share what he knew. If there was even the slightest possibility of Aoife being alive somewhere out there, then he would stop at nothing to bring her home.

“Very well. Go and fetch your father, Lexi, I will return to Ann's room, and for your sanity, Felix, I will keep Allen in there with me until you are comfortable with allowing him to help out. I promise you though, Allen and I had nothing to do with this. What happened between Jasper and us all those years ago, as I said in our many discussions, is between Jasper and us. We do not hold you responsible, but your assistance in bringing him to justice would be very much appreciated.”

Felix nodded quietly.

It wasn't that he wanted to betray his family, but his brother's crimes were too many to list. It had taken him far too many years to realize that he could make the decision to separate his loyalty to the family and his loyalty to his brother.

The loyalty he once held for his brother had weakened the more that he found out about his depraved ways, and it was hanging on by a hairs length.

His face hardened with resolve as he made a decision. If Adam and Allen could help him resolve his mate's murder and disappearance, then he would help them pursue justice against his brother.

He had been allowed to create chaos for far too long, and that had to stop soon before both kingdoms suffered any more tragedies.

## **Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 255**

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### **Chapter 255 Similarities**

As soon as Lexi reached her father's quarters, she didn't bother knocking. She flung the doors wide open as she called out for him.

"Papa? Are you here?" she called frantically as she tried her best to hold back the tears that threatened to fall.

Lord Brarthoroz's head appeared around the edge of the doorframe and his frown deepened as soon as he realized the state that Lexi was in.

"My daughter," He greeted her with a soft smile as he threw the book he had been reading onto the bed and made his way over to her, "Tell me what troubles you."

The combination of his soft, coaxing voice and the way he looked at her with such concern, seemed to open the floodgates as her grief poured forth with tears streaming from her eyes as she choked back a sob.

"Papa it's Aoife! She... she's dead. She was in the room right next door and I didn't hear a thing...I should have stopped it, I should have..."

"Hush child, that's enough," Lord Brarthoroz soothed her as he wrapped his arms around her, cradling her head to his chest as he had done when she was a child, letting her sob noisily for as long as she needed, "I am sure that had there been anything that you could do, then you would have acted immediately."

Lexi sniffled miserably as she pushed back from him and looked up at him with the eyes of a daughter that was desperately seeking reassurance from her father.

"Papa, her room, it looked... well, it's so similar to Mama's disappearance..." she whispered hesitantly

"What?" her father snapped a little harsher than he had meant to, making her flinch slightly.

He sighed lightly at Lexi's reaction. He hadn't meant to make her jump, but the memory of losing his beloved was still so fresh and raw in his mind, that he wasn't sure he would ever get over it.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap at you..."

"I know Papa, it's fine, don't worry," she said as she smiled up at him weakly. "But, you said there were similarities ...?" He asked as he c\*\*\*\*d his head curiously.

Lexi nodded slowly.

"Tell me." Her father said seriously as he gestured for her to sit down and offered her a drink, which she declined with a shake of her head.

"Felix is adamant that Aoife was dead when he entered the room, her throat cut, with no chance of revival. He was distraught enough and covered in enough blood for that to be true." Lexi explained carefully as she watched her father down a large glass of whisky as if it were water,

"Yet when we got there, there was no body... just the horrific aftermath of a clearly violent crime scene." she continued morosely.

"Any weapons?" Lord Brarthoroz grunted as he swirled another double shot of whisky around in the glass.

"A knife, and, I know it's not a weapon, but there was the pungent odor of sulfur tainting everything when we arrived. The damn shifters are so lucky not to be able to smell that," she grumbled.

Lexi looked at her father as he grunted again before downing the contents of his glass in one gulp, and placing his glass firmly on the counter as he stared at Lexi.

After a moment's pause, he nodded, sighing heavily.

"Okay, show me," he said simply gesturing towards his door.

Lexi stood and once they were out of his room, she began to lead the way to the infirmary. She could feel the tension rolling off him in waves and understood completely how difficult this would be for him to face. Yet he was still willing to come to their aid and offer any assistance that he could.

Lexi smiled to herself and slipped her arm through her father's as they entered the infirmary and hurried through the corridors to the room where Felix waited in.

The security detail waved them through and tried his best to hide his shock at Lord Brarthoroz's colossal size in comparison to him. Shifters weren't small by any means, on average, they were frequently taller than 6ft and built like they spent their lives in the gym, but Lord Brarthoroz made them look like scrawny teenagers in comparison.

The envious looks and sheer shock often brought a smile to Lexi's face whenever she accompanied her father anywhere.

In minutes they were pushing through the door of the innocuous-looking room, and her father stopped in his tracks as he took in the gruesome scene before him.

Unlike his daughter, he didn't cover his nose, instead, he inhaled deeply, as if scenting the air around them, and walked straight past Felix to the corner of the room without so much as a word.

"Sorry," Lexi apologized quietly with a grimace, "That's my Papa, Lord Brarthoroz, but I think you've already met."

Felix nodded dumbly as he stared at her father.

"He doesn't get any smaller does he..." Felix breathed almost enviously.

"What are you talking about? This IS small for him, he's much larger in his own realm. Reducing his height to this is just a courtesy. Wouldn't want you shifters getting all shifty on us now would we?" Lexi smiled gently.

The ghost of a smile played on Felix's lips but he was too preoccupied with his wife's fate to see any humor in the situation without feeling too guilty. He watched Lord Brarthoroz like a hawk as he seemed to inhale deeply at various points in the corner before narrowing his eyes at the point where the two walls met.

"There." He said with certainty as Lexi and Felix rushed to his side, squinting hopelessly at the corner.

"I don't see anything..." Felix muttered, the disappointment in his words cutting Lexi's heart like a knife.

"You won't be able to, shifter. It's the faintest traces of what remains of a portal." Lord Brarthoroz grunted as he turned to face the bed.

A flicker of pain crossed his eyes for the briefest moment as he took in the all too familiar scene before him.

The blood-soaked sheets, the congealed blood on the floor... but there was something else that was here that hadn't been at the gruesome scene that was all he had left of his beloved mate's final moments... a dagger.

He snarled as he reached for it, his face contorting in a mask of fury.

"Papa?" Lexi asked quietly, her voice trembling slightly with fear at the raw unadulterated anger in his face.



“f\*\*\*\*g Eromaug...” He hissed furiously, his irises blazing red as a terrifying aura rippled outwards from his massive frame.

Lexi gasped in horror as Felix looked between the two of them in confusion.

“You know who did it? Who the f\*\*k is Eromaug?” he questioned urgently.

“Are you sure papa?” Lexi breathed as her father chuckled darkly.

“Oh, I’m sure all right.” Lord

Brarthoroz hissed as he spun the dagger in the light, studying it carefully, “Whilst I don’t think he was the one who killed your wife, I am certain that Eromaug, my bastard of a little brother, had a hand in your wife’s fate, Felix, and by the looks of it, most likely in my own mate’s fate too.”

“How can you be so sure?” Felix scowled as Lord Brarthoroz’s steely glare turned to meet his doubtful gaze.

“Because this dagger is my brother’s, and it still carries the stench of another on its handle.”