

Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 286

Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate by A E Randell

Chapter 286 Learn about the Rest of Us

She couldn't help but feel angry at herself for reacting that way. Of course, she had been warned about the Cambion's effect on non-daemons, but she had thought that with her part daemon heritage, that perhaps the pull wouldn't affect her as deeply.

How wrong she had been.

She could still feel the traces of the ache of desire between her legs and as soon as she reached the top of the stairs and emerged into the room beyond, shutting the door to the staircase behind her wearily, both Greyson and Allen stopped mid conversation, their heads snapping to look at her intensely.

She swallowed nervously and tried to brush the feeling away as they tilted their chins upwards, sniffing delicately at the air before their eyes darkened suddenly and the two of them stormed over to her.

Greyson grabbed hold of her arm, his eyes flashing angrily as he scented the air around her as unobtrusively as he could.

"Why are you aroused, Lexi?" He ground out as his grip on her arm tightened and she winced with the pain.

"Greyson let go of her, you're hurting her." Allen said, reaching for his hand and pulling it away roughly, revealing the red marks on her arm where he had gripped her fiercely.

"You aren't bothered by this?!" Greyson snarled as he turned to face Allen, "We leave her alone with a bunch of Daemons known for insatiable appetites and she returns to us smelling like this?!"

Allen's eyes flashed with the gold of his wolf as he narrowed his eyes at Greyson.

"Of course, I'm bothered, but I trust her. There has to be an explanation if you give her time to tell us. Being an asshole about things won't get you anywhere." Allen growled warningly.

"I didn't mean to...it's just..." Lexi stammered as they both turned towards her with varying degrees of anger rolling off them in waves.

She already felt guilty for feeling as though she wanted to be railed endlessly by the Cambion, but it was hardly her fault. Yet, she knew that neither Allen, nor Greyson would see it that way.

“Look, it’s actually not my fault,” she began, keenly aware of their accusatory gaze, “I’m sure neither of you know what a Cambion is because for some reason Daemon’s suddenly became irrelevant when the war was over and people felt safe once more.”

Greyson scowled at her furiously still, but Allen’s face had at least softened a little.

“It’s part of their skillset, as stupid as that sounds. They make it so that you can think of nothing else but them and then when they have you at your most vulnerable they...well...they eat you, and absorb any of the strength or abilities that you had for themselves.”

“THEN WHY THE F**K WERE YOU DOWN THERE WITH THEM?!” Greyson roared, grabbing hold of her by the shoulders as Allen tried to pull him away.

“I DIDN’T F**K HIM YOU IMBECILE!!” Lexi roared, losing her patience and violently shoving them both away as she felt every set of eyes in the room focus on them intently.

Greyson and Allen had staggered backward, both mildly surprised by the strength that Lexi had exerted to move them both so effortlessly.

“For f**k’s sake, you males are f*****g insufferable sometimes you know? Do you really think Papa would let that happen?!” She fumed incredulously at Greyson, “The Cambion’s h*andlers were a little slow off the mark, Papa intervened as soon as it locked my gaze, and I came out, although I’m beginning to wonder if I should have stayed. At least my misery would be short lived.” she hissed.

Greyson scowled at her, although she was hit with yet another pang of guilt as Allen looked as though he had been physically wounded and she sighed heavily.

“You can either move on from it or not, I don’t care. It really can’t be helped.” she shrugged as she sauntered away from them, but Greyson had other ideas as he followed her quickly, took hold of her arm and led her into a side room.

In seconds Lexi found herself pinned against the wall with his body against hers, and caged between his arms, as Greyson dipped his head to her neck and inhaled deeply.

“Do you have any idea how f hard it is to resist taking you right here?” he murmured as Lexi shuddered in pleasure under the feeling of his l*ips grazing the hollow of her neck, “you smell f*****g divine and the memory of that wet little p***y of yours quivering around my f*ingers as I f*inger f****d you in the gym is driving me crazy.”

Lexi bit her l*ip as her arousal only grew, annoyed at her body betraying her yet again. Yet, the thought of both Greyson and Allen pleasuring her at the same time was an image that seemed to run through her mind at alarming intervals.

“f****g control yourself,” She hissed with a conviction that she didn’t truly feel, “Just because you are an animal, doesn’t mean you have to act like one.”

Greyson chuckled darkly as he leaned back and regarded her with eyes that were nothing more than black orbs now, his feral nature gripping him tightly as he gazed down at her.

“Don’t think that I don’t know about your desire to have your mates inside you, Lexi.” he murmured as he allowed his h*and to slip down her body and towards the area between her l*egs.

“I know that you would give anything to have us both here, wringing every labored breath and sweet little m*oan from between your l*ips,” he grinned as he pressed against her mound, his f*ingers perfectly positioned to apply pressure against her sensitive spot and sending a jolt of pleasure coursing through her.

Lexi stopped the m*oan that threatened to spill from between her l*ips and smacked his h*and away, shoving him back yet again as he grinned at her.

“There’s a time and a place Greyson,” she snapped, “I’m not about to let you f**k me in such close proximity to so many people.”

“And what if I don’t give you a choice, Lexi? The Lycan in me begs me to force you to submit...” he continued, his beastly nature obviously fully in control of him and clearly enjoying the hunt. “Then it will be the last thing you ever do, Greyson. Do you understand?” Lexi snarled viciously, her eyes flashing, “If you are pleasuring me then it is only because I allow it, and if you ever try to take me without my consent I will end your life in seconds, are we clear?”

Greyson paused, eyeing her appraisingly as Allen appeared in the doorway.

“I’ve seen what she can do Greyson, and you’ll regret it for all of the few seconds that you have left of your miserable existence whilst she burns you alive if you ever force yourself on her.” Allen snarled furiously, “You are better than this Greyson, f****g control yourself.”

They both watched cautiously as Greyson’s eyes swiveled between the angry black pits of his Lycan and the usual hues of his eyes, as he struggled to push the urge away and eventually, the pits disappeared completely.

Greyson clenched his jaw tightly, a scowl etched deeply onto his face as he mumbled an apology and stormed out of the room.

Lexi glanced at Allen and sighed.

“What the f**k was that about?”

“Lycan’s, Lexi, are far more complex than any standard shifter. Their insatiable desire to possess and dominate through any means, although violence is usually favored heavily, outweighs any normal shred of reason. Why do you think there’s so few of them left?” Allen grimaced, “As much as we have to learn about Daemons, it seems you still have a lot to learn about the rest of us.”

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Chapter 287 These Six Will Help You

Allen and Lexi made their way back into the main room and quickly realized that Greyson was nowhere to be found. Lexi was a little embarrassed regarding the sympathetic glances and understanding smiles that many of the females here threw her way, but it also helped her feel a little better about the whole thing.

Greyson had seemed so understanding and generally a nice guy when she had first met him, and she had quickly come to the conclusion that the part of him that was Lycan, the near feral, primal beast that lurked inside of him, was both terrifying and exhilaratingly exciting in it’s dangerousness.

As they chatted amongst themselves and Lexi listened to a discussion about the recent foray into the closest villages for supplies and rescue, the door to the stairwell opened and Lord Brarthroroz emerged with a deep scowl on his face.

“Where’s Greyson?” He asked abruptly as he looked around expectantly for an answer.

“He just stepped out for a few minutes Papa,” Lexi answered hastily as he snorted in disbelief.

“At a time like this?” He snapped irritably.

Lexi wasn’t sure how she was supposed to explain what had happened without outing him to her own father, but she felt the weight of everyone’s stares as she desperately tried to come up with an excuse.

“Well...” she began, but was cut off by the door at the opposite end of the room opening, revealing a much calmer looking Greyson.

“I’m here, sorry about that.” He said quickly as he locked eyes with Lexi momentarily while he approached the group, before tearing them away and focusing on Lord Brarthroroz again.

“Good! I don’t think it’s wise to have the Cambion’s pass your people here, I’d rather avoid any unpleasantness if possible so if you wouldn’t mind vacating the area, just until

their h*andlers have them out of here and on the way to cause mayhem at the containment facility, I would much appreciate it.” Lord Brarthroroz informed them off-h*andedly.

Lexi, Allen and Greyson began to shepherd everyone outside and to a presumably safe distance as the Cambions and h*andlers moved past them in an almost perfect convoy.

Lexi smiled ironically to herself as she watched both Allen’s and Greyson’s gaze zero in on a beautiful female, built like an absolute goddess as she strode confidently ahead, with a smoldering gaze cast towards where the shifters had assembled.

They shifted uncomfortably on the spot as Lexi snorted when, with a quick glance, she noticed them hastily trying to cover their groins and hide their raging erections from view.

She leaned in closely to Greyson’s ear with a vengeful smirk on her face. “Perhaps I should rage and hold you responsible for something that you have absolutely zero control over,” She purred quietly as Greyson’s cheeks suddenly became furiously flushed.

“I’m sorry, Lexi. I didn’t understand ...” he murmured softly as his eyes remained glued to the intoxicating allure of the female Cambion.

“There’s a lot that you do not understand about daemons as a whole, Greyson, but what you should understand is the mate bond. The trust should be implicit and if you carry on the way that you are heading with your Alpha male and Lycan bulls*hit, then do not expect me to tolerate it without consequence.”

“Understood.” He ground out with a curt nod of his head.

The h*andlers quickly diverted the Cambion’s gaze, much to its disgust, and a seductive whisper rippled across the air that sent goosebumps down their spines.

Lexi snorted. The single word, ‘play’, dragged out breathlessly and dripping in desire and need held the promise of the best time of your life, but hid the secret of your death. The people at the containment facility wouldn’t know what hit them.

As Allen’s and Greyson’s locked stares were broken, they seemed to sag with relief, readjusting themselves uncomfortably, along with the rest of the males in the vicinity.

“What the f**k was that?” A male voice rose from behind them.

“A cambion.” Lexi answered simply, “A well developed one at that. I won’t go into further detail but it should be enough to know that what you think you wanted a few moments ago would have resulted in your death only moments later. Hence my father wanted those who would be affected to move to safety.”

Lord Brarthroroz emerged from the building and gestured for them to return back to the safety of the building.

“Now, I’d like to introduce to the six man team that will be searching for the next entrance, and infiltrating the tunnels below as far as possible.” He said as the shifters assembled back inside and began going about their business as usual, “If you would like to collect your teams and bring them downstairs, you’ll be able to see who not to attack once we begin the assault.”

Once the respective members who were planned to be part of the main assault were assembled, they followed Greyson down to where Lord Brarthroroz, Lexi and Allen were waiting, eyeing the six, very ordinary looking people beside them with suspicion.

“They don’t look like anything special,” one of the guards at the front snorted, “No offense, but they look far weaker than any of us. How are they supposed to...”

His words were cut off as one of the mimics dashed forward with lightning speed and wrapped one hand around his neck, lifting him effortlessly off the floor as it scratched its head.

“No offense taken, little wolf.” It purred dangerously as its features began to shift and change, melding to mirror the face of the guard that it held aloft perfectly, “perhaps this little demonstration will convince you that Lord Brarthroroz is astute in his choices.” it continued with a smirk.

“That’s enough,” Lord Brarthroroz said calmly amidst a background of horrified gasps and murmurs.

The mimic beamed widely, as it let go of the shifter and dropped him unceremoniously to the floor, where he clutched at his neck and growled weakly towards where the mimic had retreated.

“Oh, for f***s sake, pipe down puppy.” Lexi snapped irritably, “You all really need to stop judging a book by its cover and actually trusting the people that your damn Alpha Queen has sent to help you.”

“These six will help you, and all wear an identifying choker around their necks with amber stones set in the horns that will carry the scent of one of your leaders, so that you can distinguish them easily. It is your choice who you choose to nominate. Whether it is Greyson, Allen or Lexi, the choice is yours. I would prefer it if you chose someone who didn’t inspire the feeling of wanting to rip their faces off though.” Lord Brarthroroz smiled.

The general consensus was that Greyson’s scent would be preferential, as they had all been working under him for weeks at this point, and it was easily recognisable to all of the people assembled here.

Once the amber had been scent marked by affixing a few of Greyson's hairs behind the setting, the mimic's were briefed on the locations and set off without further delay.

"Now what?" Lexi asked as she looked across at her father.

"Now we wait. In a few hours we will know whether or not we are entering one of the ruins and taking them by surprise, or whether or not we will have to mount a full offensive on the containment facility." Lord Brarthroroz answered as his face settled into a grim expression that promised that either outcome would see the end of something that should have finished long ago.

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Chapter 288 Special Brand of Vengeance

In Lexi's opinion, waiting was always the hardest part of anything and she was well aware that patience was not her strong point.

While everyone else sat waiting, chatting amongst themselves or poring over various maps and blueprints, she paced backward and forward restlessly.

It seemed like forever since the teams had left them for their various assignments, but a quick glance at her watch told her that it had only been around an hour and a half.

Greyson and Lord Brarthroroz were going over the briefings for the men who would be involved in the initial assault and although Greyson kept sending her furtive glances whenever he got the chance, she was still pissed with him.

She checked her watch again and sighed in frustration, half wishing that she was at least able to do something to take her mind off things instead of feeling like she was a spare piece in a colossally f****d up game of chess.

Her head snapped across to where her father had suddenly stood up, moving away slightly from the group of men that had paused mid-discussion and now watched his every move just as eagerly as she did.

The expressions on his face were familiar to Lexi, and she knew instantly that one of the parties that had been sent out was mind linking with him.

She stepped towards him quickly, her stomach flipping in anticipation as his eyes rose to meet her gaze and he smiled softly.

"Well, it looks like we have a location for the main entrance," he grinned sinisterly as excited hoots and shouts rose from the men and women.

He strode across to the map that had been unfurled across the table and marked with the locations that Bartholomew had pointed out, as Lei practically ran to his side, and everyone else gathered round expectantly.

“Here,” he grunted gruffly as he jabbed a f*inger on the paper, “Movement of the coven has already been confirmed and the team is about to enter and explore as far as they can without being discovered.”

“And the other sites?” Greyson asked with a frown, now completely focused on the task at h*and.

“This one is still sealed,” Lord Brarthroroz said, jabbing at a second location and watching as Greyson marked it off the map, “But this one? The team is still yet to arrive. They encountered a small party of coven guards as they passed through the outskirts of the first site I showed you. They dispatched them easily enough, but it delayed them by another thirty minutes or so.”

Greyson nodded thoughtfully.

“Okay. Well, seeing as how they are both along the same routes, I propose that we begin to ready our forces and set out. It should save us some time and allow us to rest close by for a short while before we begin our assault.”

“Are you not waiting for the reinforcements?” Lexi asked.

“They should be here in the next thirty minutes or so. It will take that time for everyone to gear up and set out though, plus

I still need to make a quick check that the guards remaining here are well supplied too. I don’t want them facing issues while we’re gone if it’s something that we could have fixed before leaving.” Greyson answered curtly, avoiding her eyes.

Lexi felt the smallest trace of satisfaction curl its way inside of her at the sight of his obvious discomfort. It was important that he understood what she would, and would not accept from her mates and it seemed that he had finally gotten her message loud and clear.

She had been curious though, whilst her mind worked obsessively on overthinking the whole incident with him. She had loved the thrill and domineering aspect of their encounter in the gym, it had taken her by surprise quite honestly, but the threat of him forcing himself upon her here? No. That would NOT be happening and she would NOT be the meek and demure mate that a Lycan preferred.

She had no desire to roll over and be protected. f**k that. She could take care of herself without anyone else’s help and she had no intentions of changing her entire personality

just to please some guy who wanted to bury his d**k inside of her and beat his chest like a damn animal.

After a short conversation with Allen though, minutes before he had disappeared briefly to check on the updates from the Enclave, she had come to realize that by her standards at least, Lycan's in general were colossal d**s. She understood that Greyson was clearly different from the standard Lycans that Allen had spoken about, discussing briefly their preference for seclusion and general refusal to mix with other species.

There were exceptions, of course, Greyson clearly being one of them, but his dark nature remained essentially the same, even if it was somewhat tempered.

She watched him like a hawk as he stood and made his way out of the room still avoiding her gaze, before snorting quietly to herself and smirking. That was nothing she couldn't tame though, given enough time, and he was already learning that what he might have gotten away with, with a weaker willed mate, certainly wasn't going to wash with Lexi.

"Everything okay?" Lord Brarthroroz asked quietly as people began moving away to make their preparations, "I couldn't help but notice a little... tension, between the two of you." He continued, jutting his chin in the direction that Greyson had left.

"Nothing that a swift kick to the balls won't fix if it happens again, Papa," Lexi smiled sweetly and he chuckled in response.

"As long as you're sure. Are you sure that you're up for joining the assault?" He asked as a look of concern crossed his face.

Lexi nodded firmly.

"After everything that those f*uc*kers have done, there's nothing that would stop me from meting out my own special brand of vengeance." She grinned as her eyes flashed menacingly.

"Very well," Lord Brarthroroz nodded, "I would prefer it if you stayed close to either myself or Allen and Greyson then, not that I doubt your abilities, but purely because I don't want your 'own special brand of vengeance' to overwhelm you. You still need practice and as I'm sure you're aware, the more your souls feed on the lives they take, the stronger they get."

Lexi grunted in response and

begrudgingly acknowledged that her father had a point. Giving in to the call of her soul's magick would result in her making quick work of her enemies, but would also mean that she put the lives of her team at risk, and she didn't want that.

“Then let’s make the necessary preparations and get moving. The sooner we get there, the sooner that I can get my h*ands on my traitorous brother.” Lord Brarthroroz snarled.

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Chapter 289 Yes Commander

They approached the outer ring of the crumbled defenses of the overgrown ruin, moving as stealthily as they possibly could.

Lord Brarthroroz had been good enough to extend a barrier around the group that would keep the noise of their movement muffled and the team hidden from sight, but it was only really effective if there was no one close by to see the movements of the undergrowth around them.

So far, they hadn’t come across any scouting parties as they moved and it had mostly been plain sailing.

Lord Brarthroroz led the group with Lexi, Allen and Greyson behind him, and the rest of the ranked wolves and fighters spread across in groups of five as they walked.

As they drew closer and began to set up a field base and perimeter under the cover of the surrounding forest, Lord Brarthroroz moved a little further forward to rendezvous with the Mimic’s that had been waiting patiently for their arrival.

The other ruin they had been waiting to hear back on had turned out to be unoccupied, and that team had begun to circle back, agreeing to rendezvous with the assault force and lend what support and aid they could.

They had also received gleeful reports back from the h*andlers of the Cambion’s who had been dispatched to the Containment facility. They had managed to rescue a few shifters that had originally been part of Greyson’s team, but had been taken prisoner early on in the days before the expedition had managed to set up the defenses for their base of operations.

Although they were still in the process of clearing the various levels, the h*andlers assure Lord Brarthroroz that the Cambion’s were quite literally having the time of their lives with their victims, and the people that had been rescued so far had been escorted back to the perimeter without incident, and collected by the medical teams to arrange transportation back to the Enclave.

Lexi helped unload some of the equipment as others began to set up the medical tents and command center, with Greyson and Allen assisting in everything that they could.

She could feel Greyson's eyes watching her as she moved around, but now was not the time to discuss personal issues between them and as he finally plucked up the courage to approach her, she sighed internally.

"Lexi..."

"Look, you had all the time in the world to discuss this on the way here. Now is not the time." She snapped as she stacked another box of medical supplies on the ground in the designated tent.

"I know," He said hastily, clearly struggling to stop himself from reaching out to her, "I just wanted to apologize for...letting my urges control me. I never wanted to be that way. That's why I left...well, nevermind that. We can talk about it later. I just want you to know that I'm sorry and I don't ever want to hurt you. If it ever gets to that point..." He trailed off, leaving his meaning clear.

An awkward silence passed between them as Lexi eyed him shrewdly.

"Noted." She said coldly, "Anything else?"

"No, I just.. didn't want to go into this without making things right beforeh*and." He mumbled as he hung his head and his shoulders drooped.

"Right?" Lexi snorted, "Do you really think this apology will make it right?"

Because it won't. It's a start for sure, but you have a metric f*uc*k-ton of making up to do after all of this over, boy."

"Boy?" Greyson blinked in confusion as Lexi sneered at him distastefully.

"Yeah, boy." She reaffirmed, "No man would ever dream of treating their soul mate that way, and the ones that do...well let's just say that there's a special place in hell reserved just for them to experience everything that they put their mates through for themselves, with glorious attention to detail."

Greyson swallowed nervously and nodded.

"Understood." He murmured as he jammed his h*ands into his pocket and

glanced back at where Lord Brarthroroz was making his way back to the camp.

"Good!" Lexi said brightly, "Now, can we get back to focusing on the task at h*and please? I never thought I'd say this, but I've had my fill of drama and gossip for a lifetime, and I'm quite looking forward to melting the faces of Narcissa and Ada, just for being slimy f*uc*kers and managing to find a way out of answering for their crimes.."

Greyson cracked a small smile that matched Lexi's and they began to walk towards her father who had re-entered the makeshift camp, bringing the two mimics with him.

After grabbing a quick bite to eat and refilling their water bottles, they gathered in the hastily erected command tent and listened carefully to what the mimic scouts had to say.

"The tunnel's really aren't as complex as some of the structures that we've seen before, but they are busy on the inside in all of the branches," one of the Mimic's explained patiently, "If you can imagine an ant hill...it's very much the same."

"We followed the first four branches but they didn't seem to lead anywhere other than to sleeping quarters and various rooms for their day to day needs. The main bulk of the activity seems to be from beyond the main chamber which you'll get to if you follow the main tunnel that you first enter into." The second mimic advised as they quickly sketched a loose map on the blank pad of paper they had given him.

"Is there anything we should be concerned about in the main chamber?" Greyson asked, his face focused in a serious scowl.

"The scent of decaying flesh hangs in the air throughout, but it is strongest towards the back of the main chamber. There are three doors at the back end, two of them are heavily guarded and we thought it best not to draw attention to our presence by attempting to pass."

"I see." Greyson frowned as Lord Brarthroroz waved his h*and dismissively.

"I can clear one set of guards while Lexi clears the others," Lord Brarthroroz said in an unconcerned tone, "We will just need a few of you to ensure that we are not attacked so that we can focus on the groups."

"Understood." Greyson nodded as he cast his eyes around those assembled, "Allen and I will move forward with Lexi and Lord Brarthroroz. We'll need possibly four more to ensure that we aren't surprised during the attack."

An ocean of h*ands rose, all of them eager to assist and Lexi found herself flooded with a feeling that she could only describe as pride.

Were all these men and women truly willing to protect her and her father with their lives? It all seemed a little surreal to her, especially after the years she had spent being looked down on.

As much as she hated to admit it, she actually felt a little emotional and had to bite the inside of her l*ip to try and stop her from spilling the tears that were rapidly welling up in her eyes. She focused on the sound of Greyson and her father selecting the final

members of their team to distract herself and suddenly found her h*and encased by another.

She turned and saw Allen standing stoically at her side, his facial expression not betraying a thing as he squeezed her h*and tightly, letting her know that he was there for her. It should have calmed her, but instead, she felt her throat become tight as she fought the sob of gratitude that threatened to break free.

“Excellent, the rest of you will split into four groups,” Greyson stated as he began explaining their plan of attack and gesturing to the crude map in front of them.

“Groups one and two will split down the tunnel branches with group one splitting to clear those on the left, and group two to clear those on the right. Group three and four will follow us through the main corridor and progress to the main chamber. Once we’ve eliminated the guards, well assess the situation and move forward from there, but the first priority is to clear to the chamber, understood?”

A chorus of “Yes Commander!” rose from the men and women, and the sound gave rise to a cascade of goosebumps that erupted across Lexi’s skin.

She was fully aware that she had never shied away from confrontation, but this feeling as they stood on the cusp of battle was intoxicating. Lexi knew with certainty then, that if her best friend, the Alpha Queen ever called for her to fight in her name, she would dive headfirst into the conflict without hesitation.

She felt more alive than she ever had before and her souls hummed with excitement within her. Soon, both her lust for revenge and her souls insatiable thirst would be sated and the thought filled her with radiant joy.

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Chapter 290 Ada?!

With the groups positioned in place behind a crumbling wall and covered by Lord Brarthroroz’s cloaking, they waited for the entrance of the ruin to clear of the few coven members that had appeared outside and stood chatting mindlessly.

Once they disappeared inside again, Lord Brarthroroz glanced back at the people waiting behind him with a smirk, lifted his h*and and motioned for them to advance.

Lexi’s heart was beating wildly in her chest with excitement without a trace of fear as they crept over the remaining distance between them and the entrance, making their way quietly down the remains of the crumbling staircase and onto the dirt trodden

walkway that cut below the ground floor of the ruins and into the gaping maw of the entrance to the cave system.

They managed to reach the first branches of the main passageway and the assigned groups split off from the main party and advanced down the tunnels. The muted sounds of the first violent confrontations echoed within the tunnels and Lexi felt sure her heart would smash through her chest with the excited pounding as they moved further forward.

Only when they reached the second branch of the cavern and the groups began to move off, did they cross paths with a very surprised looking group of coven members.

They screamed in fury as they ran towards Lord Brarthroroz's cloaking and as they broke through they froze momentarily in surprise at the towering form that stood before them with a malicious grin on his face, and flanked by a small army.

Even as they gathered their wits about them, they didn't have chance to act because with a simple abrupt lift of his hand that sliced through the air, they were flung upwards into the roof of the cavern, their heads connecting with the slimy rock with a sickening crunch before they fell to the floor.

"Four down and the rest of a coven to go?" Lord Brarthroroz commented lightly as he strode forwards, "They broke through the cloaking though so now it has broken. Prepare to meet resistance and be ready to fight back." He continued casually as he stepped over the heap of bodies that were slowly oozing blood across the passageway.

Allen and Greyson glanced at each other as they increased their pace to keep up with Lexi and her father and subtly shared a concerned expression as they took in Lexi's expression of morbid delight and her hauntingly lit eyes, one eye a furious crimson fire and the other an ethereal electric blue and green swirling storm.

Small skirmishes broke out around them as members of their party rushed forward to meet the attacks that now began to come from all sides, and the air filled with the furious growls, snarls and screams of the shifters and their prey. The scent of blood began to fill the air and Lexi inhaled deeply.

Even the stench of rotting flesh that assaulted them as soon as they entered the cavern did nothing to diminish the look of demonic delight on her face as she and her father ran to the middle of the enormous cavern that had opened up around them.

"Pity," Lord Brarthroroz grunted as he took in the sight of the eight large daemons that had been standing in front of the doors on both sides and were now barreling towards them furiously, "This will actually require a little effort on our part."

Allen and Greyson looked towards the figures barreling towards them with a mixture of horror and disgust. They were roughly the same size as Lord Brarthroroz as he was now, with mostly humanoid figures, yet the heads of what looked like bulls.

Lexi snorted as she raised her arms towards the closest aggressors and two of them froze, before immolating instantly on the spot.

“f****g minotaurs,” She mumbled as she turned her attention to one that had effortlessly swept to wolves to the side with his abnormally large axe, sending them yelping across the floor and slamming into the wall.

She could feel her souls surging together, twisting their energies around each other as she directed them outwards, never melding together but desperately wanting to. She flicked her wrist as the minotaurs arm jerked to the side and he looked at it with what would pass as surprise, before she brought her arm in a violent arc and the creature watched helplessly as it embedded its axe deeply in its own skull, before dropping to the floor, twitching.

“Three down already Papa,” she laughed, as the corpse of the minotaur burst into flames and she shuddered pleurably, “Are you keeping up?”

“Why do you always insist on making things into a competition?” Her father snorted as he dispatched the third and watched as Lexi directed the final two to run at each other, their axes raised before simultaneously bringing their axes in opposing, sweeping arcs and slicing cleanly through each other’s necks.

Lord Brarthroroz turned to his daughter with a raised eyebrow as the heads rolled across the floor and a white, misty substance rose from the two minotaurs that had fallen and flowed towards Lexi, wrapping itself around her arms and seemingly absorbing into her skin.

“Five to three Papa, I win,” She smirked triumphantly as he rolled his eyes.

“I hope you’re keeping track Lexi,” Lord Brarthroroz warned as he wagged a f*inger at her, “Do not allow one to feed more than the other, otherwise...”

“Yes, I know, Papa. Balance for the souls. I got it.” She grinned as the sounds of battle began to fade around them.

“Did she just...” Greyson asked quietly as Allen nodded and clapped him on the back, already anticipating his question.

“Absorb their life force and feast on their souls?” he murmured quietly as he locked eyes with Greyson, “yeah...pretty much. Welcome to the weird and wonderful world of our mate and her insatiable souls.”

With the main chamber clear and more of their party beginning to filter down to them with the tunnels and entrance now secured, their attack force waited patiently for their next orders.

Lord Brarthroroz strode forward a few paces and frowned as he focused intently on each door for a few moments before returning to the group.

“The door to the left ...I’m not sure what lays behind there but my best guess is that it extends further inwards into the heart of these ruins. I would suggest sending two of the mimics for support with a small force to explore a little way.” Lord Brarthroroz advised, his face serious, “There may be cells beyond...but I cannot say for sure.”

“The door to the right... I am certain they hold a flesh crafter there,” Lord Brarthroroz continued with a growl, “The stench of rotting flesh emanates from there so it is possible you will encounter greater resistance there if there are... abominations remaining.”

“As for the door in the middle,” Lord Brarthroroz sneered as his face darkened, “The scent of Eromaug is heaviest there. That door is mine.”

Greyson nodded, still clearly a little shell shocked that his fated mate ate souls to feed her own souls, but cleared his throat and did his best to present a normal front to his men.

“Okay, divide into three groups, two of them with mimics please. The men assigned to Lord Brarthroroz and Lexi will remain the same, unless you are injured and in which case we’ll swap you out, and the group with no mimics among them will advance with us.”

The party efficiently did as he asked, the mimics joining their groups without needing to be directed and Greyson nodded in satisfaction.

“Group one will head towards the door on the left, Group two to the left. The third group...” Greyson began before his orders were interrupted by the sound of a door scraping open.

They turned as one to face the sound, revealing the middle door that had cracked open slightly as a small figure emerged with her head down, clearly not realizing the predicament they were about to find themselves in. As soon as they raised their head, their eyes widened in shock and fear as they took in the size of the force before them.

“You’ve got to be f*****g kidding me,” Lexi scoffed as her eyes flashed dangerously. “Ada?!”