

# Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 291

Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate by A E Randell

## Chapter 291 Put Her Down.

Before anyone could stop her Lexi snarled viciously as she broke away from the group and raced towards the doorway where a terrified Ada stood frozen to the spot, her arms wrapped protectively around her swollen stomach.

She could hear the distant shouts of Allen and Greyson, and the deep growl of displeasure from her father but right now, she didn't give a f\*\*k.

This arrogant little b\*\*\*h was half the cause of all of the problems that her best friend had faced, and the cause of her misery growing up...there was no way that she was going to let her just scurry off back to whatever rat hole she had crawled out of.

Her eyes flared even brighter as she reached for Ada's ragged cloak fastened tightly at her neck and wrenched her violently forward, her face centimeters from Lexi's. Ada whimpered helplessly at the sight of her malevolent grin and wrapped her arms around her belly tighter.

"Please..." Ada whispered, swallowing nervously as Lexi tipped her head back and laughed.

"Please?" Lexi let loose a cruel, mocking laugh as she narrowed her eyes at her. "You never listened to Ann when she asked you to stop, did you?" she hissed furiously.

She could vividly hear the sobs of Ann pleading with her when they were all children, just to leave her alone, and stop her constant torment. She had given up asking, pleading with her to stop as they reached their mid teens.

She had learned to suffer it all in silence, with Lexi being the only one that had ever seen the raw side of Ann, the silent hiccuping sobs as she clenched her fists angrily at her side, wanting desperately to retaliate but knowing that her father would always, always take Ada's side.

And Lexi had hated her for it.

"You don't understand, my mother..." she whimpered.

"f\*\*k you and your mother, you heartless little w\*\*\*e," Lexi hissed as she grabbed a fistfull of Ada's hair and yanked it back harshly, Ada's yelp of fear eliciting a delicious shiver up Lexi's spine.

“Lexi...” Lord Brarthroroz growled from behind them as Lexi tensed briefly, her smile disappearing for a split second as her blazing eyes dimmed slightly, but then her grin returned as she gripped her even tighter.

A low warning rumble from behind her, which she knew belonged to her father made her sigh heavily and roll her eyes to the ceiling

“She deserves this Papa.” Lexi hissed vehemently, not taking her eyes away from Ada’s fear stricken orbs. “She may... but her child does not,” he growled from behind her as Lexi huffed irritably, “Put.Her.Down.”

“So she can f\*\*\*\*\*g run away and warn them?!” Lexi snarled over her shoulder at him as Ada grasped at the hand gripping her cloak.

“I can help... if you’ll let me...” she pleaded desperately, dropping her voice to barely above a whisper, “I don’t want to be here. My child...”

Lexi turned back to her and practically hissed in Ada’s face as her father’s arm dropped down firmly on her shoulder, and reluctantly, she uncurled her fingers from the material of her cloak and pushed her away. “She deserves death Papa,” Lexi snapped as she stomped past him furiously

“And it will come to us all, daughter of mine,” Lord Brarthroroz snapped as he reached out and pulled her back to face him, “Yet the child she grows within her is not at fault, and you would have the blood of an innocent on your hands...as well as it’s soul.” A brief silence passed between the two of them as his eyes seemed to bore into her.

“And that would change you beyond all recognition, daughter. It is not something that I, nor your mates will be able to take from you, and it will eat you alive until there is only darkness and torment.” Lord Brarthroroz hissed ominously, “Eromaug is living proof of one who chose his destiny through anger, and has lived with the consequences ever since.”

Lexi blinked up at him in surprise as he released her roughly and turned towards Ada raising an arm to lay his hand on her shoulder gently, even as she flinched away.

She retreated sullenly to where Allen and Greyson stood a few steps away, unable to hear the conversation that her father was holding with Ada. Neither one of them dared to risk asking if she was okay purely due to the murderous rage on her face and the seething aura that emanated darkly from around her.

Eventually Lord Brarthroroz made his way back to them, with Ada staying slightly behind as she watched them warily, her arms still clasped around her bump.

“The doors behind her lead to Eromaug’s chamber.” Lord Brarthroroz began before Lexi’s disdainful huff interrupted him loudly and his gaze rested on her momentarily.

“And you believe what that witch will tell you so readily? Without question?! How do you know that she isn’t lying through her teeth?!” Lexi gritted out suspiciously.

“She does not reek of deception, daughter, that is why I take her words so freely.” Lord Brarhroroz explained patiently as Lexi snarled in response.

“You do not know that! Both she and her mother are masters of deception! They tricked the shifters...”

“Enough,” Lord Brarhroroz hissed furiously, his eyes flashing dangerously as he narrowed them towards his daughter, “Do you really think that I am no better than these... little shifters? I, who have been in this world centuries longer than any of them? Do you not believe that the wisdom of the centuries I have accumulated does not outstrip that of these young shifters of this realm?”

Lexi swallowed nervously at her fathers words, the fire of fury in her heart diminishing almost instantly at the fury and disappointment in his eyes. She took a steadying breath as both Allen and Greyson laid a hand on her back and she felt their calming influence quench the rage inside of her.

She met her father’s eyes and nodded silently before sending a glare towards Ada, but she said nothing more.

“As I was saying,” Lord Brarhroroz said quietly, dragging his eyes from his daughter and glancing at the shifters assembled around them, “The door behind us leads to Eromaug’s chamber. He is currently...in a state of rest. The door to the left leads further into the coven’s quarters, and the door to the right does indeed lead to one of their flesh crafter’s.

“And what of her w\*\*\*e of a mother?” Lexi hissed, “She is not...as she once was.”

“When we returned, Eromaug punished her,” Ada offered in a tremulous voice as she stepped forwards hesitantly, “He changed her to something between a wraith and...a banshee, I think. She was cold and cruel before, but now?” Ada snorted softly as she shook her head, “Now she holds no emotion whatsoever.”

Lord Brarhroroz grunted as a dark look crossed his face.

“Then she will be in his chambers with him somewhere. They exist only to serve. Once killed they will return to the being that owns their souls and after a time, will reappear, ready to serve once more.”

“So what you’re saying is, the only way to kill her, is to kill Eromaug?” Greyson asked, horrified that this daemon could raise a small army that was simply unkillable.

“Exactly that.” Lord Brarthroroz smirked as he turned to face the doors darkly, “I would suggest that you wait out here Ada, I do not expect that we will be long and I will not have your blood on my hands.”

## **Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 292**

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### **Chapter 292 Show Yourself**

The three groups moved forward as one, each team approaching their doorways silently and waiting for the signal to advance.

Ada moved to the side of the enormous doors as Lord Brarthroroz,

Lexi, Greyson and Allen took their positions up in front of the main door and exchanged a brief look with each other before Greyson raised his arm and gestured for the groups to push forward.

As one, they opened the three doors as quietly as they could and began their advance forwards, sliding carefully through the cracks of their respective doors and into the hallways and rooms beyond.

Lexi followed behind her father, shooting a disdainful glance to Ada as she passed, still unsure about her motivation and reasons for helping them so easily. To her, it reeked of a hidden ulterior motive, but it was too late to do anything about it now.

The breath caught in Lexi's chest as she emerged into an enormous cavern beyond and from what she could see, she assumed it must be a natural cave with the rough edges of the stone walls that she could see, a stark contrast to the floor, which had been smoothed over time with the passage of people across its surface.

She screwed her eyes up slightly as she strained to see further into the naturally formed room. But even with her keen eyesight, she was unable to penetrate the darkness that thickly clung to the edges of the room and descended like a curtain a short distance in.

The almost crushing, depressive aura that hung in the air descended over them the further they moved into the room, and Lord Brarthroroz held his hand up for them to stop.

A low, rumbling growl emanated from his chest as he too, narrowed his eyes towards the darkness and he glanced back over his shoulder at them.

“Spread out and do not give them an easy target that will allow them to take out more than one at a time,” Lord Brarthroroz murmured quietly, “Stay clear of the darkness near the edges.”

“But Papa... I can't see anything beyond the darkness. What are we fighting...”

“Shadows, Lexi. They will come first when they become aware of our presence, only you and I will be able to destroy them with our abilities.

Allen, Greyson, you and your shifters will need to wait for the physical daemons to show themselves. Stay away from the darkness and do not let it engulf you while you fight.”

The shifters shared uneasy glances with each other as they fanned out behind them and began to advance forward across the room until suddenly, an unsettling laugh emanated from beyond the darkness.

“How nice of you to visit brother...and you brought friends too? How delightful.”

Lord Brarthroroz growled in response and stiffened, his senses on high alert as the voice echoed eerily around the cavern.

“What? No hateful retort brother? No threats of violence if I don't bend and scrape and bow at your feet?” the voice chuckled mockingly.

“Show yourself.” Lord Brarthroroz hissed furiously at the shadows as they began to curl outwards towards them.

“I think not. Where is the fun in that? It's been such a long time since my shadow fiends have been able to play properly... well, with more than one person at least.” the voice chuckled as misshapen figures began to form around the room and from the darkness in front of them.

Lexi huffed and rolled her shoulders, before stretching her arms in front of her and cracking her knuckles.

“Let's play then, shit-head.” She snapped with a sneer, “All this standing around is boring me. I have plenty of things that I'd much rather be doing than stuck here listening to your damn monologue.”

As she spoke, the outline of a figure beyond the darkness could almost be made out, two amber orbs the only hint at where this creature's eyes lay, and a disbelieving snort came from its direction.

“Lexi?” The voice whispered almost tenderly, instantly eliciting a protective snarl from both Allen and Greyson as they took a step closer to her, not liking the tone that the voice carried towards their mate.

“That's right f\*ucktard. Now let's get this over with.” She smirked as she lazily lifted a hand in the direction of a few of the shadowy figures that had formed at the edges of the room and flicked her fingers, the figures instantly evaporating in a burst of green light.

The other figures took this as a signal to launch their attack and Lord Brarthroroz and Lexi began their defense of the vulnerable shifters.

“I can’t believe you would be so kind as to bring her straight to me, brother,” the voice laughed as wave after wave of shadow fiends descended upon them, their numbers seemingly endless as they pressed both Lord Brarthroroz and Lexi to within their limits.

The odd scream of the unlucky shifters that weren’t quite quick enough to evade the demons tore at Lexi’s heart as she tried desperately to protect them all while listening to the taunting words of what she assumed must be her uncle.

“All this time keeping her from me, and now you waltz in here with her at your back, and expect for me to allow any of you to leave?” Eromaug chuckled and tutted loudly, “This was a poorly thought-out plan brother, even for you.”

Allen and Greyson’s hackles rose at the tone in his voice, not liking the way he spoke her name as they pressed closer in to her side, as if their very presence could reflect the cloying, sickening, almost reverent way that his words curled their way through the air and wrapped themselves around them.

None of the shadows even came close to where the four of them stood, yet Lexi rapidly grew tired with fending the attacks off and in a fit of rage, threw her arms wide, causing a shimmering light to ripple outwards, incinerating everything in its path in a mixture of fluorescent green and crimson flames.

“Look, we can do this all day and you can continue hiding like the f\*\*\*\*\*g coward you are, or you can come out of your little floating cloud and...” Lexi began furiously before the voice cut her off with an amused chuckle.

“Coward?” Eromaug chuckled as he stepped forward from the shadows, “No, Lexi. I am no coward. I merely want what is mine and what was denied me by your father all those years ago. He tore the most precious thing in the world away from me and left me with nothing but hatred and a gaping hole to fill.”

## **Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 293**

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### **Chapter 293 Save the Baby**

Trigger Warning: Traumatic birth – some may find it unsettling.

“Don’t listen to him,” Lord Brarthroroz hissed as Allen and Greyson pressed closer into her sides, “He’s only trying to get inside your head.”

"I'm really not," Eromaug shrugged nonchalantly as he stood boldly in front of them, the shadows curling around the edges of his body in an otherworldly caress, "Everything I am doing is merely to reclaim what was taken. Perhaps you should ask your father..."

"I'm not f\*\*\*\*\*g interested in your bastard sob story," Lexi seethed as she stepped to her father's side, breaking away from Greyson and Alien's almost suffocating presence, "How is your petty little squabble the fault of MY world?"

Lord Brarthroroz suppressed a smirk at the frown of confusion on his brother's face. He clearly hadn't been expecting Lexi's brash and uncaring reception when he revealed himself. "You're supposed to be a daemon lord? You?!" She snorted disdainfully before spitting in front of him,

"Yet you're acting like a spoiled little brat, kicking their toys out of the pram because they didn't get what they wanted however long ago this f\*\*\*\*\*g disagreement happened. Has nobody ever told you to f\*\*\*\*\*g grow up and get over it?"

Eromaug's face twitched slightly as he c\*\*\*\*d his head, and Lexi sneered in disgust at him.

"Do you really remember nothing?"

"Oh, I remember plenty," Lexi hissed as the faint light of hope lit in Eromaug's eyes, "I remember those painful years thinking that my mother was dead and I had been unable to do anything about it. I remember Aoife, when you sent your f\*\*\*\*\*g puppet to put an end to her...they did nothing to you that would warrant their execution."

Eromaug watched her quietly as she spoke, his hands clasped lightly behind his back as he listened, before his face broke into an eerie smile.

"Aoife was... an accident, in all honesty." Eromaug shrugged as he began to walk slowly to the side, "A happy one, nonetheless. She has turned out to be quite useful." He grinned wickedly, his sharp teeth glinting sinisterly in the dim light.

Lexi blinked in shock as Greyson and Allen exchanged a look.

"Wait...she's still alive?" Lexi breathed hopefully, before she froze and her face clouded again, "How do I know you're telling the truth?" "Lexi, don't listen to him," Her father murmured as Eromaug chuckled.

"Yes, Lexi. Why listen to me when you can listen to the man who left his wife to languish in my realm without even the slightest effort to reclaim her." Eromag sneered.

"What..." Lexi murmured in confusion as, suddenly, realization dawned on her face and she let out a strangled cry as Lord Brarthroroz stiffened at her side, "My mother is alive?!"

Eromaug grinned as he stepped backwards into the shadows, his eyes trained on the spot where Lord Brarthroroz stood.

“An eye for an eye, brother.”

A terrifying roar ripped from Lord Brarthroroz’s chest as he surged forward, dropping the illusion of his smaller form as he ran at full speed towards Eromaug with his eyes blazing and fangs bared.

Lexi stood frozen to the spot as the shifters around them froze at the sight of the immense size of Lord Brarthroroz and watched uncertainly as Eromaug dodged each furious attack with ease.

A terrified scream came from the doorway behind them as Greyson whirled to see where the noise had come from, expecting an attack but seeing the form of the heavily pregnant Ada on the floor, scrabbling backwards from the eerie specter in front of her.

“Lexi,” He snapped urgently as she begrudgingly tore her eyes from her father to glare furiously at the scene behind them.

The unsettling sight of Narcissa towering over her daughter with malevolence shining in her eyes as she advanced towards the terrified Ada, greeted her and she felt her stomach knot in dismay.

“You vile, traitorous little b\*\*\*h,” Narcissa crooned as she advanced towards her, before her voice raised into an ear splitting shriek “You would betray us and allow these vermin into the Lords chambers?! Do you have any idea what you’ve done?!”

“I never wanted any of this mother,” She stammered as she pushed herself backwards along the floor, “You’ve gone too far...”

Narcissa’s laugh cut her off as Lexi looked between where her father fought furiously and where Ada desperately was trying to reach the relative safety of the shifters, her heart torn. There was no love lost between Ada and her, and if she was perfectly honest with herself, she despised the woman, yet... she had helped them.

“You are wrong, you ungrateful little brat!” Narcissa hissed furiously, “You spurned the darkness and the wonderful gifts that our Lord provided, the sacrifices that I made for you...you were supposed to be the heir that I could be proud of, but you’re nothing but a pathetic little leech, and your child will be the same!”

In the same second that Narcissa lunged for her, Lexi made a split second decision and flew towards them with her arm outstretched, directing her own magick towards Narcissa.



Her father was right. The unborn child was innocent in all of this. If she didn't intervene now, then how was she better than Narcissa, or Eromaug?

But she had moved too late and the wicked glint of the blade that arced through the air and plunged into Ada's chest, split her heart in two as a roar of fury tore from her chest.

The initial burst of magick was deflected effortlessly by Narcissa as she glanced towards Lexi and the shifters that now barreled towards her, as if they were no more than a mild inconvenience.

"A little late to have an attack of conscience now, isn't it?" Narcissa laughed as she deflected another burst of magick from Lexi's outstretched arms whilst she circled to the side.

"Lexi, we'll deal with her, see to Ada!" Allen snarled as he and Greyson shifted and raced towards the cackling figure of Narcissa, who was attempting to make her way to the pulsating darkness that was slowly receding, revealing various creatures that charged towards the group of shifters, attacking wildly.

The pool of blood that was already spreading underneath Ada did nothing to reassure Lexi as she reached her side and crouched down next to her.

"It's okay," Ada said weakly as her face contorted in pain, "I know I'm dying..."

"Shut up Ada," Lexi ground out as she placed her hand on Ada's chest and forced her magick into her, trying desperately to replenish the life that was leeching out of her, but she was losing it quicker than Lexi could heal.

Ada reached for her hand, laying her hand on top as she fought to breathe.

"Lexi... please... just... my baby ..." she murmured, "Save the baby..." she murmured, as her eyes rolled and Lexi screamed for a medic.

"No! You stupid b\*\*\*h, don't make yourself a f\*\*\*\*\* g martyr! You have a f\*\*\*\*\*g child to live for!" Lexi yelled furiously as the medic arrived at their side and quickly realized what was being asked of them.

"The baby...and... I'm sorry..." Ada murmured as her eyes seemed to glaze over and her breathing stilled.

The medic reached forwards to check for a pulse but it was obvious there was none, and that there was no possibility of saving her.

Without the ability to heal and Lexi's magick unable to help and heal it was clear that Ada would not be able to come back from this, even if they had medical support available on the outside.

"I'm going to have to cut into her to get the baby out, otherwise they'll both die." The medic said hesitantly as Lexi nodded curtly and fought the urge to shake the lifeless body in front of her for everything that she had ever done.

She averted her eyes as the medic worked, pushing what magick she could towards the unborn child to try and protect it from harm as she tried to make sense of the confusing mix of anger, hatred, and sympathy that she felt towards Ada.

A few tense moments passed as the medic worked on the lifeless baby before suddenly, an ear splitting cry that tore at her heart drifted through the air.

Lexi's head snapped to the screaming child cradled in the medic's arms and she felt relief wash over her as the medic gave her a small smile.

"Get it out of here and keep it safe. The father is Alpha Brad of the Crystal Pack." She said solemnly as she reached across and trailed her fingers lightly over Ada's unseeing eyes, closing them for one last time.

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### **Chapter 294 You Disgust Me**

She stood and with one last look at the lifeless body below her, turned her attention to the chaos at the other side of the room.

Narcissa had no problems keeping the attacks of the wolves at bay and Lexi could feel the emotions of the past few minutes bubbling wildly inside of her as she stormed towards her, her eyes blazing furiously.

Her father was still making little headway against Eromaug, but she wasn't concerned about his survival, he was more than capable of taking care of himself against his bastard of a brother.

Narcissa on the other hand... she had a lot to f\*\*\*\*\*g answer for.

Lexi strode through the fighters battling the twisted Daemons that had emerged from the shadows, throwing her magick lazily towards the monstrosities as she passed, a sneer curling at her lips as the shifters watched her in terrified awe.

It wasn't long until Narcissa noticed her approach and her face split into a sneer that matched Lexi's as she swept her arm in front of her, knocking the majority of fighters to the side.

Allen and Greyson picked themselves up off the floor with snarls of frustration. All they had managed to do was keep her busy, none of them able to land any attacks on her and quite honestly, they had not been prepared for the ease in which she swatted them aside, as if they were no more than flies.

Lexi glanced towards them and they both flinched at the hatred that burned in her eyes, softening only slightly as she caught sight of them, before turning back to Narcissa again.

Narcissa opened her mouth with a smug expression as Lexi came closer, but whatever she had been about to say was lost in the sharp exhale that was forced from her lungs as she was slammed back against the rough surface of the cavern's walls.

"Yor own daughter?" Lexi hissed furiously as she came to a stop a short distance from her.

"She was a pawn. Nothing more." Narcissa smirked, "Sweet of you to try and save the leeches life though."

"She was your daughter, you heartless w\*\*\*e! Regardless of what you had planned for her, she was carrying your grandchild!" Lexi snarled as her eyes narrowed and she intensified the force that she was pushing the magick out of her with.

Narcissa winced as her body contorted with pain, and her eyes flashed dangerously.

"Neither of them mean anything to me. Don't you understand? The only thing I ever gave a damn about was ensuring that Lord Eromaug's plan came to fruition. I live to serve him and only him." she cackled wildly.

"You disgust me." Lexi hissed as she focused her magick, deciding that Narcissa would experience the exquisite agony of being burned from the inside out.

But, the flames that began to lick underneath her gray skin, illuminating her in a strange light seemed to have no effect on her as her flesh split and shriveled back as the flames began to consume her.

"Don't you see?!" Narcissa cackled triumphantly, "You can kill me as many times as you like now, and I will ALWAYS come back to him. To serve him faithfully in whatever he asks of me!"

"I guess you'll just have to get used to me inventing new ways to kill you then," Lexi hissed as she snapped her fingers to her palms on both hands and Narcissa was consumed in a mixture of green and crimson flames that devoured her hungrily.

Her face twisted into a sneer as she spat at Narcissa's feet and turned towards her father, completely ignoring the inhuman screams that emanated from Narcissa as Lexi slowly crept closer to where her father and Eromaug were still fighting.

The impenetrable darkness that had cloaked half of the room previously had now receded to fill only a small portion of the cavern, revealing a pair of ancient looking stone pillars just behind where Eromaug appeared to be edging towards.

The space between the two pillars seemed to glimmer and shift, distorting the appearance of the stone that sat behind it.

Lexi frowned at the image, knowing from experience that it was a portal, similar to those that her father's portalmancer, Steve, created to enable movement between locations and realms.

As Lexi opened her mouth to warn her father, Ermoaug smirked and slammed his hands into Lord Brarthoroz's chest, propelling him backwards only a few steps, but it gave him enough time to back off to the portal.

"Don't think I won't come for her again, brother!" He snarled before turning to Lexi. His face almost softened slightly in that split second, before he backed through the portal, slamming his arms against the stone pillars as he did so, and sending the columns toppling forward as he disappeared from sight.

Lexi's heart was pounding as Lord Brathroroz let out a ferocious roar and slammed his fist into the wall where the portal had been only seconds before and breathing heavily.

"Papa... who is he coming for?" Lexi asked, her adrenaline still coursing through her as she stepped towards her father uncertainly.

She had already begun to reach her own conclusions regarding his words throughout this confrontation, but she didn't want to believe what her intuition was telling her.

"We'll talk later. I want this place secured and guards stationed so that he can NEVER return."

Her father's snarl and the total avoidance of looking at her made her skin crawl. If anything, it only confirmed what she was feeling.

"Is it me that he wants, Papa?" She breathed in disbelief as her father whirled furiously towards her.

"I HAVE ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT WE WILL TALK LATER!" He roared furiously, as Lexi felt herself shrink back reflexively, her emotions a complicated vortex inside of her.

Allen and Greyson suddenly appeared in front of her as they took a protective stance between her and where her father was standing with a menacing, murderous aura rippling from him.

“Lexi, we should go and see if anyone else needs our support,” Greyson suggested quietly.

Lexi nodded wordlessly and with a final glance over her shoulder towards her father, she began to make her way back out to the hallway, her stomach rolling uncomfortably.

## **Alpha Nocturne's Contracted Mate Chapter 295**

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### **Chapter 295 You Know That I Love You**

It hadn't taken their force long to clear the halls and clean up the bodies that were left behind.

The losses had been minimal on their part and considering the forces that they had thought they would be up against, their plans had meant that they had been far better equipped than the coven itself.

The Coven had left very few prisoners alive, and the ones that were still breathing were in pretty bad shape. Lexi and the other healers and medics had done what they could but there was no growing back limbs...no matter how proficient of a shifter you were. Lord Brarthroz had stationed huge numbers of his daemons within the winding passageways and caverns that the coven had previously inhabited and returned to the surface with his portalmancer Steve at his side.

He strode angrily across the makeshift camp to the command tent and paused at the entrance, glancing across at the medical tent where Lexi had been working.

Currently, she was cleaning her hands off as her mates watched on protectively and Lord Brarthroz felt his mouth settle into a grim line as he watched her.

“Forgive me,” Steve began from behind him, his voice no more than a raspy whisper, “It may not be my place to say so, my Lord, but I still think you made the right decision.”

Lord Brarthroz huffed loudly as he turned to raise an eyebrow at Steve,

“Did I though? All of this...the deaths and destruction... my own mate...”

“Eromaug has always been petulant,” Steve nodded, “Yet, he is not stupid. Your wife is merely a bargaining chip in his eyes... and perhaps your daughter's friend too. Even if

she denied his claims, she will feel compelled to act now with the knowledge that they are both alive.”

Lord Brarthroroz growled furiously, baring his sharpened teeth as his eyes narrowed.

“Then I will just remove that knowledge from her!” He hissed. “My Lord...as much as I would rather avoid a death at your hands, I feel it my duty to tell you...Lexi is a woman now. She has her own mind, her own circle...you cannot just keep erasing her memories.” Steve answered, his face unreadable as he felt himself being grabbed tightly around his neck and thrust inside the command tent at a speed that would have injured the living.

“If it weren’t for the fact that it has taken me centuries to get you to the point you are now, I would kill you where you stood!” Lord Brarthroroz snarled menacingly into Steve’s expressionless face.

“Indeed, you could take that course of action,” Steve answered coolly, “However, my point is still valid. You, as well as I, know that her temper matches her mothers, and if she finds that you have been hiding the very reason from her, or discovers that you blocked her memories as an adult...” Steve trailed off, watching intently as Lord Brarthroroz’s displeased rumble quieted and he pushed Steve away from him in frustration.

Steve brushed at the puff of dust that had erupted from him at the sharp contact and settled on his clothes with a disgruntled snort. “It is one thing to protect your child when they are young...” Steve continued unabashedly until Lord Brarthroroz slammed his fist into the table.

“I know. I do not need you to explain.” He hissed as he stared intently at the large indents that had formed in the surface beneath his fists.

“It seems that you do, my Lord,” Steve pressed, an air of resignation to his tone, “There is no one else who will tell you this and you know that. I would advise that you speak with your daughter and her mates and at least let them know what they are facing and why.”

“I do not remember appointing you as my advisor, wraith,” Lord Brarthroroz sneered as Steve narrowed his eyes and laughed coldly, the sound coming out as more of an unsettling wheeze.

“And I do not remember pledging to serve a coward.” Steve replied flatly as Lord Brarthroroz flinched and turned to him with a furious glare.

“Wow Steve, tell us how you really feel,” Lexi’s voice snorted from the doorway as Lord Brarthroroz froze at the sound of her voice and his eyes snapped to hers.

He shifted uncomfortably as Lexi strode into the tent with Greyson and Allen following closely behind her.

She paused and frowned as she looked between her father and

Steve, the tension positively crackling in the air around her father, while Steve stood impassively at the side.

“Did I interrupt something I shouldn’t have?” Lexi asked as she grabbed a bottle of water from the table and registered the odd indents on the metal surface of the table just behind her father.

When neither of them answered she placed the bottle back on the table and cleared her throat, gesturing to the table.

“Seems like those are about the right size for your fists, Papa. I doubt it was Steve...he’d probably crumble at the contact,” She smirked quickly at Steve who slightly raised his eyebrow at her but remained silent.

“It’s nothing Lexi.” Lord Brarthroroz grumbled as he avoided her eyes and kept his eyes fixed on Steve’s unmoving form.

“It certainly didn’t sound like nothing,” Allen said carefully as he felt Lord Brarthroroz’s gaze land on him.

“You forget that we shifters have an incredibly keen sense of hearing...” Greyson added as he stared boldly at Lexi’s father, “I think that whatever we thought we heard, would look far better coming from you, than it would from us.”

Lord Brarthroroz held their gaze as his eyes flared furiously between Steve, Allen and Greyson, the tension and anger rolling off him in waves.

“Papa, what’s going on?” Lexi frowned as she stepped around the table towards him, “What aren’t you telling me?”

His head snapped towards her and for a moment Lexi saw the fury in his eyes, but it quickly softened as he gazed at her.

He sighed heavily and turned towards her, reaching for her as he pulled her into his arms and hugged her tightly.

“Lexi.” He murmured into her hair as his voice cracked slightly.

“Papa, what’s going on? You’re starting to scare me.” “Just know that everything I ever did was to protect you.” He murmured as he released her slightly and she looked up at

the towering figure of her father and saw for the first time in the lines of his face, an unsettling uncertainty at whatever it was that he was about to say.