

Alpha Asher By Jane Doe

Chapter 213

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I floated suspended in this blissful darkness for what felt like hours. Nothing could touch me here.

Not the weight of exhaustion pulling me down or the agony squeezing at my muscles and bones.

It was a reprieve, but one thing about reprieves is that they never last too long.

At first, it started in small flashes. An explosion of light here and there, a flicker of pain, a whisper of voices just outside my minds reach.

Eventually, those flashes became longer and more drawn out.

The light became blinding, tinted with colors and shapes that moved. Voices took form, names flashing in my memory as I began to recognize them.

Each time I gathered the strength to open my eyes, it was sucked away by some intangible force. With each sensation that returned, my least favorite was my dry throat.

I couldn't seem to keep my eyes open for long enough to drink anything, but what I wanted most was some damn blood. A few

times I swore I saw the outline of Asher's face, always hovering over me, silently protecting me from any and everything.

When I gathered the strength to keep my eyes open for more than a few seconds, the first thing I latched onto was a feminine voice.

It's high pitch and friendly tone struck my memory at its core and dredged up a familiar name.

Cassidy.

Asher's voice was thrown into the mix, tight with unease that twisted my empty stomach into knots. It rumbled miserably, as if it knew I dared to think about it.

"What's going on?" I asked, but my mouth was so dry it came out as a crusty groan.

Asher was at my side before I could blink, moving so fast it startled me, but I was too weak to react.

His hands roamed my arms, shoulders, and finally, my face.

Each caress of his calloused hands was unbearably soft, bringing on such gentle sparks that my eyelids fluttered, and the darkness reached out with loving hands to suck me back in.

Thankfully, he pulled away before I could pass out again and promptly shoved something small and skinny into my mouth.

Without knowing what it was my throat worked to pull. When the taste of blood hit my tongue, rich and tangy, all thought was lost.

I kept going until the winded.

straw sputtered and ran dry, but I wasn't nearly full.

"What's going on?" I asked again.

This time my words weren't garbled nonsense. Cassidy hovered nearby; her shoulders lax with relief.

"What do you remember last?" Asher asked, clasping our hands together.

My heart began to flutter when he pressed my hand to his lips and waited for my response.

A dull ache spread across my forehead as I followed the dwindling breadcrumbs in my memory that led me back to what

happened before the darkness held me in its grasp.

"Um, I remember going to the safe haven and meeting Tristan's mother.

I sort of remember using magic to protect the land, but that's where things get hazy." I admitted.

"You did, you protected everyone. There's now a force field over the entire safe haven, but you didn't stop there.

You fixed all of the damage the witches had done. Every house, every car, the sidewalk ...even the streets look brand new.” He

exhaled, shoulders stiff and rigid.

There was amazement in his voice, but his expression was pinched.

Those eyes of his I adored so much were shuttered with worry.

“That doesn’t explain why I’m now lying -in bed back at home.”

I pointed out, lazily looking around our bedroom.

“Wait a second. I passed out, didn’t I?”

Asher lifted his head, nodding slowly.

You did. You’ve been out of it for four days now.”

My heart just about seized in my chest.

“Four days?!”

“I had Cordelia and Rowena stop by.

Neither one could do anything to wake you up, but Rowena was certain you passed out from overextending yourself.” He

grunted.

I squeezed his hand, hoping to alleviate his grimace.

When the crease in between his eyebrows smoothed out, I mustered up a watery smile.

“I’m glad everyone is safe, but something else is going on, isn’t it?”

I took one glance at Cassidy, remembering the feverish way they spoke to one another before I managed to wake up fully.

Asher pursed his lips, but it was Cassidy that spoke first.

“Your mate’s just worried about his brother, even though there’s no reason to be.”

She said lightly, an understanding smile curling at her glossed lips.

Judging from the amount of sunlight streaming through the window and the perfectly creased workout clothes she had on, I assumed she was on her way to training when she stopped by.

Her gym bag rested on the floor, the chord of her headphones hanging out the side pocket.

“It’s been four days since I’ve heard from him. He asks for a leadership position, then pulls this stunt. It doesn’t make sense.”

Asher muttered, that crease returning.

“No one’s heard from Brandon in four days?” I frowned, my eyes darting between the two of them.

Cassidy shook her head, her blonde ponytail swaying.

“I told Asher, already. Brandon stopped by to see if I wanted to go to some frat party days ago.

He said he’d just gotten back from fighting the witches and wanted to kick back and have fun.

He said something about near death experiences and wanting to get drunk, but that's your brother.

Obviously, I told him I wasn't interested." She snorted, then placed her hand on Asher's shoulder.

"Look, you know your brother. This isn't the first time he's gone off on a bender. Hell, you remember when he met that Cuban girl?"

She cocked an eyebrow at Asher, her lips tilting in a smirk that made me wonder exactly what Brandon had done all those years ago.

Asher didn't seem as amused but managed a slight nod.

"Yeah, I remember." He replied.

"Brandon went off on a weeklong sex-induced bender with this chick and didn't think to tell any of us where he was."

She explained, flashing me the same amused look she'd given Asher.

"That does sound like something Brandon would do." I laughed lightly.

Asher frowned. "He called during that time though to check in and let mom know he wasn't dead in a ditch somewhere."

I matched his expression, my eyebrows inching closer together and lips falling.

Brandon was a heathen at the best of times, but if there was one thing he cared about it was his parents, Claire especially.

“He hasn’t called this time?” I asked.

“No, he hasn’t even sent a text.” Asher replied.

Cassidy planted her hands on her hips and shook her head at us.

“He’d complain for the rest of his life if he could see the two of you worrying like a pair of mother hen’s.”

She giggled, softening her tone when she turned to Asher. “Look, I know you’ve been under a huge deal of stress lately, but maybe you’re being just a touch overprotective.

You know how your brother is, and you know that sooner or later, he always comes crawling back.

I’d say give him the rest of the week, and then we can start sending out search parties.” 8

“Yeah, you’re probably right.” Asher grunted, pinching the bridge of his nose.

The phantom throb of his headache rippled across the bond and made my eyebrows twitch.

Cassidy hefted her gym bag and slung it over her shoulder, waving at the two of

“Well, I’ve got to head out or I’ll be late for training. Remember what I said though, Asher.

He's probably just partied too hard and lost his phone in the toilet again." She snorted, shaking her head like she was reliving a funny memory.

I'm glad you're finally awake, Lola.

Training has been a bore without you, but I'll let Chris know you're doing alright. See you guys later!"

Asher and I shouted our goodbyes as she left, but our eyes were on one another.

The second the front door slammed shut,

I was being lifted onto Asher's lap, enveloped by his warmth and spicy scent.

He let out a deep breath once I was settled against his chest, snaking his arms around my waist, and holding me there.

When he buried his nose in my hair and inhaled sharply, I didn't fight it.

"What do you think about this?" Asher murmured against my head.

I peered up at him through my lashes. "Are you talking about your brother or the witches?"

"My brother."

"Well..." I paused, lost in thought. "I think you should follow your gut. A big part of being Alpha is relying on your intuition, right?"

It hasn't led you wrong yet. So, what's your gut telling you?"

After a few long seconds, he answered.

“It’s telling me that something isn’t right.”

Flecks of gold began to fill his eyes swirling like they were suspended in oil and water.

His lips flattened into a thin line, and when that crease on his forehead returned, I placed my fingers against it hoping it would

disappear. When it didn’t, my skin began to crawl with unease.

“Do you feel it?” He asked, staring off into the distance, eyes trained towards our balcony doors.

I didn’t reply right away and instead tried to open myself to whatever it was he was feeling.

The breeze wafting in through the balcony doors was warm, almost annoyingly so.

It carried the scents of the outdoors, of the forest and soil. To anyone else, it would’ve been a beautiful day.

There was unbridled sunlight streaming through the windows, beautiful if not for the tightness in my chest.

It felt like when you held your breath for too long and your lungs began to burn, almost on the verge of exploding.

“Yeah, I feel it.” I replied, squirming until Asher loosened his hold enough for me to stare into his eyes.

“I have all of the warriors on high alert.

Our pack and Zeke’s are both on lock down. The only ones going in or out are warriors.”

The feeling continued to grow, and fear quickly followed in its footsteps.

There was no way I was going to sit here and stew in it. Not after spending the last four days unconscious. If it wasn't my growing determination that forced me onto my feet, then it was the fact that my stomach was woefully empty.

Asher kept his hands on my hips, hovering in case I toppled over.

“First, I'm going to raid the refrigerator. Then, I'm going to go and get some damn answers. Are you in?” I asked him, holding out my hand.

A grim smile curled at his lips as he placed his hand in my own.

“I'm in.” I

After three bottles of water, two blood bags, and a sandwich, I was finally ready to get some answers. Asher and I marched into the building that served as the pack's prison, which was now heavily guarded from the inside out, and went straight down to the bottom levels the witches were being housed in.

During our trip down, Asher explained where their interrogations had led them for each individual witch.

“Most of them are genuinely loyal to the

Blood Witch, but there are a few that are following her out of fear. We haven't gotten anything useful out of them.

Typically...typically torture is the route we would take, but I didn't want to make that choice without your support." Asher confessed, his jaw tense.

On any other occasion, my mate would have no issue torturing a few souls to get information that might keep the people of this pack safe.

Whether they were male or female, he'd have no issue doing what was necessary, but a few of those witches were barely older than pre-teens.

Guilt wormed its way into my head. Was I doing the right thing? Was torturing these witches what really needed to be done?

At the end of the day, I was one of them. The thought of torturing my own people felt...wrong.

"Does it make me a bad Luna if I said I don't want them tortured?" I asked him, lowering my voice as we passed a group of guards changing shifts.

"No, it doesn't. You have a duty to the witches just as much as you do the Vampire's and Werewolves."

Asher replied.

Before I could reply, a voice echoed down the hall.

“Well well, if it isn’t my favorite Luna.”

“Zeke.” I grinned, opening my arms.

The smirking Alpha pulled me in for a hug, making a show of plucking me off the ground. He swayed left and right, chuckling

when my legs flailed from the movement.

After a few seconds, Asher cleared his throat. Zeke set me upright and tried to pat down my now messed up hair. I swatted his

hands away, my heart leaping when an actual smile crossed his face.

It wasn’t as wide or as carefree as it had once been, but it was a start.

“I’m guessing you’re here to see Tessa?” Zeke deduced, only looking partially disgruntled.

I did make note that he’d actually said. her name.

Lately, he’d been finding every reason not to.

“Sure are.” I replied.

Zeke shrugged. “She’s not going to tell you anything, but it’s always worth a try.”

He led us to the observation room, and through the pane of glass I made out Tessa’s curly brown hair.

She was propped up on the cot, her back against the wall and her head reclined as she hummed under her breath.

When her cell door swung open, allowing Asher and I to step inside, her eyes snapped open.

Zeke followed behind, and as her attention settled on him, I swore I saw a flash of regret cross her face. It was gone before I

could truly take note of it, leaving me to wonder if I'd imagined the entire thing.

"You've got visitors." Zeke drawled, crossing his arms, and leaning against the doorframe.

Her eyes lingered on his for such an uncomfortably long time that I couldn't help but mind-link Asher to ask what the hell had happened while I was out of it.

'I have no clue. Zeke's been visiting her cells everyday for the past four days.' He replied.

"I know why you're here." Tessa sighed, her shoulders curving inward on themselves. "It...it doesn't matter what I tell you. It's too late. You're too late."

I knelt down to her level, forcing every shred of urgency into my voice.

"Tell us how to stop this, Tessa. Do you understand how many people are going to die? How many children?"

She chewed on her lower lip. "You can't stop what's coming. None of you can."

“That’s bullshit and you know it.” I snarled softly.

“There’s always a way.

“Not this time.” She whispered, staring down at her hands. When she looked up, her eyes were watery.

“You can’t stop what’s coming, because it’s already here.”

There was no amount of arguing, no amount of begging that would make Tessa change her mind.

It didn’t matter how many lingering stares she threw Zeke’s way, or the number of times regret, or some other emotion flashed in her eyes.

She wasn’t budging, not in the slightest. Left with no choice, I did the next best thing.

I called Rowena.

She took one look at Tessa, and determination flooded her features, forcing her to press her ruby-red lips into a thin line.

“Midnight.” Rowena said. “We’ll do the spell at midnight. Make sure you drink lots of blood before then.” I

I stared at Tessa, giving her this one chance to come clean. She pulled her

knees up to her chest and continued to look down at her hands, running her eyes over the faint lines along her palms. Zeke

shook his head in disappointment and left her cell, not once looking back.

Determination filled my voice and body as I turned back to Rowena and said, "I'll be ready."

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