

Alpha Asher Novel [by Jane Doe] Chapter 220

Chapter 220

I was slammed back into my body, the impact tearing a ragged gasp from my throat.

Panic obscured my thoughts, my hands grasping at my chest, taking fistfuls of my shirt as I pulled it from my body to peer down at smooth, unblemished skin.

“I’m alive...” I panted, my heartbeat thundering in my ears. “It wasn’t me. I’m still here.”

The sensation of my soul slipping away, the very essence that made up my memories, hopes, dreams, and fears, was one I would never forget. Far beyond the physical pain was a peacefulness I never would’ve thought existed. It caressed the soul in feather-light touches, wrapping around that beacon of light in a protective embrace.

Remembering Death’s gentle touch brought tears to my eyes and made me wonder if that was how Sean felt-if he too felt at peace.

‘We have to go, Lola...’ Maya said softly, her tail curling around my thoughts.

As much as I wanted to stay and linger in that peaceful haze, it quickly began to slip through my fingers. Cordelia had been right, after all.

I was alive, and every beautiful, horrible moment was mine to shape.

With my blood-soaked knees forgotten, I pushed myself to my feet and stood tall, inhaling the crisp, silky air and letting it fill my lungs with life.

‘You’re right.’ I told her, drawing her presence to the forefront of my mind, embracing the sting of my bones shifting and growing. ‘We have work to do, Maya.’

Running through the forest, melting into the world around me as I worked in tandem with Maya and became one with nature itself, I thought back to what I saw in Cordelia’s memory.

I didn’t want to believe that there were traitors in this pack. That someone I trusted with my life and the lives of my people were secretly plotting our downfall. After what I’d seen I needed confirmation, and I knew just who to go to.

It was haunting to know that I was taking the same route Cordelia had been taking when she was forced to run into the forest.

Everything, even the heavy blanket of shadows draped along the main road, was exactly the same. This time around, there weren’t any cloaked witches creeping out of the forest, but that didn’t mean I let my guard down.

Keeping just a few feet inside the forest, I followed the shoulder of the main road until the dark outlines of buildings began to pop into view. As I pressed forward, the streetlamps with their gentle, golden glow provided just enough light to make out the smaller details and the washed-out colors of my surroundings.

There was a plaza of small businesses farther off to the side, but it was the unassuming office building I had my eyes set on.

At first glance, one might think it were a bank or some nameless company with rows of cubicles and an army of overworked, underpaid employees. It was neither of those things, but its modern appearance was the perfect cover up for what was hidden within, spanning several feet below the earth. 1

Almost fifty feet away, I narrowed my eyes at the place, a feeling of wrongness twisting my stomach into knots the same way an expired blood bag would.

There were too many shadows lingering around the place, sapping every ounce of light and color until even my advanced eyesight had a hard time seeing what was going on.

Shifting into my human form, I approached on foot. There was a slight kernel of exhaustion tugging at my eyelids from using my magic to keep my clothing intact, but I was carrying too much adrenaline for it to take hold.

Fifty feet turned into thirty, and then twenty, followed by ten, and five.

I stopped in my tracks, the wind whistling in my ears as it ruffled my hair and billowed through the shattered windows and splintered door of the prison facility. When it came back out, stirred by another gust, it carried with it the scent of fresh blood.

There were nearly a dozen guards keeping watch over those cells. Men and women with families, mates that they had either already met or now never would.

“Oh, no...”

Zeke had been in charge of watching over Tessa, but Holly had said herself that Zeke was out helping find Asher.

With my heart drumming out a nervous beat in my ears, I reached out to Breyona.

‘Tell me Zeke is with you guys right now and that he’s out looking for Asher.’

‘I mean, he was. About twenty minutes ago he said he was going to stop by and check on Tessa, see if she knew anything about what the hell’s going on.’ She replied instantly. Silence spanned between the two of us, and the longer I stared at the ransacked building, the heavier the feeling in my gut became.” Why did you want to know where Zeke was?’

The way she asked was cautious, bordering on outright worry.

I barely realized I'd closed my eyes. The darkness behind my lids was identical to that of the forest and night sky. Battling the urge to shift and tear this entire pack apart until I found the answers I was looking for, I forced myself to reply to Breyona's question.

"The witches broke into prison. Tessa is gone, I can feel it. I-I can smell the blood from out here.' I said, the crunch of my grinding teeth rumbling in the background." I'm going to sound like a coward for saying this, but I-I can't go in there. If Zeke's down there, I won't be able to handle finding him like that.'

'I'm on my way to you. I'll go down there and see if there's any survivors.' Breyona's voice, even thick with fear, was soothing. '

Oh, and Lola...you're not a coward.'

'I wish I could agree with you.' I whispered, my throat tightening. To keep myself from succumbing to the grief and guilt battling in my brain, I latched onto something else—a partially thought out idea that had to work."

Breyona, I'll be gone when you get here, but I'll be right back. I promise.'

'What? Where are you going?'

'I'm going to use my magic to find Tessa.

I'm going to make it lead me straight to her.' I replied, closing my eyes, and falling into the space between time, where the past, present, and future came to meet.

It was there that my magic hid, bright and all consuming, ready to be manipulated.

Take me to Tessa. Show me the way.

A current of magic rippled over my skin, and when I closed my eyes I could see it take form behind my lids in a burst of golden light. It shot out of my stomach in a thin, straight line and skirted around the ransacked building, delving into the forest directly behind it.

It stopped abruptly, hitting something with enough impact to send me stumbling forward. The sensation was similar to what

I'd imagine running into a concrete wall would feel like. Needless to say, it was an experience I could've went without.

Staying in human form, I crept along side the prison walls, pressed against the rough brick that scraped my skin. The shadows were thicker back here, given there weren't any streetlights to chase them away. Each step I took was deliberate. I avoided the

dried leaves strewn across the ground like my life depended on it. Witches didn't have the luxury of heightened senses, a fact I planned to use to my advantage.

It was harder to keep quiet as I slipped into the forest, parting the tangled branches of a shrub to squeeze through. I stepped only on bald patches of earth, places that were barren of grass and twigs.

The silence was deafening and all too easy to notice as I concentrated on the tugging sensation in my gut. When it veered to the left, so did I.

I only stopped when I heard voices.

"Come on. Move it!" A feminine voice scolded, one I couldn't quite pinpoint from this distance.

The second one I was able to identify all too well.

"You stabbed me in the back with a silver blade. I don't exactly have full range of motion right now." Zeke's voice floated through the air, strained and just the slightest bit raspy.

Rough bark bit into the palms of my hands. as I dug my fingers into the tree I was currently hiding behind. A potent swell of relief filled my chest, so fucking euphoric that I nearly groaned out loud. The breeze shifted and I caught a strong whiff of Zeke's scent, only it was tainted by a metallic undercurrent that smothered everything else.

Zeke was alive, at least for now, but I had the chance to save him if I played my cards right.

The wet thud of my heartbeat filled my ears, growing faster the more adrenaline my body produced. I pushed off the tree and followed the tether of magic, judging my steps carefully when all I wanted to do was make a run for it.

When I finally spotted them, their figures obscured by the heaviness of the darkness, I bit my lip to muffle a sigh. I needed to move faster, push myself harder before they somehow managed to slip away. My steps became less calculated, but I was gaining on them. Every so often, when one of them would pass under a moonbeam that managed to penetrate the treetops, I'd catch a flash of creamy skin and dark hair.

They were coming up to a clearing. I could make out the silvery moonlight through the trees and could hear the gentle trickle of running water. If I had to guess, I'd assume it was a small stream they were approaching. Hopefully, it would delay them long enough to give me the chance to land the first attack.

I counted the seconds in my head, making it to forty-five when they broke through the tree line and stepped into the light.

Without a doubt, the voice I'd heard was Zeke's and the woman's had to be Tessa's, but there was a third person with them. I hadn't noticed her since I didn't dare take

my eyes off Tessa, but the surprise caused me to falter. I recognized that head of hair, long and silky as it swayed in the breeze.

I took another step and a loud, sickening crack split the air.

My stomach dropped to the floor, and as my concentration snapped, so did the tether connecting me to Tessa.

Shit.