

## Alpha Asher Novel [by Jane Doe] Chapter 221

### Chapter 221

It echoed louder than necessary, as if it couldn't pass up the chance to scold me. Not daring to look down at the branch beneath my foot, I threw caution to the damn wind and made a run for it.

Three heads whipped around as I barreled through the forest line like a wolf in a china shop.

"Lola-" Zeke shouted; his hands clutched to his abdomen where the white t-shirt he wore was soaked through with blood.

Rowena, whose hair long hair was tangled from the wind, had wide eyes brimming with unshed tears. They sparkled with relief, which only acted as gasoline to the fire raging in my chest.

"Get away from them." I snarled; eyes locked on Tessa.

The witch held her hands out, palms facing the ground, but I had yet to feel any magic oozing off her skin. I itched to lash out, to stop her heart and take her life in exchange for Sean's, but I wanted to make it count. If she was the one that killed Sean-or if it were that sister of hers, their death would be slow, agonizingly slow.

Rowena stumbled back from Tessa, who whipped around with wild eyes.

"Do it, Lola. Hurry before she attacks."

Rowena stammered in a voice full of fear.

She glanced my way. "I came to the cells with the supplies to break into her mind, but she'd already gotten out. The witch that helped her, she got away. She could be anywhere by now!"

"You have no idea what's going on, Lola."

Tessa warned, her voice growing increasingly strained.

The very sound of it made the blood rush to my head, roaring in my ears. Part of me wanted her to make the first move so I could pluck the seeds of her magic out of thin air and crush them to dust. She had to know how far along I was, how much better I'd gotten at conjuring. I'd use every drop of energy to snuff her out.

It was the least Sean deserved.

“Lola, listen to me-” Zeke’s face was uncomfortably pale, his voice tight with pain.

His words were cut short by Rowena crying out a second time.

“Lola, stop her! Can’t you feel her working her magic?” She stammered.

If it wasn’t for Zeke, I had no doubt that I would’ve blindly lashed out and snapped Tessa’s spine in two. There was something off about him, and I wasn’t talking about the blade lodged in his back, so long that the tip of it protruded from his stomach. He was standing closer to Tessa, hovering in a way that felt almost...protective?

I knew Zeke. Sure, he was loyal without fault, but not to those who didn’t deserve it.

If he thought Tessa deserved it, then there was definitely more to the story.

In fact, his eyes kept shifting over to Rowena, narrowed in a way that made my stomach tingle with unease.

A gust of wind came from out of nowhere, whistling through the trees and sending my hair scattering around my shoulders. Rowena’s auburn locks were blown over the side of her head. The strands were ripped away from her face, and in that moment, I could feel the world tilt beneath my feet.

Like the blackened petals of a dying rose, a patch of decayed skin blossomed along Rowena’s left temple, drifting down to the apex of her lifted cheekbones.

“What happened to your face?” I asked, sounding much too calm considering the that felt almost...protective?

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“What happened to your face?” I asked, sounding much too calm considering the chaos that was quickly unfurling.

Rowena blinked, staring at me like I’d grown a second head. Even Tessa looked confused, shifting to her other foot to cover the way she inched closer to Zeke.

“Lola, you have to—” Rowena stammered. Perhaps it was the fact that she was telling me what to do, or maybe it was simply the sound of her voice, but a hot spike of rage pierced my chest and caused me to speak. without thinking.

“I don’t have to do anything, Rowena.” I hissed quietly. “I want answers, and no one is leaving until I get them.”

Drawing on my magic, I let it build inside my body, swirling and churning until it felt like I was going to rip apart at the seams.

Trap them all. Let none leave.

What happened next was nothing like what I’d done at the safe haven, even if the spell was similar in a way. There was no veil of shimmering silver energy, beautiful like a cluster of stars had descended from the heavens to protect on my behalf.

No, this was nothing like that.

Slithering tendrils of shadows fell from the treetops, crawling out of bushes and emerging from all their little hiding places to form a large circle around the four of us.

When they connected, a ripple of black, festering energy burst into the sky, forming a dome of darkness and smoke that distorted the outside world.

The amulet around my neck heated and exhaustion began to take hold, but sheer adrenaline swatted it aside like an annoying gnat.

“What happened to your face?” I asked a second time, still sounding eerily calm.

When Rowena finished staring at the dome with wide eyes and a gaping mouth, she spoke.

“I gathered all the supplies for tonight and was about to meet you at the prison to do the spell, but I figured I’d stop and see if your grandmother wanted to come. She’s made such strides with her magic, I just—I figured I’d see if she wanted to observe.” She said in a weak voice, her slender throat working as she swallowed heavily. Her eyes fluttered shut, giving me a better view at the mottled skin along the side of her face. “I’d just barely walked through the door when they broke in- the witches. They had cloaks on with hoods covering their heads. They attacked us, and when I jumped in front of your grandmother, one hit me in the face. You see what it did to me, how strong it’s magic

was. I—I don't think your grandma and brother made it, Lola. The witches were so strong. I called out for help, but I couldn't let them get away. I chased the witches as far as I could. I was so scared that I let out this burst of magic and it hit one. It hit this one."

She pointed a trembling, red tipped finger at Tessa.

Zeke took a step towards me, "Lola—"

I held my hand up, silencing him with a look. His mouth remained open like he was debating on speaking anyway, but something in my expression must've warned him otherwise because he quickly pressed his lips together and took a step back.

"That was very brave of you to take the hit for my grandmother." I said, swiveling my eyes to where Rowena stood. "It's probably what saved her life."

Her lower lip trembled as she brought her hand to it, muffling a surprised gasp.

"They're alive?!"

"Grandma's alive, yes." I replied. "My brother, however, he's dead."

If I wasn't drowning in every blistering emotion I'd suppressed since seeing Sean's cold, limp body at the morgue, I might've been surprised at how callous and empty my voice sounded.

"What? Sean's dead?" Zeke croaked, his eyes glossing over.

"You didn't know?" I asked, surprised considering he'd been searching for Asher with Giovanni and Tristan.

"No, I didn't. We knew something bad happened with Asher, but-but we didn't know your brother..." He trailed off, his shoulders slumping as understanding and pity filled his soft eyes.

"Asher's the one that killed him, actually. It wasn't his fault though. Was it Rowena?" I hummed, sliding my eyes from the towering Alpha to the trembling, red-headed witch.

"I'm not following, Lola." She stammered, confusion so genuine filled her eyes that I wanted to tear it from her face and stomp it into the dirt.

I cracked my neck, the urge to kill so strong that it was the only thing that kept it at bay. My patience was thinning, and I'd only be able to ride this game out for so long before I forced her to come clean.

"I talked to my grandma. Her version of events was slightly different from yours, Rowena. According to her, there was only one witch present, not two."

“She was out cold when I chased the witches from the house, Lola. There’s a strong chance she’s not remembering things correctly.” Rowena said, her full lips turning down at the corners.

“You think so? That’s an odd thing to say considering she’s one that told me Asher killed Sean. That’s not even the best part, though. Would you like to know what else she said, Rowena?” I mused.

Rowena shuffled back a step, her eyes wary as they flitted to various points of the dome I’d constructed, the one keeping all four of us caged inside.

“What’s wrong, Rowena?” I cooed the way one would when approaching a small, skittish animal. “We’re just talking here, aren’t we?”

“I think you’re confused about things, Lola. Does anyone know you’re here?” She asked, her voice taking on the same caring tone a mother would have. “Maybe you should call your father. You’re grieving, and grief can... distort some things.”

“Oh, I’m very much confused, but maybe you can clear some things up for me, yeah?”

She blinked. “I’d be happy to, Lola. You know that.”

My lips twitched into an unhinged smirk.

Even though we stood in the middle of the forest, surrounded by shadows and liquid moonlight, I could feel myself teetering off the edge of the cliff I’d been standing on since learning my brother was dead. One foot dangled off the edge, the tingling sensation in my stomach warning me how close I was to falling. Nothing—not even Asher’s face in my mind, could warn me away.

“Wonderful.” I exhaled, fighting the insane urge to laugh in her face. “My grandmother used her magic to try and save Sean, but it was too late. Asher had already gotten to him, but she did manage to hit the witch...”

I turned to Zeke and Tessa, directing my question at all three of them. “Can anyone guess where she hit her?”

Zeke’s eyes roamed Rowena’s entire body, starting at her feet and ending at the patch of decayed skin on her face. His spine went ramrod straight and all traces of pain vanished from his expression when a look of pure murder took hold.

“Her face.” He whispered. “She hit the witch in her face.”

“You’d be correct, Zeke.” I grinned, then turned and tilted my head at Rowena. “What exactly did you say happened to your face again?”

“You can’t actually be serious.” She laughed nervously, eyes darting between the three of us. “The witch that attacked us hit me, obviously. What are you trying to say, Lola?”

I took a step towards her, my fingers twitching from sheer anticipation. The mossy tones in her eyes were bright. I memorized each one, taking in their shape. and the way the moonlight hit them, memorizing every aspect of my brother’s murderer. Tasting the sheer extent of my rage and agony, the remaining shadows began to squirm, their whispers filling the clearing.

‘...magical blood.’ ‘We want to taste.’ ‘Kill her, master.’ ‘Feed uss...’

“You know exactly what I’m trying to say.”

In one fell swoop, every ounce of deluded innocence dropped from her face, so flimsy and half-assed that I wondered how I’d ever been fooled in the first place. With steady hands, she wiped the smeared eyeliner and mascara from her cheeks.

Her eyes narrowed much like a feline, her ruby red lips curling into a smile that could only be described as cruel yet sensuous. She held her hands out at her sides, palms facing upwards.

“Damn, you caught me.” She said, oozing fake disappointment. Her laugh was throaty and triumphant. “It sure took you long enough.”