

Alpha Asher Novel [by Jane Doe] Chapter 222

Chapter 222

Tessa and Zeke ceased to exist as my vision tunneled, completely centered on Rowena's prideful expression.

"You killed my brother." I barely recognized my own voice.

The savageness in it was foreign to my ears, a quality I'd only ever seen Asher possess. I never thought I was capable of blind hatred, the kind that devours everything good about a person until all that's left inside of them is blackness, but I'd been wrong.

I hated Rowena. I hated her with every fiber of my being, with every breath I took and with every beat that shuddered my broken heart.

The edge was so close that my skin began to tingle with the familiar sensation of falling, but I didn't lose my balance until Rowena opened her mouth and spoke.

"Well, technically your mate did that, darling. We did need another sacrifice, after all." She rolled her eyes, inspecting her nails, completely oblivious that these were the final moments of her pathetic life. "It's rather inconvenient your grandmother survived, though. I've never failed to stop someone's heart before. It seems the old broad had more strength than I gave her credit for."

My body moved on its own, disconnected from my head as I lunged at Rowena.

Rowena glided backwards, my claws missing her face by inches. She wagged her finger at me, smiling coyly like I was a child throwing a tantrum.

"Ah, ah, ah. Can't have you doing anything rash and ending the fun." She giggled, emerald eyes dancing in the darkness. Besides, there's so much to tell you now that you know the truth. I'm going to savor that look on your face. You know the one I'm talking about, don't you? When you realize how royally you messed up, and that every problem you and your pack have faced has all led back to you."

One second I'd been drowning in rage, and the next I was struggling to breathe. A phantom hand clamped down on my throat, squeezing every drop of air from my lungs. I couldn't gasp—couldn't make a sound as I clawed at the nothingness choking me out.

"Don't even think about it." Rowena hissed at Tessa and Zeke. "I'll kill her right now if either of you take so much as a step. Don't think for a second that the blood-witch can't reanimate her corpse."

I didn't look at either of them, especially Zeke. I didn't want to see my friend, an Alpha whose strength nearly matched Asher's, mourning my death with his eyes.

The phantom grip on my throat loosened, but only barely. I gasped loudly, sucking in just a pinch of air before it clamped back down again.

“So, Lola. Do you remember that story I told you about my childhood? The one with the little witch next-door that taught me everything I knew?” Rowena hummed, not bothering to wait for my response since it wasn’t coming. “You see, I never mentioned why she left. I woke up one morning to find that her family had moved away. As it turns out, they were running from something, from an Alpha the mother murdered many years ago. That little girl I was friends with,

Freya was her name, not only was she his daughter, but she also grew up to be the most powerful blood-witch our kind has ever seen.”

Freya, half-sister to my dad’s mate, Flora.

Her grin brightened at the horror and fury on my face. She was soaking this up, every fucking drop. It’s why she kept loosening her hold, allowing me the smallest bit of oxygen before clamping down once more.

“That’s right, Lola. The blood-witch taught me how to harness the darkest parts of my magic. You think any other Natural would dare stop someone’s heart? Bah, they all fear their power! I, on the other hand, I bask in it.” She exclaimed, her head tilted back, and eyes closed as she breathed in deeply. Her eyes met my own once more and in them I saw fragrant disappointment. “If only you had such vision, Lola. You could’ve stopped all of this before it ever started. Oh, well. You’ll lose consciousness soon, and when you wake up, you’ll get to meet Freya for yourself.”

She was right in more ways than one.

The hand around my throat tightened hard enough to bruise. Panic flared to life when the first of many dark splotches filled my vision. My thoughts lost their sharp edge, dulling like the blade of a knife. In a last- ditch effort for control, I scrambled to grab hold of my magic, but it felt like I was caught in a spider’s web. Every move I made only tangled me further.

When I felt that familiar jolt of electricity, I would’ve cried out with relief had I any air in my lungs.

Get her off of me.

The phantom hand cutting off my air supply and squeezing the life from my body twitched. A numbing wave of exhaustion began to take hold, spreading from my chest as it tugged at my eyelids and turned my bones to lead.

The amulet around my neck began to warm

Wait, a second. The amulet.

Rowena's gift to me, the one she said would strengthen my power and help me focus it.

All this time, I thought there was something wrong with me. Every time I used my magic to conjure something I'd feel absolutely wasted.

I stopped clawing at my throat, trying and failing to pry her magic off my windpipe, and instead grabbed the amulet where it rested along my sternum. The gold-framed ruby was hot to the touch, stinging the palm of my hand the tighter I held on.

"What are you doing?" Rowena said, her voice cold and so very distant. "Don't you dare, Lola!"

With a sharp tug, I ripped the amulet away from my chest, smiling as the thin chain snapped in half.

A loud crack split the air. Perhaps it was from my teeth smashing together, or from my body hitting the ground. I had no clue, nor did I care.

I threw my hand out in Rowena's direction, fingers outstretched.

Air filled my lungs in a single great whoosh, sending the black spots scattering. The urge to cough and hack was strong, but the power I felt held it at bay.

How had I not noticed the hold that amulet had over my magic, how it sucked my energy and scattered my thoughts?

Freedom felt like power, sheer power that crackled at my nerve endings and begged-no, demanded, to be used.

Shadows snaked from the forest, gliding across the ground, passing through the dome of magic with ease. They surrounded

Rowena, twitching like leeches desperate for a drop of blood, their bodies black and shiny under the might of the full moon.

She tried valiantly to remain calm and unfazed, but I was too fixated on every square inch of her face to miss even the slightest tells. Her upper lip twitched, and pupils dilated with unease.

Without lifting a finger or speaking a single word, two shadows shot up from the ground, wrapping around her wrists and pulling her to the forest floor. Like chains of festering darkness, they kept her rooted in place. A third snaked around her throat before attaching itself to the ground, forcing her to remain upright.

Maya was getting nervous now, but anger and betrayal were louder than any voice, stronger than any bond.

I had invited this woman-this witch into our home, our pack. I alone made the decision, and I alone was to blame for every bit of damage she'd done.

There would be no forgiveness for me, but I'd happily take revenge.

This wasn't to soothe my own guilt. No, this was for Carmen and Lars, for Cordelia and Breyona's parents, for everyone hurt or killed at their hands.

This was for Asher, the weapon they used to kill not one, but three werewolves.

I didn't need Rowena to confirm what I already knew. The pieces had clicked together the moment Breyona told me it was Asher that had killed Sean. The moment she said his name, I was pulled back to what the Shadows had said-to the curse they warned us about.

Now all that's left to know is how and why.

"That amulet wasn't to focus my magic, was it? It was just another tool to manipulate me, to keep me weak." I scoffed, pulling myself up off the ground.

Rowena lifted her chin at me, defiance shimmering in her eyes as she pressed her lips together. I let out a dry, sardonic laugh.

"What happened to all those secrets you wanted to share? Not feeling generous now, are you? That's alright. Now that I'm free of your influence..." I nudged the shattered amulet with the toe of my shoe, digging it deeper into the dirt. A twisted smile graced my face when I met her eyes a second time." ...I have a few ideas on how to get you to share."

Thriving and feeding off the chaos, the shadows holding her to the ground trembled and hissed. Each one pled for a taste of her blood, their fiendish voices overlapping one another.

"Go ahead, my children. Taste her blood." I cooed. Lifting my pointer finger, I knelt down to eye the shadows around her wrists and neck. "Not too much, understand?"

There's information she has that I need."

'Yesss, Massster...' 'One sssmall tassste...'

I held Rowena's eyes the entire time, watching as the shadows sliced into her skin. Pain flashed in her eyes, and I knew from the way she clenched her slender jaw, that she was biting back a scream.

Blood welled like the velvet soft petals of a rose, spilling from the thin skin that stretched over her wrists and throat. The shadows were vibrating, singing off the potency of her magical blood. As their strength increased, so did mine.

“Lola...” Zeke’s raspy voice pulled me from my haze of bloodlust. It was weak, drawing my attention to his pale face and the spot of blood on his shirt which had grown larger these past few minutes. “We need to get out of here before I bleed out.” 1

“No.” I hissed, hackles raising at the thought of leaving Rowena alive and breathing, not a single repercussion for what she’d done.

Zeke didn’t understand. How could he? It wasn’t his brother, someone he grew up with, someone he both loved and hated on the best and worst days. No, I wouldn’t- couldn’t leave.

My head snapped over to the elemental witch at his side, the one currently supporting half of his weight. Her affinity was earth. From what I’d seen, her magic was very much physical, but there was still a chance my hunch could be right. Everything -whether it be human, werewolf, vampire, or witch, came from the earth.

“Tessa, this is your one chance to make a difference. Which side are you on?” I asked her.

Through the rage, the guilt, and the pain, I tried to show her with my eyes that this was what she was meant for. The man at her side, who couldn’t help but look longingly at her when she wasn’t paying attention, was her future. She didn’t have to be a nameless faceless minion in a war where millions would die.

She, Tessa, Luna to Zeke’s Pack, could change things all on her own.

Tessa looked down at Rowena, the two of them locked in a stare that felt almost like a conversation.

She squared her shoulders and said, “I’m on the side of life.”