

Alpha Asher Novel [by Jane Doe] Chapter 223

Chapter 223

Even chalk-white and swaying on two feet, Zeke managed a look of utter surprise. Tessa's slender eyebrows fell into a grimace, and a subtle blush stained her face. From the way she avoided his gaze at all costs, I knew things were far from perfect between the two, but it was a start.

Tessa was no longer against us, so long as I held up my end and kept my word that witches would have a place in the world, one where they didn't have to hide in the shadows.

"Can you heal him?" I asked her, nodding in Zeke's direction.

"I think so, but I might need some help. I've only ever mended small wounds...

nothing like this. Plus, his weakness to silver is going to stunt things." Tessa replied, peeling up the bottom half of Zeke's shirt. When she made it to his back, where the gem-incrusted hilt jutted out a few inches from his spine, she winced. "I'm going to have to pull it out. It's...it's going to hurt."

"Do it." Zeke grunted, sinking to his knees to brace his hands in the dirt.

"On three..." Tessa murmured, gingerly wrapping her hands around the hilt. She took a deep, shuddering breath. "One... two..."

Without warning, she pulled. Zeke's eyes flashed silver, his wolf threatening to emerge the second the blade slid from his back, and he let out a harrowing snarl.

"Now, Lola. Funnel your magic into me." Tessa urged, flattening her hands on Zeke's back, right overtop of the wound.

I did as she said and had to close my eyes halfway through to bask in how good it felt. A single thought and my magic flared to life like an obedient pet. It followed my every whim much like a dog would, only its sheer strength reminded me more of a fire-breathing dragon.

A thread of glistening gold connected Tessa and I, growing brighter the more magic I sent crackling through.

Nearly ten whole seconds later, Tessa lifted her hands from Zeke's body and shouted, "Alright, Lola. That's enough."

At the snap of my fingers, the connection shattered into golden dust.

“Too much?” I questioned, tilting my head.

Zeke stood, pulling his t-shirt off to hand to Tessa. She wiped her hands on the clean parts of the fabric, then shuddered.

“It was intense, almost like drowning.” She said breathlessly, looking at me in a way I wasn’t sure I liked. “Is it like that all the time?”

“No, not until I took off the amulet.”

“You are a traitor, Tessa. Just as I predicted. If only you had Ember’s strength.” Rowena said, her voice no longer flowery and smug, but stretched thin with pain.

Tessa frowned, turning to hover over Rowena. “Ember’s strong, but her stubbornness keeps her from seeing the bigger picture. Freya won’t just stop with the Werewolves. She’ll go after the Vampire’s next, and then the humans. What will be left? A handful of witches to rule over the ashes.”

‘Lola, you there?’ Breyona’s voice filled my head, distant and muffled. ‘Shit’s hit the fan, bad. I think I’m losing my mind here. Tell me you can hear me.’

‘I can hear you for the most part. What’s going on?’ I replied, desperately trying to keep my cool but truthfully, I was beginning to panic.

I hadn’t heard anything from Asher- hadn’t felt a single thing through our bond, but I couldn’t just leave and let

Rowena get away. As much as I trusted Zeke, Rowena was slippery and the moment she saw an opportunity to escape, she’d take it.

‘Zeke’s trying to kill Asher!’ Breyona shouted, her snarl ringing down the mate -bond along with another, one that lifted the hairs on my arms with how familiar it sounded. ‘I know it’s crazy, but I’m watching it happen right now!’

It was Asher. I was sure of it.

“What do you mean Zeke’s trying to kill Asher?” I asked out loud so that Zeke and Tessa could both hear. “Zeke’s standing right next to me.”

Zeke stiffened, his face paling. “Is she sure? I’d never hurt Asher, you know that. Either way, I can’t be in two places at once. I’ve been at the prison this entire time.”

‘How can he be standing right next to you and be trying to cut your mate’s heart out of his chest?!’ Breyona snarled in frustration.

"I don't know!" I shouted, both out loud and through the mind-link. "I have no clue what's going on. Just-just stop him from hurting Asher. I'll be on my way as soon as possible."

'On it.' She snarled in response, her voice fading into the background.

Wait a damned second-

I pivoted on my heel, staring at Zeke while my tongue chose that moment to turn to lead. The incredulous look on my face had him knitting his eyebrows in confusion.

There was something seriously wrong here, and I was going to get to the bottom of it.

"You were at the prison this entire time?"

I repeated his earlier statement.

Zeke nodded slowly, as though this were obvious information. "Yeah, that's why I didn't know what happened to your brother. Breyona called me up and told me she, Giovanni, and Tristan were searching for Asher and that something happened. She asked if I'd come help, and I wanted to-seriously, I did, but I wasn't comfortable leaving the prison unprotected. She said if I changed my mind to meet her at your place, then that was the last I heard from her."

I visibly stiffened when Rowena's amused laughter hit the air.

That rush of numbing coldness swept over me and once again I found myself teetering off the edge, hanging on with what little strength I had left in my fingers.

"You're all fools." She giggled to herself, the decayed patch of skin on her face wrinkling as she smiled.

"Is something funny, Rowena?" I cocked an eyebrow, towering over her. "Do you know why Zeke's suddenly able to be in two places at once?"

"Should I, Lola?" She purred, staring up at me through her lashes.

A single thought was all it took to coax the shadows holding her in place to tighten, digging further into her skin. They lapped up the blood that wept from her wrists and neck with long tongues the color of an oil slick. She winced, and I watched with disgust as the decaying skin on her face began to peel away. The flesh beneath was black, like her meat had rotted.

"I'm going to bleed every secret from your body, Rowena." I promised, my voice dropping an octave. "Every. Last. One."

"I'm not afraid of death, darling." She sneered, her full lips peeling back to expose her teeth. "Do your worst, it won't change your fate."

'Breyona, you still with me?' I called out to my best-friend, holding tightly to the mind-link between us.

She panted, 'Yep, still here. Don't know what's wrong with Zeke #2, but he's a fucking asshole. Stabbed me with a silver blade and everything. It's weird, once Asher started fighting back, he was quick to take off.'

'He got away?' I asked, cursing silently. 'I don't think that was Zeke, Breyona. You said that Zeke claimed he needed to go back and check on Tessa. Well, this Zeke is telling me he never left the prison to begin with. He didn't even know Sean was dead or that Asher killed him.'

'What? How's that possible? He literally met me at your place, Lola. That's where I told him what happened. We went looking for Asher together.' Breyona said, just as confused as I.

The longer I stared at the sharp corners of Rowena's smug grin, the more my stomach twisted itself into knots.

"We still don't know who the second witch is..." I trailed off. "She could be anywhere."

"Or anyone." Rowena hummed, a wicked glint in her eyes.

Breyona's voice unfurled in my head. "Lola? Hello? You can't just bail after saying that. We need to figure this out. Where are you guys? Asher and I are on our way.'

"The Zeke you were with was the second witch, I'm sure of it.' I informed her, tasting her shock as it vibrated down the mind-link. 'We're in the forest, not far from the prison, actually.'

The mere mention of Asher had my heart hammering, but I couldn't bare to linger on the thought of my mate. Asher filled me with a strength I never knew, but he also knew how to calm my inner storm, and that was the last thing I needed. Rage and pain would get me answers, not bravery and mercy.

'It definitely fits, but how can you be sure? Shapeshifting doesn't exactly seem like a common type of magic, you know? Wait, you said the second witch...which implies you know who the first one is.' Breyona trailed off, her words tight with worry. 'Lola, are you with one of the witches now?'

I lowered my eyes to Rowena, my expression blank while her's was positively gleeful.

'Yes.' I said simply.

'Who is it?' She asked with palpable reluctance.

'Rowena.'

A blistering snarl cracked through the mind-link, so loud that I swore the entirety of the pack heard it in their heads. The hairs that lifted along my arms and the back of my neck told me who the snarl had come from.

'Shit. Asher's pissed.' Breyona cursed. 'We're on our way, Lola. We'll be there soon.'

'Alright, but in the meantime I'm going to wring her for answers. Lucky for me, I know just where to start.'

'Lola, you're freaking me out. I've never heard you like this before.' Breyona said cautiously, lowering her voice. Her wolf's whine rippled through my head. 'We can get answers together, okay? Just wait for us.'

'I can't do that. There's too much I need to know, starting with how she made Asher kill my brother.' I whispered, a tremor wracking my body as my magic flared to life, crackling beneath my skin in an attempt to get free. It thrashed against the bars of its prison, lashing out as the grin on Rowena's face grew. I couldn't hold it back even if I wanted to, and I didn't. '...hurry, Breyona.'