

## Alpha Asher Novel [by Jane Doe] Chapter 224

### Chapter 224

I sliced through the mind-link, cleaving it in two and watching as it fluttered and frayed like the torn pieces of a ribbon.

“Now, where were we?” I exhaled, rolling my shoulders back as I weakened my hold over my magic.

It swarmed at the first hint of freedom, filling my cells until they swelled with power. As hard as it was, I had to control each and every thought that passed through my head, taking care not to feed any energy into them. Like stones floating down a stream, I’d pluck one out of the water to inspect it, only to toss it back in, releasing it altogether.

Rowena snickered, much too confident and cocky given her current position. “You were threatening me with death should I not reveal all my little secrets.”

“Ah, right. I’d like to change my earlier threat if you don’t mind.” I smirked, tilting my head the way a predator would as it sized up its prey. Right now, that’s exactly what Rowena was. She didn’t even have the honor of being called fresh meat, not with that patch of decayed flesh growing out of her face.

She schooled her expression into one of mock-seriousness and nodded all too understandingly.

“Of course, darling. Go right on ahead. Give it your best shot and I promise I’ll try to be properly spooked this time around.”

“I appreciate the consideration. I’m fairly new to this whole torture thing, but with my magic, I think you’ll find my ideas... creative. To say the least.” I hummed, grazing the tendril of shadow wrapped around her left wrist. It writhed, preening under my touch almost lovingly. I continued by dragging my finger up Rowena’s arm, circling her until I stood at her back. She stiffened, craning her head to the side when she could no longer see me.

I lowered my lips to her ear and smiled. coldly. “We both know there are things far worse than death, Rowena. Let’s discover them together, shall we?”

When I circled back around to the front of her, a warm pulsating wave of satisfaction washed over me, as dark and alluring as the magic that throbbed in my veins. There was fear in her eyes, brighter than the emerald treetops and the moss that covered their roots.

“You have no clue what kind of magic’s you dabble in, Lola.” She hissed; eyes narrowed as if that alone would blot out the ripe scent of her fear.

I lifted my hand, inspecting it for any trace of dark veins. There was none, not that it mattered in the slightest. I brought the witches down on this pack and I'd do anything-anything to make it right again.

Letting my magic fly free, chasing after my thoughts to turn them into reality, I grinned.

"I don't care, Rowena."

The shadows wrapped around her wrists shot up from the ground, dragging her arms upwards until she stumbled to her feet. Higher they climbed, until she hovered a solid foot off the earth. Her head whipped around, eyes darting between the three of us, lingering on Zeke and Tessa as if they'd come to her rescue.

Despite the fact that I didn't trust Tessa, she didn't seem the least bit enticed to aid Rowena.

With the flick of my hand, two more shot out from the blackened forest line, snaring her ankles, and anchoring her to the ground.

There weren't words that could encompass the beautiful, terrible things I wanted to do to her, but as it turns out, my magic didn't need words to know what to do, and neither did the shadows.

They came from all around us, slithering from every little crevice the forest had to offer. Tessa's gasp told me that she and Zeke could see the tendrils creeping towards Rowena with obvious excitement. Faster they crawled, one after another, until there were dozens pooling around her feet.

"What are you doing?! Stop, stop this at once." She hissed, still holding onto that modicum of power. "I'll tell you what you want to know but stop this."

As they began climbing the tendrils that kept Rowena suspended in air, she began to thrash and buck. It was no use, though. Any movement she made forced the shadows around her wrists, ankles, and neck to dig in deeper, coaxing droplets of blood that whipped the others into a frenzy.

I took one step, then another, until I was standing so close that I could smell the floral notes in her blood. Craning my head to look up at her, I grinned until my cheeks ached.

"I don't need you to tell me anything, Rowena. Why would I when I can simply pry it out of you? I imagine it would be similar to cracking an egg, only in this case, the egg is your skull. That's only half of the fun, though." I mused, stepping back to admire the nightmare I was bringing to life. "No, I don't think I'll stop."

Once they reached the tender flesh of her ankles, the screaming began.

The shadows blacked out her pale skin, climbing her calves and slithering up her long, flowing skirt. They didn't slice into her skin or draw blood. No, they did something much worse.

"What are you doing to me?" She screeched, her voice cracking as she snarled and wailed, the sound more animal than human. Her eyes were bulging from her head, so bright that they truly did look like shimmering emeralds.

Much like the veins of inky darkness crawling up my fingers, Rowena's skin began to blacken. It was the color of night, of a place where even the strongest, brightest light couldn't reach. With how many were swarming her body, crawling up it like a nest of fire ants, it was hard to see how they seeped into her skin-how they slowly began to turn her into one of them.

A shadow.

Somewhere in the back of my mind, I knew I shouldn't have been enjoying this, but I couldn't seem to stop. There was nothing as potent as the screams of someone who begged for death but knew that something so much worse was coming for them. It fed that brewing darkness inside of me, the one egging me on with its seductive voice, filling my head and body with notions of unmatched power and delicious promise.

Holding my arms out, I sent out a silent call to all of the shadows. I allowed the ones forming the dome around us to break formation, urging them to come forward and claim their slice of Rowena's humanity.

"This is for Sean." I whispered, barely recognizing the monstrosity that my voice had become.

They were at her thighs now, continuing up and up and up. I was absorbed in my masterpiece, but not so much so that I didn't see movement from my peripherals.

Tessa leaned into Zeke and whispered in his ear. It mattered not how quiet she was, I could hear every single word.

"You need to stop her before it's too late. The magic she's using is dark. It's corrupting her as it destroys Rowena."

Dark, savage fury filled my body, all of it directed towards the Elemental witch that thought she knew me-thought she knew my magic. Who was this girl to question me and my will?

Zeke, his face etched in a kindness I recognized but refused to acknowledge, took a step in my direction. He lifted his hands in a gesture of surrender, baring his neck the way a lower pack member would do to appease their Alpha.

“Lola, this isn’t right. She deserves to pay for what she’s done, but not like this. I think-I think it’s best if you call the shadows off.” He said slowly, cautiously.

The flicker of fear in his eyes made my heart spasm, but any emotion it invoked was smothered-devoured, by the scathing need for revenge. That same fury filled me, only this time directed at Zeke. All familiarity vanished within the blink of an eye, and I found myself staring into the mournful eyes of a stranger.

A stranger that dared to tell me what to do.

“No.” I hissed, my voice deeper and darker than it had ever been.

“Sean wouldn’t want this, Lola.” He urged, eyes broken and pleading.

Tessa clung to his side, both holding him back and urging him to talk me down from the ledge they both thought I stood on. If only they could see there was no longer any ledge. I was freefalling, tumbling through the air at a thousand miles per hour. My breath ripped from my lungs; my hair yanked back from my face.

There was no cliff because I had already fallen.

“QUIET!”

I didn’t recognize my voice as it left my lips or the wave of magic I hurled at both Zeke and Tessa. Their mouths hung open, moving as they formed words, yet no sound came out. Tessa clapped a hand over her mouth, staring wide-eyed up at Zeke.

I closed my eyes, trying so hard to hold onto the last shred of humanity I had, but all I could see behind my eyelids was Sean’s pale, bloodless face.

“Please, do not make me hurt you.” I begged the two of them, begged them with everything I had left.

The dark spider-web veins now crawled up my hands, staining my wrists with their poisonous glow. Rowena continued to thrash like she was being electrocuted, and I continued to watch. They had reached her hips and were gaining in speed. One they reached her mind, I’d let them shatter it, cracking it open to let her secrets, fears, and desires spill out.

They, along with her human body, would fade into nothingness.

Replaced by pure, unending, Shadows.

I was so lost that I didn’t feel the bond between my mate and me. If I had, then I might’ve noticed the chill that slid down my spine and the butterfly that grew wings and

took off in my chest. Even his scent was lost to me, carried away by the wind and swallowed by the forest.

“Lola.”

One word and my head snapped up, craning to face where the deep, melodious voice had come from.

The dark, festering thing taking over my soul crooned at the sight of him.

Mine. Mine. Mine.

The people standing by his side didn't matter. They were faceless, invisible when standing next to him. His eyes glowed like bars of pure gold, eyes ripped open and bearing every broken, shredded piece of his soul. With messy hair and a body of rippling muscles covered in a lifetime of scars, my mate stood tall. 1

He didn't look at Rowena, didn't admire the craftsmanship of my work. The claws embedded in my soul tried to pull my attention away from him, but he was so beautifully broken that I couldn't help but stare.

“Asher.” I said in a voice that wasn't completely my own.

“Baby, come here. Come back to me.” His voice was honey, thick and sweet in all the right ways. It latched onto me as deeply as the dark magic I channeled, only it brought a warmth that my cold soul desperately needed.

I glanced at Rowena, confused because shouldn't he be happy for me? Shouldn't he be encouraging me to finish this?

“Don't look at her. Look at me, Lola.” Asher purred, eyes hooded and full of longing.

He looked at me differently than the others-than Zeke and Tessa whose expressions held outright fear.

Differently than the brunette girl who had tears streaming down her face, and the two muscular guys, one blonde and the other with dark, curly hair, who stared with open mouths and mournful eyes.

Asher looked at me with an emotion that was blistering hot, unwavering in the face of what I'd done. There was a small piece of me that recognized it as love, and it was that piece that brought me back.

“That's it, baby.” Asher said softly, inching closer.

I watched every step he took, watched how there was no fear or reluctance in his steps, only a certainty I wished I had. He reached out with calloused hands, wrapping them around my own. His skin was so hot that it bordered on painful. When had I become so cold? How could I not feel it?

Sparks set my insides aflame, caressing the festering wound in my chest that Sean's death had left behind. With words and touch alone, Asher plucked me out of my freefall, reconstructing that cliff I'd once been teetering on, before placing me back on two feet.

As Asher pulled me into the heat of his chest, wrapping his arms around my torso, the Shadows evaporated, and Rowena's flailing body fell to the ground.