

Alpha Asher by Jane Doe Chapter 161

Read Alpha Asher by Jane Doe Chapter 161 – “She can be charming and nice...until she isn’t.”

No matter how many times I told myself not to take Emilia’s warning to heart, her words played on repeat in my head.

The drive to Rowena and Cordelia’s wasn’t nearly long enough to sort through everything I’d learned. Not only that, but I was no closer to identifying the sickening sense of foreboding that clung to my soul like a noxious gas than I was to discovering how Lars was connected to all of this.

I had no choice but to force what I’d learned about Cassidy to the deepest reaches of my mind. After all, Asher had said she didn’t handle embarrassment well. It didn’t excuse her obvious vendetta against Emilia, but I had bigger fish to fry at the moment.

One of those fish happened to be standing in the kitchen of the house I’d soon be wielding magic in.

“Dad?” I frowned, pausing within the doorway as I spotted his bulky figure hovering over grandma in the kitchen. “What are you doing here?”

“He’s about to find himself on his a*s if he doesn’t stop hovering over me.” Grandma grumbled, gripping a plastic bowl in her hands.

She shuffled to the left a few feet, to a clear patch of countertop that wasn’t littered in flour, sugar, and other various baking ingredients. Dad’s movements mirrored hers, his hand stroking the length of his newly trimmed beard. Grandma began mixing the contents of the bowl furiously, her arm moving so fast I worried for Dad’s safety as he hovered too close.

“Your grandma is practicing her magic.” Rowena’s voice was as warm as her laughter as it trickled from upstairs. She appeared seconds later, sweeping down the steps in a flowing skirt that reached her ankles. When she spotted grandma’s furious baking and the way dad shadowed her like she was handling unstable chemicals, the tender look on her face dropped. “Oh... well, I wonder how this will turn out. I suppose only time can tell.” She murmured and made a beeline for the kitchen, pausing to turn and call out over her shoulder, “Lola, why don’t you head upstairs and begin with Cordelia while I watch over these two. I’ll call you down shortly for our lesson.”

“Ma, you got a piece of eggshell in there.” Dad’s voice was low, but I’d never mistake its depth.

“Don’t need nobody watching over me...been doing this for thirty-five years and I’ve never needed a babysitter ...” I heard grandma mumble, followed by a light thwack and the sound of my dad grunting.

I found Cordelia upstairs, rummaging through her trunk of ancient looking spell books. The urge to tiptoe closer and sneak a glance over her shoulder was overwhelming, but I managed to keep myself still. From the scowl on Cordelia's face when she turned around, I decided my self-control was a good thing.

"Are you alright, Cordelia?" I asked, unable to keep still for any longer when she swiped a hand over her face. The silvery strands of her hair were falling out of the bun she had it in, and more than once her fingers grazed the amulets around her neck.

"I'll be alright, dear. You have plenty to worry about without adding this old witch to the list." A few of the shadows faded from her eyes, replaced with a comforting smile that appeared to be genuine. Without another word regarding her flustered appearance, she slammed the lid of the trunk shut and gestured to the stack of books sitting at the foot of the four-postered bed. "Today you're going to try your hand at some actual magic."

"Are you sure-" I began to ask, but a loud c***h sounded from downstairs.

The light thud of feet followed, growing faster as the sense of surprise in my chest swelled. As the sound stopped, Rowena's head of auburn hair appeared in the doorway. Her cheeks were rosy and flushed with blood, but she didn't seem too out of sorts.

"Everything's fine. Your grandma is just getting a hold of her magic. It's a bit more...powerful than I anticipated, but not to worry. I'm going to need just a few more minutes though." She said in between light huffs of breath, and even managed a half smile before flitting back down the hall.

"I'm not sure I even want to know what happened..." Cordelia shook her head softly, a hint of that troubled expression appearing within the creases on her face. She turned her attention to where I stood and slipped a book off the top of the pile she constructed. "...but yes, I'm sure. Time is not a luxury you have, I'm afraid. Witches are taught the craft from the time of their birth. They have years to discover their unique type of magic and to hone it. Unfortunately, you do not. We're cutting some corners, which can be dangerous but..."

"My life is already dangerous." I finished for her, letting a wry smile form on my face when she nodded softly. "...alright, lets do this then."

"You think they're alright in there?" I asked Cordelia, shedding the jacket I wore as a warm breeze whipped up around us.

The sun had started its journey across the sky, leaving trails of umber and scarlet that melted into gentle pastels as stars began to pop into existence. Beneath my b**e feet the grass was cold and still damp from this morning's dew.

I barely heard her reply and turned my head in the direction of the sliding glass door. Rowena had herded us outside the moment we stepped downstairs, making sure to avoid the kitchen at all costs.

"They're fine, I'm sure." Cordelia replied, flitting through the book in her hand without meeting my eyes.

Discomfort rose in my throat as I stared at the small kitchen window, waiting to see a flash of grandma's face behind the glass. When I saw nothing, I had no choice but exhale and turn my focus to Cordelia.

"Alright, this is the sigil I want you to do..." She hummed, smoothing out the rigid pages until they finally lay flat. "I'll be standing watch the entire time, so if you need help simply ask, but I would like to see you complete this on your own. It's a relatively basic sigil, so if you do miscalculate the results shouldn't be too severe. You'll find the supplies you need in here..."

An unassuming cardboard box sat in her hands, small in size though I could see numerous candles, oils, and incense within. The scent of sandalwood and dragons blood trickled in through my senses, and I took the box from her hands.

"That's...not comforting at all." I frowned, even though a kernel of excitement bounced around in my stomach.

"No, it's not. Is it?" She replied but gave no further advice as she walked a few feet away and perched herself on the edge of the porch swing where the rest of the books sat.

A scowl painted my face as I scanned the ridiculously small print but was short lived when I spotted the small sigil and its intended use. My eyebrows lifted in surprise, and I turned to the witch that watched me patiently.

"This allows you to see in the dark?" I asked even though the words sat right in front of my face.

"I'm aware wolves already have a keen sense of sight, but you'll notice this is different. I've done it a few times myself and it's an incredible experience." Cordelia replied but gave no further explanation before gesturing to the book in my hands.

"Alright...night vision." I murmured, "...can't be too hard."

The book read like a manual, only the words were twisted and held double meanings that tripled and quadrupled, tangling themselves until I wasn't entirely sure what the results might look like.

I tilted my head and stared up at the moon. The tiny sliver of silver brightened the ever-darkening sky, but its presence meant I'd have to switch things up a bit.

"I see you're noticing this sigil is strongest on a full moon. You will have to compensate by using more of your own energy and magic. The simplest way is to picture it, see its light and magnificence in your mind's eye. Feel it flowing and know that you and you alone are the one to direct it. Let it fill the sigil, but make sure you pay attention to how much energy you're releasing." Cordelia said, giving me an encouraging nod before falling silent.

I skimmed the paragraph about drawing the sigil in oil and rummaged through the box until a small amber bottle fell into my hand. The cinnamon oil was pungent and filled the air with a spiciness that reminded me of grandma's award-winning apple pies. With the small paint brush I found within the box, I began to paint the sigil onto a slat of wood that made up the back porch.

Sean was the artist of the family, starting young with cartoon animations until he graduated with complex figures. I was too heavy handed, too rough to use something as delicate as charcoal or pastels. Even now the oil smeared and dribbled down the wood, but the pattern was still legible and identical to the one in Cordelia's book.

There were two circles, one within the other. The final touch was adding the moon at the center, only it had to reflect the one hanging in the sky. The finished product reminded me of an eye, though the pupil was formed by the small crescent moon I'd painted.

With a shaky breath, I placed my pointer finger at the center of the crescent moon and closed my eyes.

The moment darkness encompassed my vision, I could feel the electrifying presence of magic building in my gut. I hadn't expected it to be so easy to picture its force. Instantly an image formed in my mind, leaving me both startled and nervous. Rather than the crackling golden light I'd imagined my magic looked like, I was surrounded by a dark and impenetrable smog.

The inky smoke circled my feet, pouring from my finger in waves. A powerful warmth hid beneath my skin, and I knew without scouring the depths of my soul that this was the energy I had to work with. With each pulse of magic I fed into the sigil, the warmth would slowly fade.

"Lola, I'm going to ask that you open your eyes..." Cordelia's voice was soft and distant, as though she'd taken several steps backwards.

I did as she asked and tried not to recoil when I saw it—the tendrils of my magic, almost identical to the shadows that hid deep within the forest.

As my concentration was shattered, the wisps of darkness faded and scattered, and were replaced by the sound of a deafening pop!

Cordelia gasped and slapped a hand to her heart as the porch light above her head exploded in a shower of sparks. At the same time, the lights glowing from within the house burst, blackening each window and plunging us all into darkness.