His Salvation

by Sallsmum

Summary

Alec Lightwood had just gone through the worst year of his life. After losing both parents in an accident, he made things ten times worse after one drunken night with his best friend Jace. He needed a change and picked the quietest place he could find and bought an old house where he intended to make his life long dream of writing a novel a reality. Little did he know that things weren't as quiet as he had first thought. It wasn't until he had bought the place that he learned of it's sad past and of it's previous owner, Magnus Bane. It seemed that he and Magnus shared a troubled history where love was concerned and that misery loved company and even the veil between one life and the next was no barrier for two troubled souls. But finding love would mean risking losing it as well. Did Alec have the strength to do that again?
Alec Lightwood sat in his car out the front of the large ramshackle house that had just became his. Well, it would be when the real estate lady came with the keys and the final papers. Rain hammered the roof and blurred his view of his new home. He couldn’t help thinking about what his parents would have said if they had been there.

“Alexander Lightwood, are you crazy? What were you thinking buying this old place out in the middle of nowhere? You’ll be running back to the city in the first six months, you just wait and see.”

He could even see his mother Maryse, as if she were sitting in the passenger side seat across from him, looking at the house and shaking her head. His father, Robert, would be in the backseat, a hand patting him on the shoulder.

“Good for you, son. I bet you’ll do a great job fixing the place up. It’ll be home in no time.”

Alec absently put a hand up to his shoulder; he could almost feel the comforting touch on it. But the only thing he felt was the slightly damp material of his t shirt.

His dad had always been like that. More the follow your dreams type than his more practically minded mother. She had been the captain of their ship while Robert had been more of the tour guide, enthusiastically pointing out points of interest as they went along. God, he missed them. He leaned his head back against the seat, a single tear falling from his eye.

He scrubbed it away, angrily, mad for allowing himself to be like this twelve months after the accident that had robbed him of his beloved parents. He had thought the gaping hole that had been torn in his soul that day would have been healed by now, but it seemed that some wounds never really do. They just give the illusion of being alright until something has them tearing open again; a memory, a photograph, a piece of jewellery, and unguarded moment.

The sound of another car had Alec sitting up looking in the rear-view mirror. It was the realtor, finally. He watched as large black umbrella bloomed from the open door of the car and then the small shadowy figure of Dot Rollins emerged after it.

Alec opened the car door and then made a B line for the front porch of the house. He was wiping the rain from his face with the front of his shirt, hoping to hide any sign of his when Dot joined him after she tip toed through the puddles on the front path.

“Phew! It’s really coming down out there.” She said, smiling up at Alec.

She folded the dripping umbrella and leaned it against the faded wooden wall. She carried a folder in one arm and opened it up, extracting a stapled collection of papers and a pen.

“Here we re, a few delft swipes of a pen and she’s all yours.” Dot said, smiling at him.

She handed him the pen and the open folder and Alec signed off on the next chapter of his life.

“Fabulous! Congratulations. I’m sure you’ll be very happy here. I always thought this place was waiting for someone special to own it and love it the way it should be. I bet it comes up a treat.” She smiled at him and then gave a satisfied sigh. “Well, I’m sure you’ll want to start introducing yourself to your new home so I’ll leave you to it. Any questions or problems with the place just let me know. I’m only ever a phone call away.”
Dot bent down and retrieved her umbrella and then after opening it out, she tackled the slippery steps and flooded front path once more to her car.

“Thanks, Dot.” Alec called out as she climbed in and pulled the door closed.

He watched until she had backed out of the drive way and headed back to the dryer confines of her office.

Alec fished the keys out of the folder and after taking a breath, unlocked the front door. He knew it was silly but he had always imagined that unlocking the door to his very first home would have been a little bit more of an experience. He hadn’t expected a ticker tape parade or anything like that, but he had always thought it would be with his parents and maybe, just maybe, someone special by his side to enjoy the moment with him.

And who did you have in mind for that job, hmm? Jace?

He frowned and tried to rid his mind of the thought. Of course, it hadn’t been Jace. He was his best friend, nothing more.

But you wanted him to be more, didn’t you?

He almost yelled the words shut up out loud but he bit his tongue and ought harder to rid himself of the unwanted thoughts.

The first key he tried didn’t seem to work so he tried the next one and it slid into the lock. He turned the cold metal in his fingers and with a small scream of protest, the old lock gave way and he felt the release of it in his hand.

He turned the knob on the door and pushed it open, stepping inside. He had only seen the place once before now and as he peered into the gloomy room, trying to adjust his eyes to the sudden change of light, nothing seemed to of changed. Not that he had expected it to. The house had been sold to him fully furnished and while he had found the contents to be quite old fashioned and a bit too quaint for his liking, he’d had no wish to replace it with his parents belongings either. That would have been too painful. He hadn’t wanted to come out each day and sat at the kitchen table to eat breakfast and think, yeah, this was the chair Dad always sat in cause it has that L shaped scratch on it, or sit in a strange living room in a chair that he could remember his mother sitting in, her legs bend underneath her and a book in her hand. That soft smile she got on her face when she got absorbed in the words on the pages.

He walked over to the windows and opened the heavy curtains, letting the weak watery light to fill the room. Dust floated in the air as he looked about him. The place had that musty shut up smell about it, the damp weather not helping. He looked towards the slightly yellowed ceiling and saw no signs of water damage but then again, there was another floor above him. He began to make mental notes about what would need to be done. And it was shaping up to be quite a list.

Apparently, the plumbing had been updated a few years ago when the last tenant had vacated so he knew that wasn’t going to be a problem but he was unsure about the electrical wiring.

The walls had been papered in a hideous floral at some stage so that would be one of the first things on the list. Getting rid of a lot of the useless little Knick knacks around the place would be too. Alec didn’t mind little touches of whimsy but he didn’t want to feel like he was living in his grandparent’s house either. Some of the old paintings he would keep just to keep in touch with the age of the house but most of them would be discarded too.

The old sofa had been covered in old drop clothes and he pulled them off, sending clouds of stale
dust into the air once more. He walked around to the front of the large couch and gave it an experimental push with his hand on the seat. It was spongy but didn’t seem too bad. There was a large side board, the home for most of the condemned ornaments, that held various pieces of mismatched china that would probably make a half decent TV stand when cleared out. Alec imagined turning the overstuffed couches around to face that wall and nodded his head. Yep, sounded like a good idea. It would probably mean getting in an electrician to put new cabling in but he wanted the all that checked out anyway. There were a couple of small end tables that he wanted to keep as well. The floors looked in reasonable order, considering their age and apart from a few scuffs and worn marks, he was happy to leave them be for now.

He walked past the stairway and into the small dining area and saw the highly polished table with its six matching chairs. He would definitely be keeping that. Once again, the walls were covered in the same gaudy wall paper as the living room so that would be coming down as well.

Alec made his way out to the small eat in kitchen and cringed at the bright green cabinet doors and yellow walls. This must have been someone’s idea of bright and cheerful but to Alec it was more dayglow and screaming. Yep, definitely a repaint in here. The stove looked in reasonable condition and the fridge although old appeared to be working by the way it hummed against the wall. The Laundry was off that and although tiny, it held a washer and a stainless-steel tub. Alec went back through the house towards the stairs, taking note of the creaking boards under his feet. It was something he was going to have to get used to if he wanted to live in an old house. His parent’s place had been a condo so he was used to quiet as he walked.

The climbed the stairs, nearly each one giving a squeak of protest. He went into the first bedroom, the larger of the two and opened the drapes. The room was dominated with a high brass bed that looked at least queen sized. There was a set of tall drawers opposite the foot and a large double door wardrobe on the same wall. The room had been painted a pleasant restful blue and although it looked a little tired, Alec didn’t think he needed to worry about changing it anytime soon. A high backed upholstered chair in a deep grey fabric at in the corner near the large double window. It looked the perfect place to sit and get lost in a good book; Alec gave a soft chuff of a laugh. Now he sounded like his mother.

He went back out and to the smaller bedroom that he had intended to use as a work room. The only thing in here was an old chest of drawers so it wouldn’t take much to turn it into the room he wanted to write in. He had kept his father’s old desk, more for practicalities sake than anything else, and he could just see it facing the window, the sun coming in brightening the room as he sat in front of the laptop screen, working on the novel that he intended to write. It had been plaguing him for years now but he just never seemed to of gotten the time before; he had been too wrapped up in his work at the paper. He had been a feature writer, one of the youngest at twenty-six, and had travelled quite a bit for the sake of his craft.

When he was home, there was always things to catch up on, friends, family, laundry, socialising. If there was a silver lining to this tragic event in his life, it had shown him that life was too fleeting not to do the things that you wanted to the most. His decision to leave a perfectly good job, which he had loved, by the way, and the solid group of friends he’d spent his precious spare time with, had been a part of that realisation.

He had tried to go back to it all after the funeral but nothing seemed to fit right anymore. It was like trying to wear a favourite sweater that he’d worn for years but all of a sudden it had shrunk in the wash and instead of offering comfort, it now felt constricting and wrong. And after what had happened with him and Jace, he needed to make a break for it. New surroundings, new perspective. A new life.
Alec gave the room a final look over and then headed for the bathroom across the hall. It was small and needed a good clean but other than that was okay. He looked towards the second flight of stairs that led to the attic but decided to leave his exploration of that for another day. The truck with his few meagre belongings was going to be arriving soon and he needed to make sure that here was enough room to get that desk in the door and up the stairs.

He headed back down to the living room and started moving the small end table and an old standard lamp out of the way to clear the path for the movers. He looked over at the cluttered side board and decided to clear it out so that the wide screen TV could be sat directly onto it, even though there wouldn’t be a way to hook it up today. He was wondering what to do with all the things that cluttered the top and the old china that was inside it and then remembered that he had two boxes on the back seat of his car that held a few of his personal things from his old room. He went back outside and, hunching his shoulders against the still falling rain, grabbed them from the car and brought them inside. He took them straight up stairs and put them on the bare mattress on the bed.

A life summed up in a few objects; a framed photo taken on his graduation day with his parents standing either side of him, beaming proudly, his framed diploma in journalism, a ratty old teddy bear that had been with him all his life and his mother’s jewellery box which contained both their wedding rings and the few pendants and bracelets that he knew his mother would want him to keep. The other box contained books. They were his absolute favourite and where he had no trouble getting rid others that had filled his shelves in the condo, he refused to be without these. He left them laying on the bed and took the two empty boxes back downstairs.

By the time he had cleared the top of the side board and stacked the china carefully into the boxes he heard the sound of the mover’s truck pulling into the drive.

It didn’t take them long to bring in the desk and the TV, DVD player and his miniature juke box that he listened to music through, along with the boxes of linen, towels and things for the kitchen and they were gone within half an hour.

Alec looked around him and let out a breath. This was it. He was home. He took out his phone and saw that it was mid-afternoon. As if to remind him of the fact that he’d missed lunch, his stomach gave a growl and knowing that there was going to be nothing here, Alec decided that a trip into town was called for. He hoped that there was some kind of fast food that he could grab without having to go to a supermarket and cook something. He found his keys and headed into the rain again.

The main street of the small town that was about twenty minutes from his house was only three blocks in length so it didn’t take long to find a pizza place about the middle of the second block.

He parked the car and hunching his shoulders and putting his head down, he headed for the shop. Just as he got to the door, he felt his body collide with someone. He looked up, water dripping from his wet dark hair and saw an elderly woman standing before him. Damn, now he felt really bad for not watching where he was going.

“I’m really sorry, are you alright?” He asked her.

She was rather diminutive in stature, barely coming up to Alec’s chest. Her hair was thick and dark grey, traces of its original black still threaded through it. Her skin was a deep ebony and in spite of her obvious age, was still quite smooth across her cheeks and forehead. She wore dark sunglasses and Alec wondered why she would need them on such a dreary day. She leaned heavily on a carved walking stick that had been made from a deep red wood. She turned her face up towards him and smiled.
“It’s you, isn’t it?” She said, her voice deep and steady.

Alec frowned and looked around. Maybe she was expecting someone else.

“Ah, no ma’am, I don’t live here, well what I mean is that I’ve only just moved here, today …” He said but she held up one knotted finger to silence him.

“No, it’s you. I know it is. You’ve finally come, after all these years. I’m so glad. He will get his peace now.” She said nodding her head and smiling.

Alec was completely lost. He had no idea what she was talking about and he looked around for any sign of assistance but there was no one.

“I think you might have me confused with someone else, ma’am.” He said.

“Oh no, I know who you are. It’s alright, young man, you’ll work it out in time. Welcome, welcome.”

She reached out a hand and gave him a motherly pat on his arm before she started to shuffle off up the damp street. Alec opened his mouth to say something but he had no idea what he should say. With a quizzical look, he watched the small shuffling figure as she moved up the street before shaking his head and entering the store.

Pappa’s Pizzas turned out to be a small restaurant. A long serving counter ran down one side of the narrow space and a row of red and white checked tables ran down the other. The place was empty apart from a finely built red headed girl that was behind the counter.

“Hi, can I help you?” She asked pleasantly.

“Alec looked at the chalk board above the counter and read the selections on offer.

“Yeah, can I get a large supreme pizza thanks.” He told her and she nodded her head, writing out the order on a pad.

“No problem, it’ll be a bout ten minutes, have a seat.” She said and she took the order out to the kitchen.

Alec took a seat at one of the tables. The girl returned and leaned back against the bench behind her, arms folded across her chest.

“So, are you just travelling through?” She asked him.

“No, actually I just moved here.”

She gave a small chuckle.

“Geez, of all the places you could have gone, what made you pick this place?”

“I just needed a change and I liked the peace and quiet.”

“Yeah, lucky for you we have that in spades here. So are you renting or..?”

“No, I actually bought a house just out of town.”

The girl frowned for a moment then her large eyes went wide and she looked at him in surprise.

“Oh my God, don’t tell me you’re the one who bought the old Bane place out on Hunter’s Road?”
She said, crossing over to lean over the front counter.

“Ah, I don’t know anything about any Banes but yeah I guess so.”

“Wow, man, good for you. That place has been empty forever. I bet Dot did a happy dance when you said you’d buy it. And there isn’t any Banes, plural, there was only ever one. Didn’t she tell you all this?”

Alec shook his head and felt the hairs in the back of his back starting to prickle. So, what was going on here? What was going on with his house that he should know about?
“See, your place was owned about a hundred years ago by this guy called Magnus Bane. He liked it quiet too, so you have that in common. Only his reasons were because he liked guys. He kept it on the down low pretty well until he met this one guy, ah, I think his name was Elias. Apparently, the rumour has it that he fell madly in love with him and got a bit sloppy and the town found out about it. They ran poor old Elias out of town on a rail and Magnus became the town shut in. He never got over it and supposedly died of a broken heart out there in your house. Bet ya didn’t expect to hear that about the place.” The girl told him.

Alec felt a shiver run through him. Not so much from what he had just been told about what had happened in the house but from the reasons behind the occurrence. It hit a little too close to home for his liking. Jesus, what were the odds of him buying a house that was once owned by a gay guy that sounded just as deeply closeted as he was.

“Alec Lightwood. Hey, ah, there was an old lady coming out the door when I got here, do you know...?” He started to ask her but Clary nodded her head sagely.

“Yeah, That’s old Cat. Catarina Loss. She comes in here every Saturday for a slice of chicken and cheese pizza, ha, you could set your watch by her. She’s a bit out there but she’s a nice lady.”

“Yeah, I almost ran right into her. She was talking like she knew me somehow but I’ve never been here before. Maybe I remind her of someone she knows.”

“Ha, yeah, that sounds like something she’d say. She’s sorta the town weirdo but she’s harmless enough, I wouldn’t worry about what she says too much. And I don’t know how she would remind you of anyone. She’s as blind as a bat. Can’t see a thing pretty much. Maybe it was your voice.” Clary said, giving him a wink and a cheeky smile.

Oh boy, don’t even go there, Clary, he thought.

“Yeah, maybe. I’ll probably see you around, thanks for the pizza and the heads up about the house.” He said, returning her smile, hoping it looked friendlier than the one she gave him.

“No problem. At least you’ll know what those weird noises are in the middle of the night when you hear them. Just old Magnus Bane walking around.” She laughed.

Alec gave a half-hearted chuckle and headed for the door.

All the way back home, he found himself mulling over what Clary had told him. He tried to imagine what things must have been like back then for someone to be attracted to people of their own sex. To be treated like there was something wrong with you and frightened to even look at another man that way must have been horrible. And the thought of actually finding someone and have to keep it a secret must have been agony. He wondered what had happened between him and Elias and who had outed them to the rest of the population. He found himself thinking about how bad it must have been to of having the man you loved ripped from your arms like that and then
condemned yourself for it.

It was one of his biggest regrets when his parents had died that he hadn’t had the courage to come out to them. He had known he was gay from a very young age but he’d kept his feelings to himself. High school had been the start of the most frustrating time of his life because it was then that he had met Jace.

It still astounded him that they ever became the hard and fast friends that they had been; Jace was the captain of the basketball team and a real jock while Alec had been one of the biggest nerds in the school. Their friendship had blossomed through the tutoring sessions that Alec had given Jace. He had been failing English and maths and had been told that if his grades slipped any further than he’d be taken off the team. As far as the coach was concerned, that just wasn’t an option; Jace was the best and brightest player they had and they had won more championships with him on the team than any other year.

He had come to Alec and asked him to give his star player a helping hand. Alec really hadn’t wanted to but the guy through in the sweetener that if he did, Alec’s lack of enthusiasm and prowess when it came to anything sport related might just be over looked, somewhat. So, it seemed that they were destined to be two wrongs trying to make a right.

They had met a couple of times a week in the library either at lunch times or before or after school, depending on Jace’s training schedule. Alec was surprised by how smart he actually was. It wasn’t that he’d been failing because he couldn’t do the work, it was simply a case of his sport being more of a priority. Over the first few weeks, they fell into an easy routine with each other and soon became friends. Jace invited him to his basketball games and while he felt like a fish out of water at them, Alec still went along to cheer enthusiastically with rest of the crowd. But while their friendship grew so did other feelings. Alec started to catch himself watching the tall solidly built boy when he knew he wasn’t looking. The sassy blonde hair, full pink lips, broad shoulders narrow waist and God help him, the sexiest butt he’d seen ever was really starting to do a number on him.

He knew Jace was as straight as they came so there wasn’t a hope in hell of anything more than being pals but try as he might, Alec found his attraction to him growing just as steadily as their friendship. He still didn’t know how the heck he hid it as well as he did; probably had something to do with the fact that Jace was all about what was right in front of him. He rarely thought very far in advance or too deeply about anything that wasn’t basketball related. Perfect for Alec but a sweet form of torture at the same time.

By the time they graduated, Alec had completely mastered the art. There had been other opportunities to be with other guys. There had been a few opportunities at some of the social gatherings Jace had dragged him to but Alec just couldn’t allow himself to go there. Being in a relationship with another guy meant admitting that he was gay and that meant coming out to his parents and to Jace and he was too scared to do either. So, he was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

When they had been applying for colleges, as crazy as it sounded and as much as Alec would miss his friend terribly, he half hoped that Jace would get accepted into a different one from him but fate was a cruel mistress and when he was accepted into his first choice, one that Jace had applied for as well, he couldn’t believe that Jace had been accepted into the same one, a full ride on the back of a sports scholarship. Jace really wanted to play professional basketball but he was smart enough to aim for a backup career so he decided on sports physiotherapy. Alec was studying journalism.

College had been just as hard as high school to hide his feelings from him but at least their studies kept them busy and they didn’t see each other quite as much as they had. Another conundrum from where Alec sat. He felt like he spent half his time wanting to be with Jace and then when he was with him, hating the frustration and almost physical pain it caused him.
The worst times was when they were out somewhere and Jace had been drinking and got soppy with him. It didn’t happen very often, thank God, but when it did it was agony. Jace hanging off him, one arm around his shoulders, beer bottle in hand, drawling about how if it hadn’t been for him, he would never have gotten here and then how much he appreciated his friendship. Each word and touch felt like bullets going into his heart and then he’d dig the knife in and give it a twist by saying, “I love you, man.” In a teary-eyed drawl. Alec did his best to brush it all off, telling himself it didn’t mean anything and that it was the alcohol talking. But it didn’t stop it from hurting any less.

Jace always gave him a hard time for not drinking but he was terrified that if he let go and got drunk, everything he had been bottling up for years would come spilling out, and the merest possibility of that happening was just too horrifying to think about.

But that’s exactly what had happened twelve months ago. It was the night after his parent’s funeral and Jace had flown in for it and had been staying at the condo with him to help him sort things out. After they had graduated college, Jace had pursued his sporting career while Alec had gotten a starting position at one of the bigger papers. They both missed their close friendship, Jace had no idea how much from Alec’s point of view, but they kept in touch as much as they could.

Alec’s attraction to his best friend slowly died down from a rolling boil to a simmer but it never went completely cold. Each time they got together for holidays or weekends it flared yet again, making Alec feel like he was stuck in a time loop, replaying high school or college all over again. It didn’t matter that Jace had a string of girlfriends either. His heart and common sense didn’t seem to care.

Jace had been the first person he had called when he got the news of his parent’s accident and he had dropped everything to go to him. He would never forget that first moment he had seen him as he got off the plane. He could feel himself starting to lose it but he managed to hold off until the got to the car. All it had taken was Jace saying, “I’m so sorry, man.” And that did it. He erupted into a flood of tears and howls right there in the carpark of the airport. Jace held him awkwardly over the centre consul of the car, twisting his body sideways to wrap him in his arms. They must have sat there for an hour but Jace never complained once, just letting him cry it out.

He had been a God’s send helping him with all the arrangements and Alec didn’t think he would have been able to get through it all if he hadn’t been there. The funeral was small and intimate, just close friends and work colleagues of Robert and Maryse’s. Jace’s own parents had offered to host the reception afterwards, saving Alec from having to deal with that as well. The weather seemed to of taken in the solemnness of the day and had covered the brilliant sunshine of the previous weeks with dark grey clouds. It had done the right thing and held off with the rain until after they were finished at the cemetery but while Alec was enduring the constant flood of hugs and words of condolence from the funeral goers, the sky finally broke and sheets of cold rain fell from the sky.

When everyone had gone, Jace suggested that something stronger than tea would be a good idea. Alec didn’t know why he had agreed to going to the bar with him. He felt worn out by the day and just wanted to crawl into bed and deal with his misery.

They took a table in the back corner of the dimly lit bar and spent most of the time just sitting. Slowly they lapsed into easy conversation between them, mostly reminiscing about school and college, sharing antidotes and memorable moments. Ale hadn’t really taken any notice of how many drinks he’d had and he didn’t think he’d had all that many but the stresses and sadness of the day and his burning need to just let it all go and take a break from it, had amplified the effects of the drinks he did have.
Somehow, they got onto the subject of Alec’s lack of girlfriends through their educational years and that’s when it happened. With heavy lidded eyes and slack, tear stained face, Alec found himself pouring out the one secret that he had meant to take to his grave. Jace had looked at him wide eyed and in shock but he’d taken it fairly well, considering.

“Why didn’t you ever tell me, man? It wouldn’t have made any difference to me.” He’d told him.

Alec had the crazy feeling that the was about to burst into laughter but he covered it up with a fake belch. It mightn’t have made any difference to Jace, but it would have to him. That’s when Jace started probing him about who his crushes had been. Alec kept trying to deflect the conversation but with each mouthful of beer, he could feel his resistance breaking down.

That’s when he had made the biggest mistake of his life.

“Come on, Alec, spill. What does it matter now anyway? Water under the bridge, eh? Who was it, I know you had to of had the hots for someone.” He said, poking him in the ribs and grinning at him, those baby blue eyes that had been the subject of many a wet dream for Alec over the years twinkling at him.

“You, you big idiot. You were my crush. Still are.” He slurred as he swayed a little on the hard-wooden chair.

Even in the bad lighting, Alec saw his friend go pale. His eyes went wide and his mouth hung open, parting those full pink lips. If he lived to be a thousand years old, Alec would never know why he had taken that moment to for fill the one thing that he had longed for since he was sixteen years old. He half leaned half fell towards his still stunned best friend and kissed him, hard right on those lips. The second he felt them below his own, anything that was left of his rational thinking and common sense flew right out the window. It was like being given a glass of water when you’d been so thirsty, you thought you were going to die. Time seemed to stop for a few minutes and it had taken Jace a few long seconds to realise what had happened before he made a noise in his throat and grabbed Alec by his shoulders and pushed him back.

As if things hadn’t been bad enough, Alec had to open his mouth and say something completely inappropriate.

“Fuck, I’ve wanted to do that for so long now. God, I’m so in love with you.” He had said, the words coming out of him unbidden and thick with need.

Jace had gone from pale white to rose red and he was having trouble meeting his eyes. He looked around the room but everyone else was too absorbed in their own business, something to be thankful for at least.

“I think we should get you home.” Was all he said and he had stood on shaky legs to help Alec to his feet.

For some reason, those words seemed bring reality crashing back around him and a replay of what had just transpired in the last ten minutes went through his beer affected brain.

Jace had managed to drag him out to the front of the bar and hail a cab, one arm around his waist to support his tall swaying frame. Fucking hell, he’d just told his best friend he was gay, then told him he was his crush, THEN kissed him, THEN told him he loved him. Oh God, please let the ground open up and swallow me now, Alec prayed silently. Suddenly his stomach roiled and he bent over in the gutter, his body ridding itself of the poisonous liquid that had caused his utter mortification.
It had been a very quiet trip back to the condo and an even quieter night. Alec had lurched into his bedroom as soon as he got in the door and fell onto his bed, fully clothed and caring less. Jace had offered to give him a hand but he had waived him off. Jesus, he had to spare him something. The guy had just found out that he best friend was in love with him and kissed him on top of that, there was no way he could put Jace or himself through the agony of undressing him. Fuck, that was likely to kill him, and in the state he was in, he was still drunk enough that he didn’t trust himself not to try anything else.
Chapter 3

He had laid in the dark room, damp clothes slowly drying on his cold body, hot silent tears running down the bridge of his nose and soaking into the covers below him. The pain he felt from the sudden loss of his parents was now dulled by the sharper ache of what had just happened. Not only had he lost the two most important people in his life, he was now sure he’d lost the third one.

He woke in the morning, in the same position he’d gone to sleep in. For a few blissful minutes, he had been more concerned with the way his head felt like it was splitting in two and his mouth felt like a stray cat had been using it for a litter box. He groaned and slowly rolled to his back, squinting up at the ceiling. Why the hell did he feel like he’d gone ten rounds with a pro wrestler? Then it all came back to him.

Cause you got drunk, kissed your best friend and told him you loved him, and not in the best buddies’ type of way, dumbass.

Alec had groaned and curled up on his side, squeezing his eyes closed. He had wallowed in his own self-pity for a while longer before he knew that he had to face his friend.

He rose from the bed, very slowly, so that the pounding hangover and his accompanying churning stomach wouldn’t kill him too quickly, and gathered together some clean clothes and made his way to the door, walking as silently as he could. He peered out into the hallway and couldn’t hear anything so he headed across the hall to the bathroom.

The hot water had soothed the aches and pain a little but he really needed some pain killers to finish the job properly. When he had dried off and dressed, making sure he didn’t look at himself in the mirror, he went out to the kitchen.

Jace was sitting at the table reading the paper and drinking a cup of coffee. He looked up as Alec walked in.

“Jesus, man, you look like shit. Here, sit down, let me get you a cup of coffee.” He said, standing up.

Alec gave him a small thankful smile and took a seat. If he hadn’t felt like a bus had hit him he would have refused his offer but his legs felt like they were about to give way at any second so he had little choice. He sat with his head in his hands until Jace returned with a steaming cup and a glass of water and two aspirin. Life saver. Better than he deserved. He refilled his own cup and then sat back down opposite him.

Alec knew he should say something but until his head stopped feeling like it was going to explode, he couldn’t think clearly enough. Eventually, the pills kicked in and Alec knew it was time.

“Listen, Jace, I’m really sorry about last night. I don’t…” But Jace cut him off.

“Hey, don’t sweat it, Alec. It’s fine. I understand. Yesterday was a crappy day and you’re not used to drinking like that. Shit happens, man. It’s fine. Really.” He said, in a near off handed manner.

His response had taken him by surprise but he wasn’t sure exactly what he had expected it to be anyway. Maybe he wasn’t going to run for the hills on him after all. Alec let it go after that, knowing that he really should have talked to him more about it but he didn’t.

By the end of the day, however, it became clear to him that something had shifted between them.
They spoke and did things that they normally would of but Alec felt an underlying strain that hadn’t been there before. He might not have completely ruined things but he’d changed them.

Jace had stayed one more day before he had to go back home, leaving Alec with a large dose of the guilts and a double helping of loss.

After everything had been finalised with his parent’s estate, he had thrown himself back into work, taking every assignment, he could that meant being out of town. He was trying to hide from reality, he knew that but every time he thought about going back to the condo alone, he felt sick. He knew being alone there would give him too much time to think about things, namely him and Jace.

It still felt too raw to deal with so he just kept taking out of town jobs. When he hadn’t heard from Jace in over a couple of months, he decided to call him and test the waters.

Jace had said all the right things; how was he? How was work, what had he been up to, that sort of thing. He’d told him about his work as the new team therapist for one of the big basketball teams down where he was and Alec had congratulated him. He knew the Jace must have had mixed feelings about the job. He had hit the ground running out of college, determined to explore the idea of getting a place in a pro team but just when things had started to look promising he had blown his knee out and even after surgery an intense therapy afterwards, it had never come good. At least his degree had come in handy. He still got to be involved with the game he loved even though he could play it anymore.

As amiable as the conversation had been, it lacked the usual spark their phone calls usually had. In the end, Jace had told him he had to go, and said that he’d call him next time. Next time ended up being six months later.

It was after that, that Alec started to think seriously about leaving it all behind. The idea slowly took root and by the time the first anniversary of his parent’s death had come around, spent alone and in a well of self-pity and angst, he was sure of it.

Alec pulled into the drive way and sat in his car, windscreen wipers beating out a back beat to his thoughts. He looked up at his new home and sighed. He really hoped he had made the right decision about all this. It was all too new yet and the dust hadn’t settled enough. He caught a whiff of the pizza in the box beside him on the front seat and shook his head. Enough melancholy moments for one day, he needed to eat and start unpacking.

He took the box and did a hop, skip and jump to the front porch. He opened the door and went in to sink into the couch with his lunch slash dinner. He ate about half the pizza before he felt restored enough to get started on the boxes. He shoved the rest, box and all, into the empty fridge and decided to start in the bedroom. He wanted to at least put his clothes away and make the bed before it got too late. He dug around in one of the boxes and found where he had packed sheets and then, tucking them under his arm and grabbing the two suitcases, headed for the stairs.

It wasn’t until after he had thrown the sheets onto the mattress and then dumped the suitcases decide them that he had a feeling he was missing something. He stood back frowning, looking down at the bed. No, not so much missing something but forgetting something. Two suitcases, one set of sheets, nope, he didn’t need anything else. What was it that was nagging his conscious?

He looked around and the first thing he saw was his old teddy bear sitting on the chair in the corner. He started to smile, like he had seen an old friend in an unfamiliar place and then realised what it was that he’d missed. He looked around further and saw that the photo now stood on the top of the chest of drawers, along with his mother’s jewellery box. The pile of his favourite books sat beside the bed on the small bedside table. Hang on, hadn’t he left them on the bed when he
took the boxes that they were packed in down stairs before the movers came? He felt a prickle run up the back of his neck and he put a hand up to cover it.

Clary’s story about the previous owner echoed around his mind. Now he was letting his imagination get the better of him. The more logical explanation for this would be was he had done it himself when he came up here to get the boxes. After the stresses of the past few days and the early morning trip to get here before the movers, he was hardly thinking clearly. Being told some silly small town urban legend and running into the town eccentric didn’t help either. Ah, welcome to small town life, Alec Lightwood, better get used to it.

He gave his head a shake to clear it and got on with the task at hand. It didn’t take him long to hand shirts and stash clothes in the drawers. Alec had never had a great interest in clothes, only keeping the bare minimum for work, home and socialising. He looked at his dress shirts and pants that he had used for his job and wondered if he’d ever get to wear them again. He certainly didn’t need them to write the novel he intended to here. He was going to need some old things if he was going to attempt to do as much of the renovations himself as he could. He’d never done anything remotely like it before but hey, how hard could it be to strip old wall paper and paint some walls?

He put his shoes in the bottom of the wardrobe and closed the door. He gathered his toiletries and took them across the hall to the bathroom and put them in the mirrored shaving cabinet above the sink. He caught a glimpse of himself in the glass.

Tossed black hair that never looked brushed, strong featured face with large hazel eyes, straight nose and wide set mouth. Strong jaw, covered in two day’s growth and pale skin. Too pale, really, this past year had taken its toll on him. He’d lost weight, he knew that and he hated the dark smudges under his eyes as well. But all that was going to change now. He was going to fill his days with good old fashioned hard work and start getting a good night’s sleep. There would be no traffic noises or street lights to disturb him out here. Besides, by the time he wore out his mind with writing and his body with the physical work on the house, he should be too exhausted to let any unwanted thought disturb his sleep. That was the plan, anyway.

He went back to his bedroom and closed the suitcases and lifted the first one up on top of the wardrobe. He really should put them in the attic but he hadn’t checked that out yet so this would have to do. He heaved up the case and went to slide it to the back but there was something stopping it from going right back against the wall. Alec frowned and lifted the case back down and then ran his hand around the top of the wardrobe. Stretching as far as he could reach on his tip toes, his fingers brushed against something hard. He strained his arm as far as he could get to reach the centre of the top and his hand closed around a hard rectangular object. He hooked his fingers on the end and dragged it closer to the side before reaching up with his other hand and taking it down.

It was a small wooden box, covered in years of dust and dirt. He blew across the lid, watching the grey cloud of dust float into the air. There was something carved on it but the grime of many years was persistent in not wanting to reveal its secrets. He brushed his hand across the top, wiping the worst of it from the wood. The carving was of two hearts, linked side by side with an initial in each one. ‘M’ and an ‘E’ in a stylised script. Why did those two letters ring a bell to him? He wiped his hand on his jeans and then lifted the lid.

There were only three objects inside the red velvet lined interior. One was a small yellowed rolled up piece of paper that was tied with a thin red ribbon. The next was what appeared to be a small lock of dark hair, also tied with the same ribbon as the paper and they both sat on what looked like a grey looking piece of paper. Alec went over to the bed and sat down. He looked up into the room, feeling like he was invading someone’s privacy but of course, there was no one else there and the previous tenants were long gone. But this looked like it had been up there much longer
than that. Hey, finders keepers, right? He owned the house, and it had been sold to him complete with contents, this was contents. So therefore, his.

He took the rolled paper and the fine strands of hair out and laid them on the bed beside the box before gently picking up the discoloured paper. When he touched it, however, he realised that it was thicker than that, more like thin cardboard. He turned it over. Oh my God, it was a photograph. A very old, faded photograph. He held it up into the fading light of the room and saw that it was of two very well dressed young men. One had on a top hat and a high necked white shirt and black bow tie. He was dressed in a tightly fitting waistcoat and a close-cropped jacket with matching pants. His face was very serious and his small mouth was set in a straight line. It was hard to get a really good gauge of what he looked like because of the condition of the photo and the distance of which it had been taken. But for some reason, his eyes stood out to Alec. He found himself running a finger over the surface. They were beautiful. Dark irises that hid the pupils and gently sloping lids, each outer corner turned up slightly. Mesmerising.

Alec felt a shiver run down his spine and he stretched into it. He took in a breath and shook his head. Argh! Creepy. The other man was planer looking but appeared to have a darker skin tone. He was similarly dressed minus the top had. His head covered in very closed cropped dark hair. As Alec looked at the picture, he saw something that he hadn’t seen the first time. They were holding hands. Holy shit! They were actually holding hands. Then it hit him. M and E; Magnus and Elias. Wow. So, this was the mysterious original owner of his house. And his forbidden boyfriend. Oh, the irony of it. What were the odds of him finding a house once owned by a gay man who had been in a forbidden relationship? Ha! It was crazy.

“Well, Magnus, looks like we both know a thing or two about heart break, eh?” Alec said, giving the photograph a final look before he placed it back in the box, this time, face up. He picked up the small bundle of hair and ran it through his fingers. He wondered if this was Elias’. A parting gift to Magnus to remember him by when they had been forced to separate. It was fascinating to think that after all this time, the strands remained their original colour. A small piece of a long gone human being, forever frozen in time, tied with a ribbon. He put it back in the box also and then picked up the rolled piece of paper. Did he dare disturb it any further than he had? He was worried that if he undid the tie the fragile looking paper would fall apart. He took the end of the ribbon tentatively in his fingers and pulled it very gently, testing it’s resistance. It came undone and left only a loose knot. As carefully as he could, Alec pulled it apart and the rolled paper stayed in the same tight coil. Okay, this was going to be the tricky bit.

He laid the small scroll on the bed and as carefully as he could, started to unroll it. Somehow the paper held and he saw that something had been written on it in an old-fashioned hand.

Your world will become his night,
In his heart, you will find your light.
Unlock his soul and give him peace,
His salvation will be your release.

What the hell…?
Alec frowned and read it again. Nope, didn’t help. Still didn’t make a lot of sense to him. Maybe it had been a favourite quote of theirs or something. He sat there puzzling over the odd little collection and every odder words before he realised that it was growing darker in the room. He gave a shrug and then let the paper reroll on its own before retying the ribbon and placing it back into the box with the other things. He got up and went to put the box back where he found it but something made him pause and then he laid it on the top of the chest of drawers instead. Maybe he’d give it some more thought later.
He finished making the bed and tried to concentrate on the rest of the unpacking but somehow his thoughts kept returning to the small box now sitting in his bedroom. It was almost as if it was calling him. Well, that was just tough luck, he had bigger things to worry about than some faded photograph and obscure bit of poetry.

By the time he had gotten through most of the boxes and then finished off the rest of the pizza, it was around nine in the evening. He looked at the other boxes of kitchen things and he felt his shoulders slump. The early morning wakeup call and the last couple of days were catching up with him and he stifled a yawn. He needed sleep, the rest of the things could wait till tomorrow.

He turned off the lights, all the ones he’d tried seemed to be working, that God, and headed up the stairs. For a few minutes, he thought about having a shower but he really wanted to give it a good clean up before then and he definitely wasn’t in the mood tonight. He turned out the light and striped off his clothes, not bothering with his usual sleep pants and crawled under the cool sheets. He gave a small shiver as he curled up under the cool cotton and wished he’d grabbed the blanket from the box down stairs but now he was in bed and already half asleep he couldn’t be bothered going and getting it. Once his eyes closed, he reasoned, he wouldn’t care if he felt chilly or not.

Alec’s eyes flew open. He rolled to his back, blinking in the darkness. He had no idea what had woken him and he shot out a hand to find his phone to see what the time was. Still night, obviously, or early morning. His fingers found it and he pressed the screen. Twelve fifteen. Shit! He’d only been out for a few hours.

Waking up like this was going to make it hard to get back to sleep. He moved his body under the covers and with a sigh, pulled his arms out and let them fall on to the bed. Hang on, something didn’t feel right. He spread his hands out and moved them over the bedding, expecting to feel the smooth cool sheets. But what he felt was more textured. He sat up further in the bed and looked down. No, What? The lower half of his body and the rest of the bed was now covered in the blanket that he had neglected to bring upstairs with him. He looked around the room, his eyes searching the dark.

And what exactly are you looking for, dumbass? Magnus Bane’s ghost standing there in the corner? Get real, will you?

Alec scrubbed his face in his hands. Either he was more screwed up than he thought or he was that tired that he’d started to sleepwalk. Both possibilities had him worried. Maybe he had needed this change more than he thought. He settled back down and laid in the dark, staring into the inky blackness of the room. It was the change of surroundings, he thought to himself. Strange house, no street lights, peace and quiet, nothing he was used to. He should of expected something like this. Once he started on the house and work on his novel, he’d be better in no time.

The next morning Alec woke up not feeling quite as rested as he’d hoped to. He really needed coffee and a shower. He went to get out of bed and gave a groan, remembering that he hadn’t done any food shopping yet. With a bit of luck, he’d find a supermarket open this morning to get some groceries. First, shower. Another groan of realisation. Haven’t cleaned the bathroom yet. Screw it, he’d have to live with it this once. He collected some clothes together and headed across the hall.

Luckily, there had been hot water because that was something he hadn’t checked on. Got out dripping and then made the discovery that he hadn’t gotten a towel. He stood naked and cold in the small bathroom wondering if this was going to set the tone for the day. He hoped not, he had too much to do for anything else to go wrong.

He went out the door and to the linen cupboard and grabbed a towel and dried off. For some reason, he felt like he was being watched as he towelled off where he stood in the hallway. He
looked around but of course, there was nothing or no one in sight. Now he could add paranoid to his list of complaints. He wrapped the towel around his waist and headed back to the bathroom. Alec bent over to grab his underwear and felt the towel being pulled off him. He spun around, expecting to see someone standing there, looking pleased with themselves for catching him by surprise. But the doorway was empty. Why did the air feel like it did just before a thunder storm all of a sudden?

Ah, duh, it did rain all day yesterday and probably most of last night. While you’re in getting groceries, why don’t you see if they have a two for one sale on shrink visits?

He needed that coffee, fast. Alec pulled the rest of his clothes on, finding himself shooting furtive looks towards the door way. He brushed his teeth and tried to brush his damp hair into some semblance of decency before going in and grabbing shoes. He fished his keys and wallet from his pocket and headed down stairs and out the door.

It looked like it was going to be a good day, the sky a pale blue after yesterday’s grey one. He drove up the main street and saw that there was indeed a supermarket open. Offering up a silent prayer of thanks, he pulled up out front and headed in.

Half an hour later and quite a few dollars lighter, he loaded his purchases into the back of his car and then went in search of a coffee shop. He found one in the third block and judging from the amount of people that were there, it was either really good or the only one in town. He was betting on the latter. He ordered a coffee to go and was about to head back to his car when he saw Clary from the pizza place coming towards him.

“Hey, how’s it going out there? Made friends with Magnus yet?” She laughed.

Alec gave a laugh as well but it was a half-hearted effort. After the few things that had happened lately, Clary’s words cut a little close to the bone.

“No, it’s all good. Listen, you don’t know the name of an electrician, do you? I just want everything checked out before I set my computer up.” Alec asked her.

“Yeah, the only one in town is Simon Lewis. He does good work and he’s a nice guy on top of it so he’ll treat you fairly when it comes to prices. Can I text you his number?” She asked, getting her own phone out of her back pocket.

“Yeah, great.”

Alec gave her his number and she put it into her phone before sending him Simon’s.

“Thanks for that. I really have to get going I have a car full of food, so...” He said.
Chapter 4

“Oh yeah, no worries. Hey good luck with it. See you around, maybe?” She asked hopefully.

Alec knew she was being a bit more than just friendly but he didn’t want to get into the whole sorry, I’m really interested conversation, so he just gave her a small smile and a nod before heading back to his car.

He got back to the house and unlocked the door before hauling the bags inside. Another half an hour passed before he got everything put away and he had dug out the toaster from a box to cook a bagel for breakfast.

While he ate, he got out his phone and looked up the number Clary had given him. Should he call on a Sunday? The guy was probably at home with his wife and kids or something. But Alec thought of having no TV again as well as waiting longer to start work on the book and decided to take a chance. Hopefully, he could come first thing tomorrow and he could get started.

To his great surprise, Simon picked up on the second ring and said he’d be more than pleased to come out right away. Alec gave him directions but Simon said he knew where he was and he’d be there in about a half an hour.

He got off the phone and finished off his breakfast. Things were looking up, finally.

He managed to get the rest of the kitchen stuff unpacked and put away before he heard the car in the drive way. Simon Lewis did not look like an electrician. He looked more like a computer nerd. He had dark curly hair, boyish features and wore dark framed glasses. There wasn’t too much of him but what there was looked pretty good, actually. Alec immediately felt guilty for checking out the poor guy when he hadn’t even introduced himself yet. He grabbed a tool box out of the back of the truck that had his name on the door and headed for the front porch.

“Hey there, Alec, right? I’m Simon, welcome to town.” He said beaming at him and holding out a hand.

Simon had one of those smiles that were infectious and Alec found himself smiling back easily.

He was used to city life where you walked down the street and tried not to make eye contact with anyone. Everyone was so friendly here.

“Yeah, thanks come on in.” he stood aside to let him in and found himself taking in the waft of body wash? Cologne? Aftershave? He wasn’t sure what but it sure smelt good on him.

“Wow, the old girl has stood the test of time pretty well. I’ve never been in here before.” He said looking around.

“Yeah, there’s a few things that I want to do with the place but most of it’s good. I really need a new TV point and cable put in on that wall and get everything set up for my laptop upstairs, is that okay?” He asked him.

“Yeah that’s fine. I’ll get started.” He said, smiling back.

Yep, Simon was definitely nerd hot. Probably had a girlfriend or something though so forget it, Lightwood, he thought to himself. Alec helped him move the large side board out of the way and then he left him to it to tidy the kitchen from his breakfast things. He decided to make a list of the
things he would need to get started on the improvements. He decided that Simon would probably be the best person to ask about where he could get the stuff he needed. Now to ask him without acting like a giddy school boy.

Simon was on his knees, drilling into the wall to get ready to run the cables.

“Ah, do you mind if I ask you something?” Alec said, behind him.

Simon stopped the drill and turned around, sitting on the floor looking up at him. Wow, did this guy ever stop smiling? And did he know how hot he looked from this angle?

Will you stop it? Are you trying to self-destruct? Geez, your gaydar must be busted if you think this guy is anything but straight.

“Yeah sure, what is it?” Simon asked.

“I need some paint and stuff to make a start on this place, is there a hardware store in town or…” Alec started.

“Yeah, there is. They would probably have everything you’d need. Please tell me you’re getting rid of this wallpaper.” Simon said, looking up at the busy floral design.

“Oh yeah, that’s first on the list. I have no idea how to even go about it but that’s what google's for right?” Alec laughed.

“I know a thing or two about wallpaper stripping. I did my own place a few years ago. If you like, I can come with you and help you get the stuff you need. A steamer would be a must on this, God only knows how long it’s been here.” Alec felt himself smile.

Now don’t go reading into anything, genius he’s just being helpful.

Alec reigned in his runaway thoughts and did his best to act normally.

“Thanks, that would be great.” He replied, giving him a sincere smile.

Suddenly, there was a crash that made them both jump. Simon scrambled to his feet and they looked in the direction of the noise. One of the old paintings lay face down on the floor, the frame cracked in the two corners.

‘God, that scared me half to death, I hope that wasn’t valuable.” Simon said, one hand on his chest, in a gesture to still his rapidly beating heart.

Alec walked over to the fallen painting.

“I doubt it. Damn, this was one I wanted to keep too. Oh well, these things happen in an old place, I suppose.”

He carefully picked up the broken frame and the painting itself. He turned it over, hoping that the painting itself might be salvageable. As far as he could tell, the painting hand just fallen flat, face down, there was no glass in the frame but there were large scratches right through the centre of the aged canvas. What the hell? How was that possible? A cold feeling, as if someone had just blown cold air on the back of his neck, had him breaking out in goose flesh.

Explain this one, Sherlock, his inner voice whispered to him conspiratorially.

That was the trouble, he couldn’t. While Simon got back to work, he took the broken frame and
destroyed painting to the bin out the back door. He lifted the lid and put it in, giving it a final look.
He refused to let his imagination run away with him. It was an old house, as he said, it was bound to have its quirks.
By late that afternoon, Simon had managed to get the TV point done as well as the cables and new wiring for the computer upstairs. He had helped Alec push the side board back in place, and even to change the position of the couches. They set up the Tv and the DVD player and made sure it was all working. Alec hit the button on the remote and the screen was filled with a perfect picture.

“Well, if that’s it, I’d better get going. How about I come out here and pick you up tomorrow, that way I won’t have to give you directions or anything, I suck at that.” Simon suggested with a small laugh. The sound was so young and boyish, Alec couldn’t help smiling back at him.

“Yeah, thanks, I’ll see you then.” He said and he followed Simon to the door.

He watched from the porch as he loaded his tools back in the truck and then got behind the wheel, giving a small wave as he backed down the driveway. He was such a nice guy, and the first one in a very long time that he felt the least bit attracted to. That is, if he allowed himself to feel that way. Ever since the whole incident with Jace, Alec had really pushed those types of feelings right to the back of his mind, terrified of making another embarrassing mistake. That’s why he couldn’t allow himself to get carried away over Simon. It didn’t stop his brain from replaying that cute giggle of his though and making him smile to himself. He turned to go back inside and went to walk through the door.

WHAM!

The front door slammed shut right in his face, just touching the tip of his nose. Alec flew back, almost stumbling. He stood in shocked surprise looking at the closed door. That could have been really nasty had he been further into the doorway. He reached out and turned the handle. Locked. He frowned and tried it again, thinking that it must be stuck. But it held fast. Alec gave a growl of frustration and put his hands on his hips. Okay, so this was starting to get annoying. He stalked down the steps and around to the back of the house. He tried the handle on the back door and it swung open, that God, and he walked inside. He went through into the living room and tried the front door from the inside.

The door opened without resistance. What the hell? Alec stood puzzling over the mystery that was the previous locked front door. He looked towards the back one. They were in a similar position, maybe a cross breeze had blown the front one closed and being an old house and seeing as the weather was wet yesterday, maybe the frame had warped a bit.

The trouble with that theory was one; the back door had been closed, so no breeze could get in, two; there was no breeze, the air was completely still today and three; a warped door frame didn’t magically fix itself with in minutes. If it had of been that, then the door wouldn’t of opened as freely as it did just then.
Maybe someone is trying to tell you something.

The possibility had Alec’s nerves on edge again but he refused to give it any more credit than that. He was putting it down to it being an old house and that was that.

He decided to go up and start setting up his desk, so that he could get writing as soon as possible. He took the box that he had packed the office supplies in up with him and headed for the spare room. His Laptop was already on the desk top so he set up a selection of pens, pencils, paper clips and a stapler beside it. He put the printer to one side and hooked it up as well. He put a ream of paper in a drawer and then turned on the laptop, making sure it was working fine. He set up his modem and connected to the internet.
Before he knew it, a couple of hours had passed and it was almost dark. He shut everything down and stretched, deciding to head back down to get something for dinner. He wasn’t a great cook, but he could manage the basics, so he took a tray with a piece of steak out from the fridge along with some vegetables. He almost went for the easier option of a bag of frozen fries but he decided that he really should start eating better. The way things were going, he was going to need all the strength he could get.

After he ate, Alec washed the dishes, no dishwasher out here, and decided to clear the empty boxes from the living and dining room so that as soon as he could, he could get started on the wallpaper. He folded as many as he could and then took them outside to the recycle bin. It was a pleasant evening. The air was warmer than the night before, a hint of the summer just around the corner. He turned back to face the house giving it a look. Somehow, the weather boards had stood the test of time very well, fading to a silvery grey. It was almost like the place was ageing gracefully, like an elegant old lady.

He remembered how Dot had spoken about the place as if it were a person, using the pronoun ‘she’. After the last twenty-four hours and the somewhat strange occurrences, Alec was starting to wonder if she might not be onto something. It was like the house was testing him; seeing if he was worthy of her or not. She hadn’t beaten him yet, but it was early days. It made him wonder what she would pull next. He looked up at the small dark dormer window that would belong to the attic and he froze.

Someone was watching him. It was a man, and he had a small smile on his face. There was something about his eyes that made Alec think he had seen him before but he was so transfixed by the sight of him at all that he was beyond being about to think that clearly.

The first coherent thought he had was there was a complete stranger in his house!

“Hey!” He yelled, and sped up the back steps and inside, grabbing the first ‘weapon’ he could find, which turned out to be a broom.

He tore through the kitchen, his foot almost catching on the leg of a chair, but he saved himself just in time. He bounced off the walls of the stairway and then into the hall, heading for the second set of stairs. He had a fleeting thought that the attic door might be locked but he wasn’t wasting time going back for his keys now.

He took each step two at a time and was glad to see that the door was partly open. He burst through it, flinging it wide and hearing it bang on the wall behind it. It was almost pitch black up here and he searched for a light switch. He found it and flipped it on. The space was reasonably empty, just a few boxes and a couple of old chairs. There were two dormer windows up here, the one overlooking the back yard and the one facing the front. Neither had any mystery men sitting or standing in front of them. He was alone. He was panting hard from his anger fuelled run from the back garden and now he stood in the dusty room, trying to catch his breath and work out what exactly had just happened.

He walked slowly over to the window where he had seen the face about of course there was nothing there. Why would there be? The space was all open, there was nowhere for anyone to hide. A chill ran down his spine. Could he be hiding elsewhere? He gave the attic a final sweeping look and then headed for the door. He turned off the light and pulled the door shut.

When he got back down the stairs, he searched the other rooms but didn’t find anyone lurking or hiding in a wardrobe or anywhere else. He went back down to the ground floor and searched there
but once again, came up empty handed. He stood in the living room, more angry and frustrated than anything else.

Now he was doubting even seeing what he thought he had. He was letting the lack of a good night’s sleep and the questionable happenings of the day get the better of him. But that face looked familiar. Those eyes. It was like they were burnt into his brain. Where…? Then it hit him. The box he had found on top of the wardrobe. The rolled-up note, the piece of hair, the photograph. Magnus. The face he had seen had been Magnus Bane.

Suddenly, his legs refused to carry him anymore. He stumbled to the couch and fell into it. Dear God, was it possible? To add to the confusion, he recalled what Clary had told him and also the encounter with Catarina. He felt a fine sheen of cold sweat cover his skin and immediately felt silly. His conscious was slapping his forehead with the palm of one hand.

Aren’t you a little old to believe in ghost stories?

Yes, he was. But it didn’t seem to stop that inner scared little kid from making his presence known. Ghost stories, haunted houses, what are you, ten years old? Wake up!

He needed a distraction and he needed it quick. He picked up the TV remote control and clicked it on. An old action movie was on. Perfect. He leaned back further into the old couch and tried to ignore his pounding heart and rapid breathing. After about twenty minutes, he could feel himself starting to drift off, and when his head dropped sharply to his chest, he knew it was time for bed and hopefully, a restful night.

He turned everything off, and headed upstairs. He shucked his clothes and then went to get a pair of sleep pants out of the drawer. He took the small brass ring that was the handle in his hand and tugged, expecting it to slide open. But it didn’t. Feeling drowsy, he frowned, and pulled it again this time a little harder. Nope. He let out a frustrated breath and used both hands this time, pulling the small metal ring hard enough that the whole piece of furniture rattled. But the draw didn’t budge. Screw it, he was too tired to deal with this tonight, he’d take a look at it tomorrow.

He padded back to the bed and climbed under the soft sheets and the light blanket and was asleep within minutes.

Light caresses feathered over his upturned cheek, making him smile unconsciously. So soft, so gentle. Fingers played with his hair, running through the thick dark thatch, sending delicious chills shooting through him. The sheet that was pulled up around his shoulder slowly slipped down his arm to his waist, quieter than a whisper. Fingertips ran a trail over his bare skin, making it tingle. God, it felt so nice to be touched like this. A hand, soft but strong, picked his up and held it, running the pad of a thumb over its back. He smiled, and rolled to his back; he felt like purring like a big cat.

He felt the bed beside him shift, as if someone had moved a little out of his way. But in the few seconds before then, he felt the warmth of another body beside him and caught a hint of an earthy scent. It was the briefest amount of time, but it completely filled his nose and he found himself taking in as deep a breath as he could, wanting to fill his senses with it.

A soft deep chuckle came to his ears and that’s when his eyes flew open and he scrambled to sit up in the bed. He blinked rapidly into the dark room, trying to focus his eyes that hadn’t caught up with the rest of his awakened body yet. When they came into focus, he was looking at an empty room. He fought to control his panting breath and pounding heart. What the hell had just happened? He went to grab his phone to see what the time was but it wasn’t there. It was still in his
jeans pocket. He bent over the side of the bed, a little too rapidly and knocked his forehead on the edge of the bedside table, sending stars before his eyes. He gave a yelp of pain and sat up, rubbing his damaged head.

That’s when he heard a noise that for all the world sounded like a muffled snort, as if someone had tried to stifle a laugh. He stilled, eyes darting around in the near blackness. It had sounded like it had come from the corner, where the chair was but when he looked, it was empty as always, save for his ratty old teddy bear. Had good old Ted developed a sense of humour after all these years? Not to mention a voice. Now he was just being stupid.

When he heard nothing further, he bent back to get his phone, this time giving the bedside table full clearance, and fished out his phone. Twelve fifteen. Again. What the heck…? He rubbed his face in his hands and took in a few deep steadying breaths. He threw back the covers and shuffled across the hall to the bathroom. He turned on the light, screwing up his eyes against the sudden brightness and then turned on the tap, splashing his face with the cold water. He looked up into the mirror, peering at his brow. There was a small red mark where it had made contact with the table but nothing to damaging. He just needed to go back to sleep and see if he could fall back into that wonderful dream he’d been having before something had woken him.
Chapter 5

Was it a dream?

Now he was letting his mind run away with him again. Once again, old house, new surroundings, new everything, there was bound to be a transition period till he got used to the place.

He shut off the water and dried his face, before turning off the light and going back to bed. He got in and rolled over, facing the side that had the window. His eyes closed and he took in a deep breath, settled into the softness below him. His arm stretched across the empty side of the bed, as if it were searching for that warmth he had dreamed about a short time ago. That soft sweet touch, that heady exotic scent. His hand bumped against something that had his eyes flying open. He leaned up on his other arm and sat a familiar looking shape resting on the pillow beside him. He tentatively stuck out his hand, feeling it’s surface. Worn, stubbly fur, hard button eyes, thready worn snout. Ted.

He sat up, staring at the innocent looking relic of his childhood like it was some hideous foreign thing. What in the name of God was it doing in his bed? He looked over at the chair in the corner and saw that it was now completely empty. Okay so this was just a little too Five Night’s At Freddies to be anything but creepy. Then another scent filled his nose, different from the one before, one more familiar. Sweet, floral. He looked closer at the bear and saw that there was something wrong with the profile of his shape. He cautiously stuck out a hand and gave the toy an experimental poke with a finger and immediately felt silly for acting this way over a harmless stuffed animal.

Harmless, eh? Then how did it get from the chair to the bed, hmm?

He swallowed hard and touched the object that was laying in the bear’s round tummy. It was soft and cool, and had a stem. A flower. Now the prickles of fear ran down his spine like an electric shock. With a slightly shaking hand, he picked it up and brought it closer. The scent filled his nose. A rose. Even though it was dark, he could tell it was a deep colour, red in all likelihood. Where had…?

He frowned, trying to think of where it may have originated from and it came to him. Out in the garden was the remains of a very overgrown rose garden. He had noticed it the day Dot had shown him around the place the first time but since he’d been moved here, his focus had been on the house itself, not the garden. Obviously, someone had found beauty amid the chaos. As freaked out as he felt, Alec still found himself putting the delicate bloom to his nose and taking in a stronger draught of its sweet perfume. His eyes scanned the inky blackness but as of before, the room remained empty.

He put Ted and the rose on the bedside table beside him and settled back down. Now he was beginning to calm down a little, logic, or sorts, was starting to set in. Whoever had given him the rose didn’t wish him any harm, obviously. A rose bud could hardly be defined as threatening in anyway and giving him his old teddy bear was, you know, kind of sweet.

He laid back down on his pillow again, the scent still wafting around him like a soft breeze.

“Thank you, Magnus.” He whispered quietly in the dark, before his eyes closed once more and he fell back asleep.

He missed the soft reply that came to him in return.
“You are most welcome, Alexander.”

Alec woke to the sound of knocking the next morning. He sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes and thinking that he must be hearing things again but then the sound came again. He looked over at his phone and saw the time. Shit! Simon!

He flew out of bed and dragged on his jeans from the floor and tore down the stairs to open the door. He pulled it open in a rush and caught Simon, hand raised in mid-air, just about to knock again.

“Hey, Geez, I’m really sorry, man. I overslept. Come in while I throw some clothes on. I won’t be long.” He said, a little breathless from his rapid descent to the door.

He saw Simon’s deep brown eyes do a fast intake of his bare upper body and sleep tousled hair and one eye brow went up slightly. The corner of his full lips quirking a little on one side. Hang on, What?

Alec felt colour creeping into his cheeks as Simon stepped inside and he went back up the stairs, trying not to over think what he had just witnessed on the man’s face. He was still half asleep, maybe he was over interpreting.

He grabbed a fresh pair of jeans and a clean t shirt from the drawer and as he closed it, he remembered the issue with the draw the night before. He took the handle in his finger and pulled hard. The draw slid open with no trouble what so ever.

Someone didn’t want their view interrupted last night.

The thought made his face heat all over again and he grabbed socks and his shoes and headed for the bathroom to splash water on his face and brush his teeth and hair. Don’t even go there, he thought to himself as he headed back down to where Simon stood waiting for him.

“Sorry, are we all set?” Alec asked him, pulling on his socks and shoes.

“Yep, let’s go.” Simon replied and they headed of out the door.

They took Simon’s truck into town and to the hardware store that doubled as a rural supply place as well.

It didn’t take Alec long to feel overwhelmed and out of place in the huge store. He was so grateful to have Simon with him; if he had gone there on his own, he probably would have taken on look at it all and turned around and went home.

“So, let’s get the paper steamer organised first and then we can pick paint and stuff, okay?” Simon asked him.

“Yeah, go for it. I have no idea what I’m doing.” Alec said, looking around at the miles of shelves and vast array of products.

Simon gave a chuckle and clapped a hand on his back before heading further into the store. Alec smiled and followed him.

Simon helped him find a wall paper steamer and a tool that looked more like a type of torture device that he assured him would help the paper to come off the walls easier. Then they got a couple of scrapers and some heavy duty cleaner to get the remaining glue from the walls along with two big sponges. Then they headed for the paint department and spend a fair while choosing colours for the living and dining room and then the cabinets and walls for the kitchen.
Alec was finding it hard to keep up with all the new handyman terminology that Simon was teaching him but it was starting to make sense by the time they picked out brushes, rollers and drop cloths.

They headed for the check out and paid for everything. They loaded everything up in the back of Simon’s truck and climbed back into the cab.

“I really appreciate you helping me like this, Simon. There is no way I would have gotten the right stuff if you hadn’t of helped me.” Alec said, turning towards him and smiling.

Simon gave him a megawatt grin back that lit his face.

“Happy to help. Hey, would you like to go get some breakfast? You must be hungry.”

“Yeah, sounds good.” Alec said and Simon started the truck and they headed for the coffee shop.

They parked and went in, taking a seat near the window. They ordered coffee and food and sat talking while they waited.

Alec found Simon really easy to talk to and it wasn’t long before they had relaxed into easy conversation together, laughing and joking as Simon told him about his life in the small town. Apparently, he too had been a refugee of the big bad city. He had moved there about five years ago after a long term relationship and ended and basically being sick of the impersonal lifestyle of the city.

“Now, I think I’ve swung too far the other way. Everyone seems to know what I’ve done even before I’ve done it sometimes.” He laughed softly, loading his fork up with eggs and bacon. “But, they also care too. In the city, you could disappear and no one would care less, here if they don’t see me out and about by seven thirty in the morning, I’m getting phone calls from the neighbours asking me if I’m alright. I got the flu last winter and I had more people coming to my door bringing me food than I’d seen in a year in the city. The holidays are the best. Everyone gets together and celebrates. It’s like a big family party. It’s great, you’ll love it.” He assured him.

“You make it sound great. So, is there anything that’s not great about living here?” Alec asked him. It couldn’t always be like living in a fifties sitcom, surely. Simon nodded as he sipped his coffee.

“Yeah, there’s a few things that can bug ya. I miss the restaurants and things from the city and the theatres and entertainment. They get excited here when a new movie comes to the cinema. My partner and I used to go to all the concerts. I miss that. And while it’s nice to think people actually care about you, it can get a bit much sometimes. When I first came here, I wasn’t in a good place personally. I’d just lost Andrew and things were a bit raw. I sorta kept to myself a bit for the first six months. But then, I started getting involved a bit more and things got easier.

The worst part of it was everyone trying to set me up with every remotely eligible girl in the place. I think they finally got the hint after I kept turning them down.” He said, pushing his glasses further up the bridge of his nose.

Alec let the information sink in. A spark fired up inside of him that he’d tried to keep extinguished. Maybe he hadn’t been barking up the wrong tree after all. Did he dare ask? It was the only subtle way to do it. Against his better judgement, he found the words coming from him before he could talk himself out of them.

“So, was Andrew your partner?”
He hoped that the question didn’t sound like he was prying into an obviously touchy subject. He had no idea what had happened where Andrew was concerned but he could tell it wasn’t anything good.

“Yeah, he was. We’d been together for five years when he died. He had a brain tumour. The last month was really bad. Seeing someone you love go through that is soul destroying. But, I know he wouldn’t want me to be alone for the rest of my life so I’m trying.” He gave Alec a weak smile.

Now he felt really bad. Jesus, and he thought he had problems. He’ just been running away from his embarrassment, Simon had been trying to outrun a broken heart.

“I’m really sorry, Simon. I shouldn’t have asked.” He said and he really meant it.

Simon reached out and took his hand that was laying across the table in his and gave it a squeeze. Alec felt his heart rate ramp up. This was virgin territory for him, literally. He had to fight not to pull his hand away, in spite of his attraction to him.

“No, that’s fine, Alec. It’s been long enough now that I can handle it. Hey, how would you feel about starting to tackle your wall paper? It’d be faster with two people and I don’t have anything on today.” Simon said, straightening up in his chair.

Okay, change of subject. Fine by him.

“Sure, if you want to. I have no idea what I’m doing so I could use all the help I can get.” Alec told him.

“Great, let’s go.” Simon let his hand go and they paid and left.

So, getting years old wall paper off a wall wasn’t as easy as Alec had thought it would be. After they removed all the remaining paintings from the wall and they moved the furniture into the middle of the room and covered it with the drop clothes, Simon set the steamer up and showed him how to perforate the paper with the torture device tool so that the hat water and steam could get into the paper and loosen the glue. That was the theory, anyway.

Within half an hour, they had littered the floor with strips of wet, sticky paper that, in most cases, had to be forced off the wall with the scrapers. It ended up taking them two hours just to do one wall but they had talked and joked around while with worked which made it easier to deal with.

Alec set up his Bluetooth speaker up, well out of the way of all the mess, and put on a playlist from his phone that he hoped would be motivational enough to keep them working. Pretty soon they were both bobbing up and down to the music and singing along together to the music. After they had gotten through the second wall, Alec suggested a break for lunch.

“Sounds great. All I can taste is wet paper and old glue. This crap gets everywhere.” He said, brushing small pieces of paper from his clothes.

He took his glasses off and wiped them on his shirt but that only made them even more smudged. They both laughed and Simon gave up trying to clean them until he could run them under some clean water. Alec went to head for the kitchen but Simon grabbed his arm.

“Wait, you have some paper in your hair. You don’t want to trail this all through the place.”

He took a step closer and reached up a hand to pluck the small piece from his hair.

Alec found himself freezing when he felt his fingers just brushing the strands of his hair. Suddenly,
the room had gone very quiet. He felt fingers threading though the dark tresses and it sent a bolt of electricity straight down his spine. He felt his breath hitch as Simon’s eyes looked into his. They seemed to be almost asking for permission for something, or waiting for him to react somehow. Alec had no idea what he should do, he’d never been in this situation before. Never allowed himself to be.

Simon leaned in slowly, all the while working his fingers down through his hair to the back of his neck. As soon as he felt their touch on his skin, it was like a chain reaction and his skin tingled, radiating out from his neck to every inch of his body. Oh God, what should he do? His tongue darted out to dampen his lips, dried out from nerves.

He saw Simon’s pupils expand and he drew even closer, angling his own full lips towards him. Alec braced for impact heart galloping in his chest and breathing just about non-existent.

In the second before their lips met, the room was suddenly filled with the twangy voice of a song. They both drew back frowning in the direction of the speaker. The volume had been raised as far as it would go and the song was wrong for the playlist that Alec had put on. It was an very old country music melody, whiny guitars and even a violin by the sound of it. The male singer was a complete mystery to Alec, hell, the whole song was. He didn’t have anything like that on his phone! What the hell was going on.

The words to part of the chorus rang out in the room as he kicked his way through the shredded paper clouding around the floor to put an end to the song.

“Your cheatin’ heart,,,,,” The man sang as he reached his phone and he was about to stop the song from going any further but the phone and the speaker went dead.

“Okaaay, that was weird. I have to say, Alec, you have very eclectic taste in music.” Simon said, coming over to where he was.

“Yeah, not that eclectic. I have no idea where that song came from. I hate country music.” He frowned looking at the playlist he had chosen.

There were no new songs added. The mystery music had vanished as quickly as it appeared. His mind struggled to make sense of it. A glitch of some kind maybe? He tried the first song on the playlist again and it started without a problem. He gave a shrug and stopped the song.

Simon was looking over at him from a little way away. Alec wasn’t sure what he should do. There was no reset button to push to get them back to the moment that they were having before his phone decided to take on a mind of its own.

Like Ted did last night? Like the painting? The towel? The rose?

Alec’s subconscious was somehow trying to connect the dots but the whole picture was still unclear. He almost opened his mouth and said something to Simon about what had been going on but hearing the words running through his head, he could only imagine what they would sound like. Hello, crazy, much?

“I’ll get lunch started.” He said, hating the way his voice had gone a little too high to sound normal. And like coward, he retreated into the kitchen.

He started making sandwiches, taking old meat, butter and salad vegetables from the fridge. Simon came in and went to the sink, washing his hands before coming over to stand beside him. Close but a respectful close. It looked like someone knew what they were doing when it came to matters of the heart.
“Can I do something?” He asked, looking at him. Alec kept his eyes on the task of buttering bread.

“Yeah, do you want to slice the tomato and lettuce?”

He passed Simon a cutting board with the produce on it and a knife. From the corner of his eye, he saw Simon give a small smile and start working. The air hung heavy between them and Alec was starting to worry if things were going to start to get weird between them now. It frustrated him to be so inexperienced that he didn’t know how to get passed where they were. He genuinely liked Simon, he thought he was a nice guy and the thought of actually kissing him wasn’t an entirely unpleasant thought to have.
Chapter 6

Jesus, what was wrong with him? Here was a nice guy, cute as hell, willing to put himself out there after a tragic end to a long-term relationship willing to make the first move and he was acting like a scared kid.

But he was scared, the last time he had felt an attraction to someone, an all but misguided one, it had been a disaster. Yes, it had been his own stupid fault for falling for his best friend, and yes he had been under the influence of alcohol and grief when it had happened, but after years of unrequited feelings and even knowing that there would have been no future at all in it, some ridiculously small section of his mind still clung to the long held hope that if he just told Jace how he felt that he would magically change and come running into his arms.

Whatever had given him that totally delusional thought ought of been taken out and buried in a hole somewhere but it hadn’t stopped him from having it and look where it got him. Even being painfully aware of all the facts, and knowing full well he had set himself up for the mother of all disappointments, it still hurt like hell. Not only had he shattered his long-held fantasy but he destroyed a friendship as well at a time when he had needed one the most. The fall out of all this had made him totally gun shy when it came to anything romance related.

“Alec, I hope I wasn’t pushing my luck with you earlier. If I was I’m sorry I just …” Simon started and Alec let out a breath he hadn’t really been aware that he’d been holding. He stopped what he was doing and turned to face him.

“Please don’t apologise. It’s my fault. I’ve never been in a relationship before and I have no idea what I’m doing. I feel like an idiot.” He confessed, his head down. Simon, took his hand.

“Hey, you’re not an idiot. It’s fine. I get it. I just thought that maybe you’d been with someone and they had ended it badly or something. You just gave off that kind of vibe.” Alec looked up at him.

Boy, he was closer than he thought with that. Did he tell Simon about Jace?

“No, not really. It wasn’t the other guy’s fault. It was kind of a big mess actually. My life was a big mess, I suppose I was running away when I came here, but I needed a change. I thought the change in scenery would clear my head but I guess I was wrong.”

“No, I don’t think you were. You’ve only been here a few days, you just need to give it time. I wouldn’t have helped by throwing myself at you either. Another drawback of a small town is having to wade in a very shallow pool where it comes to dating options if your gay. So, excuse me for getting a bit over enthusiastic when I find out that the hot new guy in town is like minded.”

Alec felt colour rising in his cheeks. Yet another symptom of his inexperience. He managed a weak smile. He’d never been given a compliment like that before and he certainly had never thought of himself as being ‘hot’ either.

“it wasn’t your fault, Simon and I wasn’t exactly saying no, either. It’s just I’m kinda messed up at the moment with everything that happened in the city. I don’t think I’d be good for anyone right now.”

“I understand. I’ve been there myself. It’s just time. I don’t want to pry into your personal life but whatever it was that drove you out here, it’s in the past now and if you ever want to talk to anyone
about it, I’m here. I like you Alec, I think you’re a good guy. Worth waiting for.” Simon said, and he smiled at Alec’s dropped eyes and blushing face.

What gave him the courage to do what he did next, alluded him but the next thing he knew he was slowly raising his head and leaning in towards Simon, his lips seeking his. Simon didn’t move, letting him control the moment this time and Alec slowly closed his eyes as he felt the soft brush of his mouth against his. He tingled all over as he felt the other man’s mouth move slowly against his, guiding him in his first proper kiss.

Simon shifted his stance and turned to face Alec more, his hand coming up to gently touch the side of his face, as his lips pressed slightly harder against his.

CRACK!

A loud noise from the living room hand them both pulling back quickly. They looked towards each other before heading into the other room. At first, Alec couldn’t see anything amiss but then when his eyes swept over the wall they had just finished stripping, he saw that there was now a large round hole right in the plaster. Simon had seen it too.

“What the hell…?”

They both walked over to survey the damage. Alec reached out a hand and touched the jagged edge of the gaping hole.

“How the hell does something like that happen? That all looked fine when we finished it.” He said to Simon, who was frowning at it as well. He shook his head, just as puzzled as Alec.

“Dunno. Maybe it was a patch in the plaster that gave way when we took the paper off. Weakened by the steam. That’s just a guess. I have no idea, really. Ha, maybe the old girl didn’t like us stripping her off and took offence.” Simon gave his arm a playful thump and laughed.

Alec gave a chuckle at his joke but there was something that was just a little too close to the truth for him to dismiss it as just a shot at humour.

“Come on, let’s finish those sandwiches and get something to eat. We’ll tackle that other wall today before I go.”

Simon put his hand softly on his shoulder in a more than friendly gesture. Alec nodded and went to follow him to the kitchen but there was a thought that was nagging him. He turned back to the wall and looked at the gaping maw of a hole. He lifted his hand and looking at it, made a fist. Taking in a breath, he slowly moved it to the hole as if he was going to punch it in slow motion. His clenched fist went into the hole and apart from the fact that it was a little smaller, the torn edges of the hole fit perfectly. There were even bumps and grooves where his knuckles were. A chill ran down his spine as the realisation hit him. Magnus. Magnus had done this.

After they ate, they got the rest of the paper off the last living room wall but it didn’t go as smoothly as the others had. The steamer stopped working for some unexplained reason so they were forced to get buckets of hot water and sponges and wet the paper down that way and scrape it off. Simon tripped over one of the buckets that he swore wasn’t in his way before, spilling water everywhere and banging his knee quite hard. With all the soggy shredded paper around their feet and the water on top of that, the clean-up took quite a while.

By the time it was almost dark, they had finally finished the last wall. Simon helped Alec pick up the armfuls of the old paper and put it into garbage bags and sweep the floor before he left. When
he was heading out the door, he leaned in towards Alec to kiss him again. Alec had put his hand on his chest to stop him.

“Simon, I’m really sorry. It’s not that I don’t like you, because I do, it’s just, I think I just need a bit more time to settle in here. But I don’t not want to be friends, can we do that?” He asked him shyly.

A flash of disappointment showed on his face but it was quickly replaced with a smile.

“Of course, we can be friends. I get it. We’ll take it from there and just let things happen on their own. Listen, I can’t come tomorrow, I have a few jobs to go to but I can come and help you tackle the dining room on Wednesday?” He said, in a hopeful tone.

“Yeah that’d be great. I’ll see you then.” Alec said, smiling at him.

Simon said his final goodbyes and then headed for the truck. Alec went in and shut the door, looking around at the chaos that was the living room. His eyes fell on the ‘punched’ wall and he raised his eyes, looking around the ceiling as if he expected to see a Casper style version of the man he had seen in the window of the attic the night before.

He really had wanted to kiss Simon again. He had enjoyed the guiltless kiss and the feeling of his soft full lips on his. But when he had gone to kiss him again when he left, all he could think about was that damn fist sized hole in his wall and he had sudden visions of Simon tripping down the front steps and breaking something or his brakes failing in his truck on the way home. If his crazy half-baked theory about Magnus Bane being behind all the strange happenings then he didn’t want to push his luck.

“Thanks a lot Magnus. Now I’ll have to get that hole fixed. What did you have to go and to a stupid thing like that for?” Alec said into the empty room.

The room stayed silent. What had he expected, some deep creepy voice saying, “because I wanted to and I can”?

“I think I inhaled too much old wall paper glue and steam today.” Alec said, shaking his head and starting to walk to the kitchen.

He was almost in the dining room when the quiet was broken by the starting verse of a familiar song. Alec stopped in his tracks and looked wide eyed towards the speaker and his phone on the table. At least this time it wasn’t a strange song. It was Sam Smith’s I’m not the only one.

“You say, I’m crazy
‘Cause you don’t think I know what you’ve done
But when you call me baby
I know I’m not the only one.

Sam Smith’s distinctive voice filled the room. Okay this was getting weird again. Alec looked around him but he was alone as usual. He grabbed the phone and stopped the music.

“Well okay then. I’m not the only one.” He said, now more angry than scared.

Just what he needed. A possessive ghost. And he hadn’t even come face to face with him yet. A cold breeze blew across the back of his neck, making him shiver.

He made himself dinner and sat and watched TV for a while before he remembered the bags of paper he hadn’t taken out. He got up and grabbed the two big trash bags and took them outside. A breeze had sprung up again and he looked up at the sky to see clouds scudding overhead. He hoped that it wasn’t going to rain again, he needed the walls to dry out so he could start to paint them.
He took a step towards the back steps and then looked up at the dormer attic window but there was no grinning face looking back at him tonight. Perhaps Magnus had realised he was on to him and he wasn’t scared of his presence about the place.

He went back inside and shut the door, deciding that he’d have a shower and go to bed. He turned all the lights off and the TV and climbed the stairs. He would be glad to get the sticky feeling off his skin. It felt tight from the dried glue that covered him.

After the shower and getting dressed, he got into bed and settling down for the night. His arms and shoulders were aching a little from their work today. He had been grateful for all Simon’s help. He couldn’t imagine the mess he would have gotten into if he hadn’t been there to guide him. He lay in the dark and watched the curtains blowing into the room, making whispering soft sounds and they whipped and slid against each other. The breeze had picked up. Alec’s last conscious thought was that he should get up and shut the window but his eyes had closed and he was asleep within minutes.

Bright flashes of light shone through his closed eyelids before they opened. A loud crash of thunder followed and Alec sat up in bed, looking towards the window. The curtains whipped almost horizontally into the room, like pale tongues of flame. More lightning, more thunder filled the room and the first sounds of fat rain drops came from outside, hitting the roof and the ground. Alec got up and shut the window, muffling the sound but not the brilliant bursts of lightning. He was about to get into bed again when he heard something bang downstairs. He stilled for a minute, trying to gauge what it could be. It sounded like a door. But they all should be shut.

He padded as silently as he could out of the room and into the hall.

BANG.

The sharp sound making him jump as it cut through the darkness. He crept down the stairs, wincing at each creak and groan of the well-worn treads.

He stood at the foot of the steps, looking around in the black room. A flash of lightning lit the scene before him for a few seconds. It took his eyes a few minutes to adjust to the quick return of the blackness. From what he had seen, there had been nothing out of place. He waited for the next set of light and noise and looked again. The living room was still in the same disarray as it had been when he went to bed.

BANG! This time, the sound was much closer and to his left. He walked out into the dining room and looked through into the kitchen. The storm was definitely getting nearer because the gap between each clap of thunder and flash of lightning was getting closer together and the next two came almost on top of each other. Alec could hear the wind and the rain growing steadily and as he watched he saw the back-door blow in and then slam shut again as if an unseen hand had given it an angry push from behind. He went into the kitchen and towards it.

He could have sworn that he shut that door properly when he had taken out the trash bags earlier. He took the knob in his hand and turned it. It seemed to be working fine. He was about to shut the door when another burst of lightning lit up the back garden. It the brief burst of light, something stood out to him in the back garden near the rundown rose garden. He felt his heart start to pound and his flesh prickle as he stood transfixed in the doorway, waiting for another flash of light to confirm what he had thought he saw.

When it came, he felt his breath hitch in his chest. A tall, dark haired man stood near the neglected rose bushes. The wind from the storm was making the loose white shirt he wore billow around him and the rain had plastered it to his chest. He must have been wearing dark pants because they weren’t showing up in the dark moonless night.
Seconds later, another lightning flash showed Alec that he had turned to face him. He was looking directly at him and it chilled him to the bone but for some inexplicable reason, it thrilled him as well. Ignoring the tempest that was starting to rage out the door, Alec stepped out and onto the steps and down onto the soggy grass of the back garden. The now near constant lightning lit the night in an eerie light as he walked bare foot and bare chested through the rain and wind towards the figure that hadn’t taken his eyes off him once.

He came within about four feet from where he stood and stopped. He wiped the rain from his face and eyes but it was replaced almost as soon as it was gone. They stood opposite each other, unable to take their eyes off each other now they were almost face to face. Alec could feel his heart pounding behind his ribs and he wasn’t sure if he was breathing at all. He knew he should be chilled to the bone with the cold sheets of rain saturating him and washing over his bare upper body and gluing his sleep pants to his legs but he was numb to it. His mind raced to think if he should say anything but what did you say to someone that had been dead for a hundred years? Luckily, Magnus took the responsibility from him.

“So, we meet, Alexander.” He said, his voice was deep and steady about the sound of the thunder and the rain.

The shirt he was wearing had been melted to his chest from the rain, rendering it opaque. Somehow, Alec managed to notice the well-defined body beneath it and in spite of everything he felt his insides spark. He noticed a smirk forming on the phantom’s face.

“See something you like, do you? How interesting.” He drawled, one corner of his mouth pulled up.

Alec fought to get control of himself. Jesus, this whole situation is bat shit crazy and you’re checking him out. What’s wrong with you? His mind screamed.

“What are you doing out here? Why are you here?”

It was a stupid thing to say, he knew but it was the first thing that came out of his mouth that was intelligible. Magnus turned to look at one of the rangy half dead roses bushes and plucked at the wet, dried leaves of a stem and sighed.

“I so miss my roses. The garden was full of them once, you know. Every colour you can imagine. But they have slowly dwindled over the years to just these few. There is a limit to my capabilities these days and there hasn’t been anyone caring enough to look after then. I hope I can rely on you for the task now you’re here.

As for why I’m here, I should think that was perfectly obvious. This is my house, Alexander.” He turned back towards him.

Alec had no idea if he had reached out towards him and touched him if he would feel solid or not. Any movie he had ever seen involving spectres of any kind showed them as transparent and mist like. Magnus was neither of those things. He had to keep reminding himself that that’s what he was. He just looked like another human being before him.

“But it’s my house now. I bought it. You, you died.” He said, wondering if mentioning the fact was the right thing to say.

Magnus gave him a look.

“Yes, thank you Alexander, I’m well aware of that fact. And yes, you may have legally purchased
the place but it will forever be my home, no matter who thinks they own or lives in it.” His tone was very matter of fact.

“Why did you put that hole in the wall if you care about it so much?”
“Yes, well, even the calmest of people can lose control every now and then. You were getting entirely too close to that boy. I didn’t like it.” He gave a sniff and looked away from him for a moment. What the hell….? Alec looked at him incredulously.

“What makes you think you have any say in who I can and can’t be with? That’s just crazy.” He felt a spark of annoyance inside him.

There was something else there as well; something that was totally inappropriate for the situation. Somewhere in his head there was a small voice giggling like a school girl over the fact that this exotic looking man was jealous and possessive about him.

“I’ve always followed my instincts, Alexander and they are telling me that you are different from all the others that have come before you. I have been waiting a very long time for that to happen and I won’t have the chance ripped from me over something so trivial as an infatuated handyman.”

“Simon isn’t a handyman, he’s an electrician and I have no idea what you’re talking about but in my life, I get to choose who I want to be with. Not some ghost that puts holes in the walls and has bad taste in music.”

“Yes well, you’d like to think that, wouldn’t you? But you don’t have anymore control over who you form relationships with than I do. The heart wants what the heart wants. It’s up to us to follow where it leads or suffer the consequences. It might not always be the smartest path to take but the course of true love doesn’t always run smoothly.” He gave a dismissive wave of his hand. “I could care less what that boy is. He could be the crowned prince of some country and it wouldn’t make a difference, he’s not for you, Alexander. I also think you’re being very critical of my music choices. I find some of yours up for debate as well.”

He gave him a long look and a high eye brow raise which seemed to do funny things to his insides. The absurdity of the whole situation wasn’t lost on Alec. To stand back and see it from a short distance away must have made both of them look bonkers. The gave a silent thank you for the lack of neighbours. A half-naked man standing in his back yard in a thunder storm talking to a hundred-year-old ghost about their choices in music. Insane.

“Are we really going to have a discussion on whose songs are better? Is this really the best thing we could talk about?” Alec shouted over the teaming rain and crashing thunder.

In spite of the fact that he found Magnus Bane to be a bit of a wise ass, he also couldn’t seem to keep his eyes from going back to that obscured muscled torso and narrow hips. They heated his blood way too easy and it scared him more than the fact that both body parts belonged to a man that had died a century ago. The wet look certainly suited him.

“You’re doing it again.” Magnus smirked, taking a step forward.

Alec hadn’t been ready for his movement and found himself taking one back a little too quickly.

“I don’t bite, Alexander. Well, not unless you want me too.”

A suggestive wink and a saucy eyebrow raise. Accompanying this with a cocked hip in a pair of tight fitting breeches, only added more colour to Alec’s face and stoked the embers that was making him oblivious to the cold rain and biting wind.
Magnus gave a deep chuckle. “Oh, you’re just way to adorable. Trust me to finally find the key to my heart and its never turned a lock before.”

He looked thoughtful for a few minutes. “Maybe that’s where I was going wrong. They had too much experience, hmm, hadn’t thought about that before.”

Alec stared at him incredulously. Was this guy for real? Well, that point was debatable, but how full of themselves could once person be? What the hell did he expect from him, to just fall at his feet and say take me now? Well, he was nuts if he thought he was going to get any closer to him than he was at this minute. He stuck his chin up in the air and tried to look as self-assured as he could. It was something he hadn’t really had much practise at.

“How do you know I’ve never been with anyone else? I could have had heaps of relationships.”

Magnus coughed out a harsh laugh that had his resolve faltering.

“Oh, my dear, the closest relationship you’ve ever had with another male apart from your father is with that mangy stuffed toy you keep in our room up there. And neither of those things count.”

He gave Alec a dismissive wave of his hand that had him feeling rather indignant. The absolute gall of this guy. He opened his mouth in protest but Magnus held up a finger in front of him.

“Ah, ah, ah, now now, don’t say anything you’ll regret later, Alexander. Just do yourself a favour and own your snow-white status, and just know that I have every intention of changing that.”

Alec stared at him, completely flustered by what he’d just said. He frowned at him, and started making noises of protest but Magnus, wagged the finger before him and cut him off.

“No no, no more. You should get that sweet seat of yours back inside before you catch cold. We can’t have you getting sick, can we? Nothing worse than sticking your tongue in someone’s ear and hearing snifflses and snorts a few inches away. As much as it’s tempting to lick you dry, I think you’ve had enough excitement for one night. Besides, I can’t put all my cards on the table too early, that would be a folly of great magnitude.”

He turned back towards the scrawny rose bush, plucking a few more dead leaves from the stem.

Alec was speechless and his mind was swimming from everything that had just happened. There was no comeback that he could think of to hit him with. He’d completely scrambled any coherent thoughts. He’s obviously been giving his marching papers but he was also determined to have the final word. So, he came out with the first thing that he thought he could say, that he wouldn’t stumble over.

“What about you? Why aren’t you going inside as well?”

It was a ridiculous thing to say after their exchange but it at least made sense.

“My dear, when you only get a few short hours to live as you once did, worrying about a little inclement weather is the least of your problems. Feeling the rain on my skin and the wind in my hair is more precious to me than gold at the moment. Go inside, Alexander. I may be impervious to earthly ills but you aren’t. Don’t worry, we’ll meet again, somewhere a little drier next time but let’s keep the dress code the same, shall we?”

He gave him a final grin before he turned back to the garden.

Alec’s feet started moving before he realised he was putting one foot in front of the other. He furrowed his brow as he trudged along in the soggy grass. What the hell was a folly, anyway?
Yeah, you told him alright. Way to go, genius.

All through their meeting, the cold wind and biting rain had pelted into him, whipping the material of his sleep pants wetly around his legs but he hadn’t felt a thing. All of a sudden, he was colder than he’d ever felt before. He started shivering uncontrollably and ran the last few feet to the steps and into the house. Before he headed up stairs to a hot shower and dry clothes, he turned to look back to where he had left Magnus in the garden. The storm was losing its intensity now and the rain and finally started to back off. The thunder was more of a murmur and the lightning had softened as well. A final flash lit up the yard, revealing an over grown garden bare of one Magnus Bane. For some reason, Alec felt disappointed. A silly way to feel considering the condescending tone with which he had been spoken to for most of their conversation.

He dripped his way through the quiet house, up the stairs and to the bathroom and under a hot shower that turned his icy skin bright pink and restored some warmth to his core.

He towelled off and went back to bed. He looked at the time on his phone. Four am. Where did that time go to? He snuggled in under the covers and closed his eyes, visions of Magnus Bane replaying in his head. Tall, dark, wet, muscled chest, tight abs, slim hips, long lean legs. He may have irritated him to no end but he had also heated his blood as well. Even now, he fought against his thoughts but was unable to stop the loop of Magnus standing before him in that rain, water running in rivulets over that hot body. Somehow, the man could push all his right buttons and he seemed powerless to stop it.

Before long, Alec had drifted into a tired sleep. The storm had past and taken the rain with it. But one element of the night remained. Magnus sat across from the bed, in the chair in the corner. His eyes were trained on Alec’s sleeping form and they hadn’t moved from an inch since he had drifted off. While he had admired the shape of that tall toned body as it lay outlined under the covers, it was his face that he kept going back to.

It twitched and moved in his sleep, almost constantly changing. It was fascinating to him. He longed to trail a finger over that wide forehead, trace the arch of each elegant brow, kiss the delicate skin of each eyelid, run a finger down the slope of his nose before finally taking possession of his mouth with his own. The thought of how the soft skin of his neck would feel beneath his lips and tongue had him gripping the sides of the chair and squeezing his eyes closed.

Alec murmured something and his body shifted beneath the sheet, exposing the top of his shoulder. Magnus rose soundlessly and went to the side of the bed. That handsome young face’s brow was creased and his lips parted a little as if he was about to say something. His saviour was restless tonight. Their meeting must be playing on his mind. Alec called out sharply into the darkness, his body spasmed. Before he could stop himself, Magnus gently lay on the bed behind him, pressing himself along his full length and wrapping an arm over his side, his hand gently sweeping the soft hair that covered his chest. Oh, dear God, he felt divine and smelt heavenly of soap and fresh rain. He stirred a little.

“Sshhh, sleep now my darling. You’re fine, there is nothing to fear with me.” He whispered near his ear.

He couldn’t help himself. He put the lightest of kisses on the curve of his ear and Alec settled into his pillow, giving a contented hum. He arched back into Magnus’ body as if he were seeking the warmth.

Magnus had to bite his lip and close his eyes to stop the moan that threatened to escape him. He pressed his face into the back of Alec’s neck taking in deep draughts of his scent memorising it each note that it possessed. He had to take as much of him in as he could until he was allowed to
return to him like this. Whole, human, a man. A single tear leaked from his eye as he relished the way his soft skin felt below his lips and he kissed the spot, even allowing himself a quick dart of his tongue. This time the quiet moan did leave him and he was powerless to stop it. His eyes flew open and he stilled, terrified that his weakness would wake the sleeping beauty and spoil everything but Alec was deep enough into dreamland that he never moved.

Magnus remained in the same place, counting down the minutes in his head, till he knew he would no longer be there. Even though this was the first time he had done this, he also knew that it would be almost impossible for him not to repeat it tomorrow night and something inside him hurt. Every fibre of his being told him that Alexander Lightwood was the one. The one he had been waiting for all these years. It filled him with happiness but with dread at the same time. Finding love and giving it in return meant losing it as well and the pain of it hit him right in his heart.

How in the name of God was he supposed to love this perfect creature and then tell him goodbye? He could feel the first inklings of that love even now. He would just have to savour each and every second of their shared time together so he had something to keep with him for all eternity. But how did he break the news to Alec? He snuggled into him further, rubbing his face against the warm skin on his board back. For the moment, he would just focus on making sure he got his full attention, away from that Simon person.

“You mightn’t know it yet, my love, but you will be mine. All mine.” He whispered against him, giving him the barest of kisses.

He closed his eyes and a small smile played on his lips as he waited for the time that signalled the end of his blissful heat.

Alec woke late and it put him in a grumpy mood from the get go. He sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes and stretching before he started to replay the events of the night before. In the mid-morning light, it would have been easy to dismiss it as a dream but the way his skin prickled at the thought of it and the memory of the feeling of the cold rain and biting wind told him otherwise. He gave a shiver and then got out of bed and dragged some clothes on.

He headed for the kitchen and got a cup of coffee, deciding that he’d fore go breakfast now it was this late so he could begin the task of washing the remainder of the glue from the walls. He turned towards the table and stopped dead. A single red rose bud sat in a glass in its centre. A small scrap of paper sat beside it with a stylised heart drawn on it and a fancy letter ‘M’ in its centre. Alec gave a look around the room but knew it was just reflex; there would be no sign of the tall good-looking ghost anywhere.

He picked the flower out of the glass and gave it a sniff, remembering the same scent from before. He couldn’t help the smile that curved his lips and he stood there in his kitchen, eyes closed, the delicate bloom under his nose, remembering what that chiselled torso looked like under the soaked shirt. That spark flared again and it both excited and scared him.

“Thank you, Magnus.” He said softly into the quiet room and hoped that on some level wherever he went in the daylight hours he could hear him.

He took the glass over to the sink and put some water in it before putting the rose back in it. He replaced it in the centre of the table before gathering his supplies for the day.

Washing glue off walls was a crappy job and lunch time, Alec’s shoulders and arms ached dully. He’d gotten one finished and was pretty pleased with the job he’d done. He thought about starting the next one but his stomach was starting to complain about the lack of food so he headed for the kitchen to make a sandwich.
He got the ingredients out of the fridge and was standing at the counter putting it together, rolling his stiffening shoulders as the muscles tightened from the change of movement. He bent his head, stretching his neck and reached up to rub the soreness. Journalism and sitting in front of a computer for most of his job wasn’t great for fitness and he had tried to go to the gym as much as he could, when he was home but the past year had been very slack in that department and it irked him to feel like this when he didn’t have to. He would have killed for a massage about now. He took the sandwich and a bottle of water into the living room and plonked down in the couch to eat.

The colour swatches he and Simon had chosen lay beside him and as he ate, he picked each one up, considering them. Did he go for the darker colour to make the place look snug and cosy or did he brighten things up, and try to bring in as much light as possible?

He was holding up the two colour choices together when he felt gentle pressure on the slope of his shoulders. He froze mid mouthful of sandwich. The sensation felt firm but delicate at the same time, the touch digging into his tensed muscles rhythmically. If he didn’t know any better, he would swear that someone was standing behind him massaging his shoulders.

He put a hand up to touch the spot where he felt it and he gave a gasp when he felt the surface of his skin dint from the pressure. He started to cough, half choking on the mouthful of sandwich in his mouth. As he reached for the water, the touch changed from a firm dig into his muscles to a soft patting on his back. Jesus, was this really happening? Then it dawned on him. Could it be…

“Magnus, is that you?” Alec croaked, still trying to clear his throat. He felt two slightly harder pats on his back and he felt his skin prickle. Dear God, it was. Somehow this was happening. The next question was, did he want it to keep happening? He was fairly sure from their conversation the night before that Magnus had no intentions of hurting him in any way. Quite the opposite, really. The massaging sensation came back to his shoulders and he felt his bunched muscles relax a little. Ghost or not, the guy certainly knew how to give a good shoulder rub. He sat back slowly, closing his eyes, and letting the firm rhythmic pressure take effect.

He sat there for a good ten minutes, and by that time, his tired sore muscles felt a lot less achy than he had before. He tilted his head to the side, smiling and felt a softness on the slope of his neck. His eyes flew open and his heart pounded. He’d just been kissed. His hand went up to the spot on his neck, expecting it to feel, what? Warm? Damp? He didn’t know. It had been the briefest of touches but he could still feel the delicate touch of two full lips on his skin. He looked around the room but knew full well that he would see nothing.

“Magnus, did, did you just kiss my neck?” He said in the empty room, his eyes shining and darting around.

Suddenly his phone broke out into a song. His lips curved into a smile as he looked towards the speaker still on the table. Mr Bane certainly made sure he got his message across. The song playing was Kiss, by prince. Yeah, about as subtle as a sledgehammer, that was.

Alec gave a chuckle and felt his skin heating.

“Very funny, Magnus. I get the point.”

He felt another kiss on his cheek and he laughed before standing up and taking the plate into the kitchen.

He got fresh water and cleaning solution to start the other wall and picked out a playlist. He just started to get into the groove of the music and the cleaning, when the song stopped half way through. He turned around to look towards the speaker.
“I take it you’re debating my choices again?” He said into the empty room.

This time there was no reply but then another song began. Alec frowned and put his hands on his hips. It was a classic from the fifties.

“Really, Magnus? This is what you like? You know, whatever, some of us have work to do.”

He shook his head and started back on the wall. Living with a ghost that had the hots for you was certainly an experience. Apart from the vintage love songs that he had no idea how were coming from his phone; he certainly had never downloaded them, he had to endure all sorts of strange sensations that if there had been two people in the room, wouldn’t seem out of place, just cute and flirty. But when you knew there was no one there, it put a whole new spin on it.
Chapter 8

Alec stretched up to reach the top of the wall and felt two arms go around his waist and he yelped from the shock and dropped the sponge. It came down and hit his chest, putting a large wet spot on his t-shirt.

“Geez, Magnus, now look what you’ve done.” He said, pulling the wet material from his skin.

That’s when he felt the side of his t-shirt riding up as unseen hands tried to rid him of his damp clothes.

“Hey!” He yelled and brushed at his ribs, like he was brushing them away. “I’m not taking off my shirt, so you can cut it out right now.”

As if to emphasise his point, he tugged the bottom of his shirt down firmly and turned back to pick up the sponge and start working again.

It was a few minutes before he felt anything else; Magnus must have been considering his options here. He had reached up and leaned his hand against the wall as he washed near the window. Two hands trailed over his outstretched arms from the wrist to his shoulders, making his skin tingle and he found himself giving a small shiver. He halted his work as the hands ran down either side of his chest as if they were mapping the surface. They reached his ribs and he felt fingers pressing firmly over each hill and valley and he flinched, giggling.

“That tickles.” He chuckled and they dug in again and he was wriggling around hugging his sides as the tickles made him helpless.

“Hey, I had an hour to fill in and thought…. Alec are you okay?”

Busted!!

Alec jerked up and gasp as Simon walked in the open door. Didn’t people knock anymore? He felt his face heat and he cleared his throat, straightening his rumpled shirt.

Okay, downplay, and make it convincing.

“Ah, yeah, just got an itch I couldn’t scratch, that’s all.” He gave him a grin and hoped he was being convincing.

“Oh, where is it, can I help?” Simon went to walk over closer to him, Alec slightly over reacted.

“No! ah, sorry, no, it’s fine now. I’m fine. What were you saying earlier?” He said, trying to sound casual and at the same time throw him off the scent.

The trouble with that was he casually went to wipe his forehead but forgot he still had the sponge in his hand and swiped the strong smelling liquid across his brow instead. He gave a yelp and dropped the sponge to the floor where it hit with a wet squelch. He put his hands under the front of his shirt and wiped the wetness from his skin, the front of his shirt pulled up exposing a good portion of his stomach to an appreciative Simon.

“Yum.”

Alec heard the word, that he was sure really hadn’t been meant to of been said out loud or for his
ears, and looked up towards Simon, who was standing before him, practically with his tongue hanging out, with his eyes trained on his bare midriff. He gave a cough and reefed his shirt back down, bending over to pick up the soggy sponge and put it back in the bucket.

Whatever happened to ‘oh, let’s be friends’? Hmmm?

Simon blinked a couple of times and remembered where he was.

“I was just saying I had an hour to kill and thought I’d come out and see how you were going with it all.” Alec knew his face had coloured but now it was Simon’s turn to blush. Alec fought the urge to chuckle.

“Yeah, it’s going pretty well, I think. Apart from this.” he tapped the wall near the hole. “I’m close to getting some paint on the walls. Do you know anyone who could fix that for me?” He asked him.

“I’d be happy to fill your hole for you. Fix, fix your hole, the hole, I mean, not, well, never mind. I’ll bring the stuff with me tomorrow, if you still want my help?” He replied, looking back at him hopefully.

Alec’s lips twitched as Simon stumbled over his words and looked pretty cute doing it too.

“Yes, of course, someone’s gotta tell me what to do. God only knows what sort of mess I’d get into otherwise.”

He covered his overwhelming need to chuckle at the flustered Simon with a laugh at his own expense. Simon chuckled back, probably doing the same thing.

“Well, I’d better let you get back to it and I’ll go fix Mrs Sutton’s back porch light. She tells me it’s shorting out but I think she just likes watching me up the ladder. This will be the third thing I’ve fixed for her over the last two months. I thought about enlightening her, but I can do with the work. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

He smiled at him and turned to go out, tripping over the handle of the broom that was laying on the floor.

“Damn, sorry, are you okay? I didn’t even realise that was there.” Alec said, picking it up. He cast a furtive look around the room, frowning.

He had a pretty good idea how it did get there too. Someone was being jealous again.

“Yeah, fine. See you tomorrow.” Simon said and headed out the door and to his truck.

Alec waited till he knew Simon had gone before he chanced saying anything.

“Magnus, will you cut it out with Simon? You could of hurt him. He just wants to be friends.” He spoke into the empty room.

Once again, the speaker burst into song, yet another one that Alec didn’t own. Alec rolled his eyes and put his hands on his hips, shaking his head. Only the chorus played.

But don’t break my heart
My achy breaky heart
I just don’t think he’d understand
And if you tell my heart
My achy breaky heart
He might blow up and kill this man.

The music stopped as suddenly as it had begun.

“Magnus, I think you’re being a little too dramatic now. Cut it out.”

He waited for another song choice but this time, Magnus must have decided to remain silent. Alec did the other wall and by late afternoon, he had finished. He stood back and admired his hard work for the day and was pleased that he had gotten it completed before they tackled the dining room tomorrow.

He went to empty the bucket and squeeze out the sponge and put them away before washing up and getting something organised for dinner. As he did, he found himself thinking about the way Magnus’ hands had felt on his body, even if he couldn’t see them. It was a surreal experience, that’s for sure, getting felt up by a ghost. He might have known that the hands touching him weren’t technically there but his skin and his body sure didn’t. Even now he could feel the way they glided over him, leaving a trail of tingling sparks in their wake. He wondered if they would feel the same way if Magnus was actually… alive? Whole? He wasn’t sure what exactly. He stood at the sink, letting the water run as he stared blindly, lost in thought.

He had always tried to reign in any thoughts of this nature, and in the past year especially, he had managed to do it. But there was something about Magnus that just busted his thoughts wide open so they just spilt across his mind, flooding his brain with a myriad of illicit possibilities. Some had his face heating and it shocked him to realise that he was even capable of having thoughts like that. He came back to reality with a shake of his head and turned off the water. He really needed to calm down. He doubted if ghosts kept regular hours and he had no way of knowing when the next time he would be able to see him face to face.

As he got dinner ready, he found himself hoping that it would soon. As utterly insane as today had been, he had really enjoyed the intimacy of being touched. Even if it had been under totally surreal circumstances.

Alec had gone to bed early, finding that he couldn’t concentrate on anything. He had eaten dinner in front of the TV, and had grown more restless with every passing minute. He should have been happy to just sit back after the work he had done that day but for some reason he felt charged and fidgety. He’s clicked through a dozen different programmes before he gave up and turned the TV off and headed for bed.

He stripped down and got under the covers, not bothering with sleep pants tonight. He grabbed one of his books off the pile near the bed and flipped through the pages but once again, he found himself having to read each line at least twice to make it register and in the end, he got up, turned off the light and got back into bed, rolling to his side to face the window.

The moon was bright outside tonight and it filled the room with a soft blue glow, almost ethereal in appearance. It was so quiet and still, not even a breeze to stir the curtains. Alec started thinking about the possible reasons why he was so awake tonight. There had only ever been a few times in his life that he had had trouble sleeping. He wanted to blame the still new surroundings but he knew that was bullshit.

Magnus. Magnus is the reason you’re like this.

He rolled onto his back and stared at the ceiling, and found his mind full of the man’s face. It was hard to get a clear picture of what he actually looked like; he had only ever seen him once and that had been when he was soaking wet, dark hair slicked back and water pouring over his face, not
exactly a clear image. The only other time had been in the old photograph he’s found in the box and it had been very faded and the image small. What would it be like to have him stand before him, inches apart so he could actually reach out and explore the delicate planes of his face. And his body. Thinking about that wet muscled torso under that shirt had his heart rate climbing and his breath increasing. Not to mention his crotch tightening.

He gave a small groan of frustration and rolled over to face the door. He shouldn’t be thinking about this stuff. Magnus wasn’t real, for Christ’s sakes. He was not much more than smoke and mirrors at best. Even with all his blustering last night about making him his and changing his ‘untouched’ status, how was that even possible? God, why was he even torturing himself about this? The words were the ramblings of an echo, belonging to a man that had died a century ago. No longer flesh and blood. And never would be again. He was doing it again, he was setting himself up for a fall and it been the aftermath of such a situation that had sent him, tail between his legs, out here. Did he ever learn? It seemed not.

He closed his eyes and tried to clear his head, hoping sleep would take him into dreamless relief from his thoughts.

The air felt different. He could somehow sense it even while still asleep. But it was getting to him and it forced his eyelids open. He rolled over to look at the window. It was like the air had been charged somehow, like it felt before a summer storm. The pale blue glow hadn’t change though, it still filled the room in a kind of negative relief. No clouds, not even a breath of wind. Alec’s skin prickled all over and he felt the hair on his arms coming to attention. Suddenly he was wide awake and on edge. He wasn’t alone. He could feel it.

He sat up quickly looking around and his eyes fell on the corner of the room where the chair sat. His breath hitched as he saw there was a body occupying it. Long legs in tight fitting dark breeches and boot clad feet were elegantly crossed, the top leg swinging slightly. Hands with long fingers rested on the thigh but the face and head were in the shadow of the corner. He swallowed, at least, he hoped that what was going on. Fear had his skin goose pimpling and he was shaking. He wasn’t sure if he was even breathing.

“Calm down, Alexander. You should have known it was me. Who else would it have been? You don’t think I’d allow just any old ghost in here do you?”

That deep, honey rich voice. Magnus. He was glad that he was here but at the same time it scared him to think why.

Magnus leaned forward and for the first time, Alec had an uninterrupted view of his face. It was mesmerising. His features were so fine; small forehead, those wonderful heavy-lidded eyes with their dark centres stood out even in this low lighting. A little sloped nose and a perfect small mouth that looked as delicate as one of the rose buds that he had given him. He could even see a hint of soft colour on his lips. Beautiful.

Those lips now curved into a smile.

“Window shopping again, my sweet? It’s all yours for the asking, I can assure you.”

Even as nervous as he felt, Alec could still hear the tinge of humour in his voice as he leaned back before slowly standing. Alec flinched and scrambled up in the bed, backing up against the cold brass of the head of the bed, taking in a sharp breath from the sudden shock of the cold metal against his heated skin and the fact that he had a ghost zeroing in on him.

Magnus stopped when he reached to foot of the bed and stilled, giving a small chuckle.

“Oh Alexander. You are just way too adorable for words. Look at you, cowering in my bed before
me like a young bride on her wedding night.”

He actually gave a shiver a delight. If Alec had been less concerned with the very real possibility of having some sort of episode and more in tune with what was actually happening, he would have been very indignant about Magnus’ last comment. He kept trying to tell himself that Magnus didn’t mean him any harm and that this wasn’t the first time he had come in contact with the spirit. Although, for a ghost, he had to admit he looked fairly solid. Somewhere in the back of his mind, a little voice was jumping up and down reminding him of his thoughts earlier that evening about testing that theory. Talk about be careful what you wish for.

Magnus started his approach once more, this time making it to the side of the bed. He slowly folded his chiselled frame so that he was sitting on the edge of the mattress, waist twisted so he could look at Alec face on.

“Surely you don’t still have doubts about me not harming you, Alexander. I should think that after today it would be perfectly obvious what my intentions towards you are.” He gave him a reproachful look.

Somehow, Alec found his voice even though his throat felt like it was as dry as a desert.

“Yeah, I guess so.” He croaked, hands clenched around the edge of the sheet that he had pulled up against his chest.

Why he was doing it he had no idea. He had been running around the back garden half naked last night and hadn’t been self-conscious. It must have been something to do with the fact that he was in bed.

Hang on, did he say, his bed? Wha…?

“You really need to relax, sweet boy, you’d find things a lot more pleasant. I told you I don’t bite, well, not unless the mood calls for it. I can’t wait to find out what you taste like.” He leaned forward, resting he weight on one hand.

Alec’s eye went wide and he swallowed hard. But at the same time that pesky ember of heat sparked up deep within him too. Magnus smiled again and gave a snort.

“I can see those cogs turning in there. Your hiding behind your inexperience but I can sense there’s something more primal lurking in the background. I told you, own your pristine status and then we can get on with more pleasurable pursuits.”

Alec frowned at him.

“I’m not some scared little virgin, thanks very much and I don’t like you saying that.” He grumbled.

“Alexander, I never used that exact terminology but you must admit that when it comes to the sins of the flesh, you are lacking knowledge. That’s perfectly understandable. We were all that way once. Even I was a blushing young lad once. Until I was sixteen, anyway. One of my father’s footmen was kind enough to, shall we say, educate me in the art of love making. I can’t say that I didn’t suffer at the hand of my master but it gave me a firm understanding of the way things were done. Needless to say, I have managed to refine the technique over the years.”

Alec looked horrified. “That sounds horrible, why did you put yourself through something like that?”
“In the time of my youth, our way of life wasn’t something that was advertised at all. It was almost like a secret society. I was lucky that I didn’t have to go looking for someone to show me what I wanted to learn, Frederick was right under my nose, so to speak. His methods might have left a little to be desired but his techniques were sound enough. I prefer a more softer approach to someone’s introduction into the pleasures of the flesh. I’m afraid Fredrick’s attitude was more along the lines of throwing one into the deep end without a life line and hoping they could swim. Not to put too finer point on it but let’s just say I preferred standing to sitting for a week after my first lesson.”

One side of his mouth pulled up and even in the low light, Alec could see a glint in his eye. Even though Magnus had tried to put a humorous spin on it, Alec still felt himself cringe at the thought of what he had described.

Not really what you wanted to hear when you’d never had sex before, even if Magnus had told him that he had no intention of following in his master’s footsteps. Magnus dropped the smirk when he saw the look on his face.

“Oh dear, I probably shouldn’t have told you that, should I? Please don’t think that’s what is in store for you, precious boy, as I said, that was my story, and it’s not going to be yours, I can assure you of that. The last thing I want to do is frighten you so you go scampering off like a little rabbit on me. The stakes are too high here for me to ever do that. I feel like you’re my last hope, Alexander and even though I know where it will lead us, I have to do my best to make it happen. For both our sakes.”
Chapter 9

Alec saw his face drop a little and he bent his head. If he hadn’t been so damn scared, he would have gathered him into his arms and held him, he looked so despondent. He had no idea what he was talking about, though, but he couldn’t focus on any other issues, he had his hands full just dealing with the fact that he was sitting about two feet from a man that had lived over a century ago, a somewhat mind-blowing experience.

Magnus lifted his head and the soft smile had returned.

“It would please me so much to have you touch me, Alexander. Human contact has been in very short supply for me for quite a while now and I crave it so. It’s one of the things I miss most about my present circumstances. To touch and be touched is one of the most basic of intimate acts but oh so important for one’s soul. I think we are all guilty of not doing it enough sometimes and it’s only when the moment or the opportunity has passed do we lament our loss. I can tell that you crave it as much as I do, my sweet, and I think that we should rectify that matter post haste.”

Alec’s mind really had to work to interpret Magnus’ speech patterns. He had never heard anyone talk the way he did but he found it fascinating.

Well, duh, he does come from a whole other era in time, of course he’s not going to sound the same as everyone does now, his conscious stated, hands on hips and rolling eyes.

Alec straightened a little in the bed and allowed his hands to loosen on the sheet. It fell softly to his lap, his hands now clutched on top. As on edge as he was, it didn’t stop him being able to appreciate the close-up view of Magnus Bane. He was definitely not like an abstract work of art; impressive at a distance but one big mess close up but he was a masterpiece of sorts. Especially in the pale blue light of the moon coming through the window.

It made Alec wish that he had a bedside light so he could turn it on and see more but perhaps he would disappear in the artificial light. He had no idea how this all worked. He noticed Magnus had that sassy look on his face again and one eyebrow was disappearing under the dark hair that fell cheekily over one side of his brow.

“well, that’s improved my view and no mistake. You truly have no idea how beautiful you look, do you? I can’t remember when I’ve ever seen something so wonderful yet so under appreciated. You must have had many an impassioned young man throw themselves at your feet, Alexander.”

Magnus said, softly, his eyes in a holding pattern of face, chest, abs and repeat.

Alec felt his face heating and hoped that the moonlight would hide it. He looked down at his fidgeting hands.

“Well that I ever wanted.” He said in almost a whisper.

“And the ones that you did want didn’t want you, am I right?”

Alec looked up at Magnus from under his lashes. God, how the hell did he know these things about him? Magnus smiled and as if he had heard his thoughts, gave him a reply.

“You have the most expressive eyes and face, my dear, and they mirror your thoughts, said and unsaid. It just takes an intuitive soul to interpret them. Oh Alexander, you make my heart ache for you on several levels. We truly are two damaged souls drifting in a sea of loneliness and self-doubt.
Rudderless and directionless. But I think we can change all that for each other, if we have the courage. All we need to guide us are the stars in your eyes and the light of love I have kept in my heart, will you take the journey with me, Alexander? you’re the only one I want to take it with.”

Oh, sweet Jesus

Alec felt his fears being washed away by his words. Why didn’t anyone talk like this anymore? It was the most poetic thing he’d ever heard in his life and there had never been the remotest possibility of ever hearing them before now. He might not know what Magnus was on about some of the time but what he had just said was as clear as a bell to him.

He looked down at his hands and stopped his restless fingers. Not letting his eyes leave Magnus’ for a second, he slowly reached out towards his hand that was taking his weight on the bed. He covered its surface with his own and immediately his eyes flew wide at the unexpected feeling of warmth and solidity. He hadn’t been sure what he had been expecting, but it hadn’t been this. They both took in a sharp breath and startled a little. As Alec watched, Magnus looked down at their contact point with wonder as if he was seeing something incredible.

He leaned back, taking his weight off the hand and raised it from the surface of the bed, turning it below Alec’s so it was now palm up. He looked as surprised by the exchange of warmth as Alec was. He slid his palm against Alec’s til he reached his fingers then took them in his own, gently holding them. His thumb brushed his knuckles and the back of his hand in a way that had bursts of heat radiating up his arm. Magnus’ eyes held his captive, stronger than any rope or iron cage could.

He felt himself being drawn into those deep dark orbs like he was being lured in by an unseen force.

“You’re so warm.” Alec finally managed to get out. Magnus gave his fingers a gently squeeze and smiled.

“And what exactly did you expect, dear boy? No, don’t tell me, I can guess. Cold dead flesh? Something opaquer like fog, perhaps? Perfectly understandable. It’s taken me an age to get used to this form as well. It’s a gift afforded to very few, I think so I try not to waste a minute of it. The condition extends to the rest of me as well, just so you know.” Magnus told him, throwing out a rather large hint.

Now they had actually made contact, Alec felt his interest rising. His earlier fears had all but disappeared and found himself wanting more. He leaned forward, still allowing Magnus to hold his hand. He held his breath and felt his heart beat a little quicker as he reached out his other hand to gently touch the side of Magnus’ face. It was so smooth and so warm. He saw Magnus’ eyes close slowly and felt him tilt his head towards his hand. Alec flattened his hand and cupped his jaw, feeling it clench on his palm. His thumb brushed over the rise of his cheek bone, the skin below his eye even more delicate to the touch.

Magnus brought his own hand up to cover Alec’s and with his eyes still closed in concentration, he moved against his palm, rubbing the smooth surface like a friendly cat. He turned his head and lightly kissed the centre of his palm, making bolts of electricity shoot straight to Alec’s core. God, how good did that feel?

Suddenly, Magnus’ fine features became even clearer to him. He could see everything. The way each of his eyebrows didn’t have a hair out of place, the smoothness of his forehead, the gentle slope pf his small nose, the texture of his skin, the faint tiny line of a small scar on the side of his cheek, the dip beneath his nose and the soft dusky pink of that perfect mouth. His lower jaw completely unmarred by any hint of a beard. He found himself skooching over a little closer, his eyes continuing to take in every minute detail of him.
Magnus slowly opened his eyes. Oh, how he had longed for this moment. Not just in the last few
days but the last few decades. Of all the things, he missed about his mortal life, feeling a loving
touch was the thing he missed the most. He had seen the fear disappear from Alec’s eyes and it had
been the first hurdle to clear in the long race to win his heart.

He loved the feel of the warmth on his face and the way the back of his hand felt under his but he
needed more. He craved it. Magnus had to will himself not to rush things and undo the precarious
and fragile start of what he hoped would be something very special. He reluctantly let go of Alec’s
hand and ran the backs of his fingers along the side of his face, loving the way he could feel the
beginnings of stubble on his lower jaw. It sent shivers running up and down his spine and his
crotch thickened at the thought of how that rough jaw would feel on other parts of his body. He
sucked in a breath, using as much will power as he could not to launch himself at the poor
unsuspecting guy and ruin everything.

He tilted his head slightly, as he let his fingers dance down the side of his neck, feeling the contrast
of rough to smooth as he headed for the slope of his broad shoulder. He felt the firmness of the
muscle and the hardness of his collar bone below the surface of his chest. But the area of his body
he wanted to explore the most was that broad hair clouded chest. His fingers had itched to explore
it as soon as he had seen it.

Magnus moved a little closer towards him on the bed and he was now near enough to feel the heat
of his body and the smell his skin. He couldn’t help taking in a great lung full of the fresh scent
and he longed to know if he tasted as good as he smelt. He had allowed himself the barest of hints
of this when he had laid with him the night before. It had been as if he had been given access to
something wonderful but he could only have the smallest of glimpses of it. Now he got to have the
full view. Well, not quite, but this was a good start.

Alec had edged closer to Magnus, half to gain better access to him and also to allow him the same
privilege. He still tingled from where his fingers had run over him and now they were paused
above his chest and he took in a deep breath, anticipating their arrival. The second his hand touched
him, he arched into it, pushing his body against his hand. He heard Magnus give a soft moan and
he moved another inch closer. Something in the was that sound came from deep inside him hit him
right in the crotch and he felt his thickening length twitch inside his boxers. He’d never wanted to
kiss another man as much in his life. Did he dare go that far? And could he hold himself back from
going any further than that?

“Oh Alexander, you are divine. So warm, so soft yet so firm as well. The perfect contradiction. I
can’t wait to feel you against my body, share your heat and I bet you taste as good as you smell.”
Magnus said, his voice sounding deep and rougher than it had before.

He couldn’t hold out any longer, he yearned to feel those lips beneath his. He had to risk it, before
it drove him insane.

Alec saw the look in Magnus’ eyes change from a twinkle to a smouldering blaze. He still had his
hand on the side of his face and he let it slip down to the side of his neck, feeling the faint steady
drumming of the pulse beneath his skin. He might have been inexperienced, but knew could tell
that Magnus was battling his own desires. He was in a war with his own needs as well. Fear caused
by his lack of experience was holding him back, he imagined that it was sheer will power with
Magnus. He could feel the tension building between them and it was growing by the second. He
knew his breathing had grown deeper and his heart knocked against his ribs hard enough that he
was sure that Magnus would be able to feel it below his hand that was resting on his chest, fingers
lost in the hair that covered it.
Alec sought his gaze and the minute he looked deep into those dark orbs he heard a noise of frustration and realised that it had come from him. The smoulder he saw in them now became a blaze and it both frightened and excited him at the same time. Oh God, he wanted to melt at his feet in a big hot puddle of need.

He had no idea what he was doing, he’d never been faced with this situation before. He had never been looked at with so much heat that he could practically read a book by the radiant glow it caused. All he did know was that he needed to feel that perfect mouth on his.

When Magnus heard that soft whimper he almost lost the small grasp he had on his self-control right there and then. What this totally beautiful man was doing to him was bordering on causing him pain. The absence of feeling utter need and the urge to want to feel another person close against your body and to share yourself with that person had been a great loss and Magnus hadn’t fathomed just how much until right now. He knew there was a hard bulge in the front of his breeches but he was doing his best not to think about that at the moment. The goal for this moment was to capture that mouth of his and feel it working beneath his own.

He saw that glow of urgency below those heavy-lidded eyes and knew that Alec was in as much distress as he was. The trouble was he didn’t know if had enough courage to do anything about it. He had always thought himself a patient man but he’d be damned if he was fast racing to his outer limits with this. When he saw Alec starting to lean ever closer towards him, his heart began to thud wildly in his chest and he fought with everything he had not to just launch himself at him and pin him to the bed. He kept reminder himself that it was important for Alec’s self-confidence to take this step on his own.

He was half an inch from his face, close enough for Magnus to feel his rapid hot breath against his skin and hear the way the air left that gorgeous chest in hard gusts. Time felt like it had stood still in that moment and he found himself holding his breath, waiting…..Waiting…..Waiting.

That first contact was the merest of touches, feather soft and just as light but it shot fire into both of them. Alec pulled back, making Magnus want to scream for more. Argh! The agony of it. The few seconds that Alec hovered before him, a mere tilt of his chin away from his reach, felt like hours before he Alec finally met his lips to his once more. This time, the kiss was more distinct, a little more confident. He was gaining strength, inch by agonising inch. It would have been so easy for Magnus to take the lead and just take over, dominating the moment but it was imperative for him to let Alec have control and while he was loving the small nibbles of something he knew would taste divine, what he really wanted was a whole big mouthful but he didn’t want Alec to choke either.

Alec started to lose himself in the moment. Magnus’ kisses where hypnotic and the longer he felt his mouth work beneath his the foggier his thoughts became. There was still that underlying current of self-doubt and fear that was making him hold himself back; he was still frightened of feeling this way because his one past experience had shattered him more than he cared to admit.

Magnus could feel it as well, but he was determined to break through the invisible barrier that Alec had created for himself. His years of experience allowed him to sense that this wonderful man had so much love buried deep within him, and he was getting a mere hint of it right now, the rest kept well out of reach. For now. That was going to change, if he had anything to do with it.

Magnus moved his hand from the top of his pecs and skimmed upward till he reached the side of his neck, his fingers going into the short dark hair at the back. He exerted a little more force, so that Alec was ever closer to him, without realising it. He kept his mouth busy till he would be able to reach his neck with his mouth. He broke the kiss to gently trail his mouth from the corner of Alec’s to his jaw where he tested the waters a little by giving him a playful nip. He heard a sharp
intake of breath but then a soft sigh followed and he took it as a consent to keep going.

He kissed his way down to the slope of his neck, where he settled in one spot, mouthing the heated surface, lapping at it as carefully as he could without giving in to his building need and clamping his mouth down hard and sucking the skin.

He knew he had Alec under his spell when he felt his head tilt sideways to give him better access. He couldn’t help but smile against him. He was so responsive, he couldn’t wait till he could experience all of him, not just this small taste.

Alec hadn’t realised how close he had gotten to Magnus until he raised his heavy-lidded eyes and looked down over the surface of his broad back. The soft material of his shirt gently brushed his bare chest and it was sending shivers up and down his spine. But now that wasn’t enough, he was craving more of him.

He let go of his hand, and together with the other one, laid his hands on his waist, tentatively gathering the shirt, bunching it in his fingers, seeking the soft warmth that lay underneath. Magnus pulled back from his neck and he missed his mouth immediately.

“If you want me to take my shirt off, Alexander, all you need do is ask.” He said softly, cupping the side of his face. Alec’s breath hitched as he saw the heat in his eyes and the way his lips were just parted, darker in colour than they were before and plumped from their kisses. Did he have that kind of courage?

He thought about how Magnus’ body had looked that night in the rain with his shirt plastered to him. The swell of his pecs, the wash board stomach and the corrugations of his ribs. What would all that sexy hardness feel like below his hands, below his lips.

Beneath his body.

The thought made his heart skip a beat and he felt his own temperature rising and his skin flushing pink. Magnus saw it too and grinned at him in an almost carnal manner. It hit Alec right in the crotch and he swelled uncomfortably under the sheet that was bunched in his lap. He squirmed a little and Magnus gave a small chuckle.

“All you have to do is say what you want, my sweet. I can see how much you want it. How much you ache to run your hands over my body, feel its heat, each curve, every hill and valley.” Magnus grabbed one of his hands and shoved it under the front of his shirt, slapping it onto the heated flesh of his stomach and Alec groaned before he could stop himself. God, he was going to explode.

“Say it.”

Magnus leaned forward and whispered in his ear before the tip of his tongue came out and traced the inner curve. That did it. Alec suddenly became a totally different person, one he didn’t know existed.

“Take your fucking shirt off, now.” He growled as his chest rose and fell rapidly from between his dry parted lips.

He didn’t recognise the voice at all, it was deep and gravely, full of a need that had never seen the light of day before. He liked it. Magnus’ eyes flew wide and that grin with its hint of something more from before was now pure primal heat. This was the moment he had been waiting for.
Chapter 10

“Ah, there he is. The Alexander I knew was hidden in there somewhere. I knew I’d draw him out eventually. Come, beautiful boy, let’s play.”

He reefed the loose garment off over his head, dropping it on the floor and leaned back, catching a wide square of the bluey moonlight as it shone through the window.

Alec fought with everything he had not to pounce on him the second he saw him in that light. Fuck, what the man was doing to him should be illegal. He had never felt anything like it. He was teetering on the edge of control and it was scaring him to death but was exhilarating at the same time. His pale skin almost glowed in the ethereal light and he had to fight to stop himself from panting like a dog. His eyes drank in every square inch of him. Suddenly his mind was full of illicit thoughts that he had never allowed himself to have before and that he didn’t think he was capable of having.

The gentle swell of his pectoral muscles seemed to beg for his fingers to glide over their smooth surface, the dark discs of his nipples called for him to trace their delicate softness before marvelling at the feel of the small hard nub of each centre. The thought of covering each one with his mouth sent thrills shooting up his spine and somehow ended up pooling low in his belly where it radiated pleasure straight to his hardening length.

What would those defined abs feel like below his palms, or better yet, scrubbing against his belly, gently tugging at the soft covering of hair? He actually shivered at the thought and his fingers flexed, itching to test his theories.

He could have sat there all night, just allowing his eyes to devour the masterpiece that was Magnus Bane, the world's hottest centenarian but the need to get his hands on him was driving him to distraction. Then his eyes slipped to below the waist band of his pants.

Oh, holy God.

Even in the shadowy light, Alec could see the firm bulge beneath the tight-fitting material. A soft sound emanated from deep within him and he grabbed the sheet at his waist, pushing against his own hardness that felt like it was trying to push its way out from his boxers to see what it was missing. Christ, he wanted that. So, so badly. He’d never had thoughts like this before over another man, even with Jace it had been different, but now his mind was full of things so dark and carnal they frightened him. And he wanted them more strongly than he wanted to keep breathing. He had never touched another man’s body before, let alone his penis, but seeing the clearly defined outline of that firm hard length had him drooling for it.

Magnus watched Alec as he scanned his bare torso with growing fascination and desire. He watched as the other man’s eyes took him in, eyes shining in the moonlight as he trailed them over his body. He sat before him still as a statue, the only thing moving were his eyes and the increasing rise and fall of that glorious chest. He had to smile as he saw his eyes widen the further he let them travel down, his pretty pink mouth parting, his tongue flicking out to wet his lips, the sight of it making Magnus need to close his eyes and clench his hands as they took his weight on the bed.

He longed for the feel of that tongue on his skin but he had to remember Alec’s inexperience and shyness, although that seemed to be fading rapidly. He was looking at him like a starving man looking at a banquet and it was the hottest thing he’d ever experienced.
The air in the room seemed to change with the sexual tension that radiated from them. A new level had been reached and it was only a matter of time before one of them broke. Magnus prayed that it wouldn’t be him. Alexander needed it to be him; needed the shot of self-esteem that had been sorely lacking in his life. He had no idea what had caused this beautiful young man to have such self-doubt and lock away this part of him that was now only just coming forth but it was a crime of the greatest magnitude. He would be forever grateful to whatever higher power had allowed him to bear witness to its emergence.

Then he saw Alec’s eyes drop below his waist and everything change in a heartbeat.

Pure unadulterated heat filled him as he saw him eyeing his tented breeches with such longing that it was almost painful to watch. The noise that escaped him hit him right in the gut and he felt his already hard erection go from hard to iron clad and throbbing, making him draw in a sharp breath and bite his lip hard to stop himself from launching at him and pinning him to the bed.

Every inch of him screamed for his touch now and he was willing him to make the move before he combusted into flames. It had been way too long since anyone had laid their hands on him this way and no one had ever looked upon him the way Alexander was. Oh, the need to take him and make him his was consuming him and he had to clench his fists to the point of pain to stop himself from ruining everything. Then he stopped breathing altogether as he saw him reaching out one tentative hand.

The world stopped turning and time stood still.

Alec forced his hand to move slowly forward, the urge to just lay hands on that beautiful body and cover as much of it as he could in as short a time possible was almost overwhelming but he didn’t want to come off looking like some hormone fuelled teenager. He took in a deep breath just before he made contact and sucked in his bottom lip.

The first thing he registered was the heat that seemed to be rolling off him in waves and he let the tips of his fingers light on the hard surface of his collarbone and start to trace its path under that soft smooth skin. The minute he started moving, Magnus flinched, his body jerking back a little and he gave a yelp. Alec pulled back in concern. Oh Jesus, what had he done?

He looked to his face, worried. Oh God, he looked like he was in pain.

Magnus hadn’t been prepared for how sensitive his skin had been. Years of neglect in this area and the heightened need that he felt had caused his flesh to be hypersensitive. Alec’s touch had been feather soft and just as light but it had left a trail of sparks below the surface that was culminating deep within the pit of his stomach. And God how he wanted it, it was just he needed to get a handle on it first. He saw the look on Alec’s face and realised that he thought he had done something wrong. He leaned forward again and put a hand to his face, looking deep into his eyes.

“It’s alright, Alexander. You’re not at fault here. It’s just my body has been so starved of this for such a long time and your touch is so sweet and gentle it’s almost too great to bare. But believe me, I want to bare it, every single second of it. I’m craving it with every fibre of my being I just need to harness the sensations its causing me to have. Please, don’t stop, beautiful boy, I need to feel your hands on me more than I’ve ever wanted anything before in my life.”

Magnus’ voice was deep and there was a slight tremor to it but his strong baritone words filled him with a heat that was threatening to consume him. He was very much afraid that even if it was causing him distress, he would have to keep going before his own desire threatened to make him implode.

He looked back at him, asking for permission anyway to keep going and he saw Magnus steel himself and give a nod.
He put his fingers back on the ridge of his clavicle and began the slow journey across to the other side. He watched his face as he did, seeing the look of determination as if he was enduring something horrible but necessary.

“Should I go faster? Would that be better?” He asked him but the only answer was a fervent shake of his head.

Alec swallowed and flattened his hand before beginning to map the rise of his pec. His palm slid over the surface of the firm muscle and he heard Magnus take in a sharp hiss and his chest rose further into his touch. He was so smooth, his skin flawless in the blue light. He covered the area with a sweep of his hand brushing over the small hard nub of his nipple and feeling it peak under his palm. A deep groan came from Magnus that sounded like it had emerged from deep within his core.

“Oh Lord, save me, Alexander, what you’re doing to me is incredible. Don’t stop! Please, don’t stop.” He begged him and he swelled his chest to press his hand firmly against him.

Alec slid his hand to the other side of his chest and got the same reaction and then took his finger and while watching his face, traced it around the soft sensitive skin of the outer edge of his other nipple.

“URGH!!”

Magnus threw his head back and pushed out his chest, his breath coming in hard panting gasps. God, he was going to burst into flames and all from his touch, what was it going to be like when they finally got to make love? Could you die twice in the same lifetime? Magnus was sure that this would be a real possibility.

The sound of Magnus’ cry hit Alec right in the crotch and he gave a small moan, closing his eyes in a slow blink. It wasn’t right to get so much pleasure out of someone else’s pain. Was it? Instead of making him want to stop the sweet torture of the man before him it only spurred him on, yearning for even more.

He moved down to those hard abs, using his fingers to press into each bump of muscle, reading the contours like a page of braille. Magnus jerked beneath his hand, his belly rising and falling in tandem with his chest. His hand slid up then towards his ribs and his fingers rippled over the corrugations.

Suddenly Magnus barked out a laugh and flinched. He broke out in a giggle that had Alec grinning broadly. It was the sexiest thing he had ever heard.

“What?” he said, softly running his fingertips up and down, loving the way he was squirming around.

“You’re making me ticklish, my sweet. I’d tell you to stop but I don’t seem to be able to get enough of it.” He said, between chuckles.

Alec laughed himself and hit him with a look that had the sound dying in his throat. Fuck, he was going to die.

Alec brought up his other hand and attacked both sides of him, making Magnus burst into new gales of rather high-pitched giggles. He collapsed before him, falling back onto the surface of the bed unable to stay upright any longer. Alec went with him, leaning over the top of him. The clear happy sound of that laughter filling him with a joy that filled him with happiness. Such a simple youthful sound but so profound at the same time.

Magnus writhed before him on the bed, his broad grin forced his eyes to close and happy tears
leaked from the corners. It had been many, many years since he had felt like this and he adored it. He was helpless with it as he lay there below Alec completely at his mercy. His arms fell to either side of his shoulders as he became aware of the fact that Alec had stilled. He wiped the corners of his eyes, still smiling and raised his lids to see the look that was on the other man’s face. He was sure his heart stopped beat for a few seconds.

The laughter faded away where it had filled the room and was replaced with the same heaviness that had been there before, only this time it was stronger, if that was possible. The heat he saw in Alec’s eyes almost scared him and he hummed, stretching his arms up further on the bed, rolled his shoulders and arched his back as if he were basking under a blazing sun.

Alec had no idea what had made him stop his onslaught of Magnus’ ribs but the sight of him lying there, magnificently bare chested and vulnerable had done something to his insides. Something had been building from deep within him and he felt like a volcano ready to erupt. He was balancing on the edge and it would take the smallest of things to tip him over.

“I want your mouth on me, Alexander, let me feel it.”

That did it, the push that he needed to topple him.

He crashed his mouth down to his, hearing the breath being forced out of Magnus’ chest from his weight on him. The kiss was hard and full of need from the start, rendering them senseless within seconds. Magnus groaned, the sound getting lost in the wet heat of Alec’s mouth. His arms came up to cling to his broad back, pressing him tighter to him. His skin felt like it was on fire and he was more than willing to let it burn him.

Alec broke the kiss only because the need to take in a deep breath was becoming a necessity. He gazed down into those two deep dark pools of his eyes and couldn’t tell where the pupils started or the irises began. He caught his breath before covering his lips with his again. He had been worried about kissing someone else when he ‘d had little to no experience at it but he let Magnus’ practised mouth guide him until he was confident enough to take the reins himself.

He felt the first flicker of the tip of his tongue against his lips and it shot bolts of lightning running through him that reached his toes. A noise coming from the bottom of his throat urged Magnus on and he lapped at him again, making Alec’s breath hitch. He wasn’t quite confident to try it himself but he was loving the way it felt.

Magnus slid his hands lower on his back and felt Alec arch it the touch and took the opportunity to move his leg out to encourage him to lay his full length against him. It worked and Alec, not breaking contact, shifted so that now he lay between Magnus’ thighs, his bare legs rubbing against the soft material of his breeches. And his hard length now bumped against the firm bulge behind the lacing of the opening and he was very quickly losing his mind from it.

Magnus was lost. The delicious weight, the way his chest scrubbed against his, the soft hair tickling his hypersensitive skin making him choke back inappropriate bursts of laughter. The indescribable heat pouring from him and the all-consuming feeling of the friction caused by their duelling erections was making him hover on the brink of insanity.

It was taking everything he had not to roll him over, rip those flimsy under garments from his body and sink his throbbing cock deeply into him as hard as he could. He didn’t know for how much longer he could keep this up before the urge became impossible to ignore and he made an mistake of epic proportions but that time felt like it was racing towards him like a herd of charging bulls.

Alec left his mouth to trail kisses down to his jaw and then onto his neck and he whimpered as he reached up to card his fingers into that silky dark thatch of hair, loving the feel of its softness
between his fingers. Then, without knowing, Alec reached the one spot on his whole body that was his Achillé’s heel.

Alec felt the strong thump, thump, thump of the pulse beneath his lips and centred his mouth over it. He decided to be brave and test out his tongue on the heated surface. He gave the spot a tiny swipe with the tip and heard Magnus growl loudly, the sound vibrating through him. He felt his hips tilt up to him, pressing his hardness against him in a way that had him seeing stars before his eyes. He groaned and gave an answering thrust. He accompanied it with a lap of his tongue over the pulse point, tasting the slightly salty goodness of Magnus’ skin.

Magnus cried out into the room, and thrusted his hips up hard, a growing patch of dampness forming on the front of his breeches, the iron rod of his cock starting to leak. After years of being denied attention, he knew that part of him now had a hair trigger and he was seconds from shooting his release hotly into his pants. The line had been crossed. He had to pull back. And it was going to be about as easy as holding back the tide.

“Alexander, wait, my sweet boy, wait.” He panted, pulling his head back, trying to force his heavy lids open.

Alec reluctantly did as he was asked. He was breathing hard himself and a whine of frustration cut the air between them. He started to thrust against him but Magnus’ hand shot to his hips and stilled him, his face screwed up with the strain.

“No, my love, we have to stop. I can’t do this anymore without taking you and it’s too soon for that. I want us to take our time with each other. You need to savour the experience to learn and I need it to remember.”

Alec gave a mournful cry and sank his head to his chest, lay his blazing cheek over his heart, feeling its rapid beat beneath his face.

Magnus sucked in a breath and clutched a hand to his head, his eyes rolling back, praying that the innocent action didn’t press that trigger. The feeling of this gorgeous man’s slightly rough cheek on him was almost too much to bear but he wasn’t ready to give him up just yet. He felt two warm lips kiss his sternum and he arched his back and frowned.

“No, sweetheart, don’t, I can’t take it…”

But then Alec turned his head and kissed him harder, this time lapping at the skin. Magnus cried out in frustration, everything bunched up tight to try to stop himself from reaching his peak. He grunted and took Alec’s face in his hands, trying to force him up but the man seemed bound and determined to see him come undone.

“Alexan... no, please, oh God, stop.... you have to....”

His voice was not much more than a hoarse whisper and he was losing his tenuous grip fast.

What possessed Alec to do what he did next, was beyond his reasoning. By now he had lost nearly all of senses and was only focused on one thing, Magnus and how fucking good he felt and tasted. While he distracted him with his fervent wet, kisses to his chest, and before he could overthink it, he shot his hand down over his fevered skin and down under the waist band of his breeches. He had expected to feel soft material of some sort of underwear but all his fingers found was the silky heat of a hard cock. He groaned loudly as he wrapped his hand around it’s throbbing girth, feeling the veins standing out in hard relief on its surface. He squeezed gently and Magnus cried out, his body spasming and he thrust up into his hand. His head thrashed from side to side and his fingers fisted into Alec’s hair, tugging hard.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

I don't normally post two chapters in one day but I couldn't have my wonderful reader Holochan in more pain that poor Magnus was, lol. It's only a short one but it might give you some closure. But i did leave a little teaser for the start of the next chapter. Enjoy, xx thanks to all my readers as well. You really encourage me with your wonderful words to keeps going.
That goes double for you Gracexxxx

He hadn't wanted his first orgasm to be like this, he wanted it to be when he was buried deep inside Alec’s body, feeling him pulse around him as he filled him with his hot essence. Now he couldn’t put a stop to the inevitable even if he wanted to. The fine line had been crossed well and truly and he was too far down the road to come back.

Alec had no idea what he was doing but he let some basic instinct guide him and he tugged upwards, feeling the silky slip of the skin on his hand and applied gently pressure to him as well. He felt his own erection twitch against Magnus’ thigh, and he whimpered as he felt the start of his own release beginning. If he had been more in his right mind, he would have been completely embarrassed as the steady flow of precum that was dampening his boxers and Magnus’ leg. But he was completely consumed with the thought of feeling their shared orgasms.

Magnus had stopped breathing and every fibre of his being had seemed to tense, knowing that the next time he touched him, he’d fire into his hand. Alec’s hand gave him a final milking jerk and he cried out loudly into the night, thrusting hard into the warm sleeve of his grip, his orgasm ripping through him in wave after wave. Hot sticky wetness flooded his skin and Alec’s fist in hard pulses and he whimpered through each one. Then he heard Alec give a moan and he felt him buck into his thigh, his own release spurting from him in hot thick jets.

Alec pressed hard against his body, his free hand clutching the side of his chest, fingers digging into the side of his chest, nails leaving red marks of the otherwise unmarked skin. He rode out each pulse, his soft keening sounds of pleasure joining Magnus’ own.

The world slowly began to spin once again and the bedroom came back into focus. They lay together, panting hard, fighting to gain control of breaths and heart rates. Both of them too wrecked to be able to communicate just yet. They clung to each other, needing the shared heat. Alec rode Magnus’ heaving chest, feeling as it slowly began to return to a normal rhythm. A soft smile of deep seated satisfaction played on his lips and he kissed his damp skin. He felt Magnus’ fingers lazily threat through his hair and he felt his chest buck as he gave a small bark of laughter.

“Come here to me, Alexander. Bring me your lips.” He drawled, his voice sounding deep and sleepy.

Alec leaned up and smiled and with great effort, pulled himself up so he could reach his mouth. Magnus pulled his head down to him, his lips joining his in a slow dance of contentment. He felt brainless and boneless but he didn’t care, he needed those soft warm lips on his.

Alec pulled back to nuzzle at his neck, and Magnus let out a sigh of utter happiness, gently cradling
his head with his hand.

“Oh my beautiful boy, that certainly didn’t go the way I had pictured it.” He reached down with his other hand and gave his hip a soft slap. “You’re an impatient one, aren’t you? I wanted our first release together to be special, but someone was a naughty boy and didn’t follow the rules, did he?”

“I don’t know but I think that was pretty special, anyway. I don’t know what happened, I just had to do it, I couldn’t stop myself.”

His hand was still jammed down the front of Magnus’ very wet breeches, fingers curled around his softened length. He wasn’t ready to let go just yet. He gave him a small squeeze and Magnus groaned softly.

“Oh, sweetheart, no. I have no doubt I could rise to the occasion again but I think I’d be straining something vital if I did. My pipes haven’t been cleared in a long, long while and I don’t think I’ve ever come that hard. Ever.” He turned his head and kissed Alec’s damp brow, ruffling his hair.

Alec gave a soft laugh, as he rubbed his stubbly face against the skin of his neck, making Magnus purr like a happy cat. Then Magnus heard the chirp of a bird outside and his eyes looked around the room and realised that dawn was not far off. He wanted to cry in frustration. He tightened his grip on the handsome man laying against him and turned to press his nose against his face, an angst filled frown creasing his brow. His time was almost up. Soon he would be nothing but a memory for his new lover and it hurt him to know that.

“I have to go soon, my heart, I don’t want to but I don’t make the rules.”

He brushed his lips against his skin and Alec brought his head up to look at him, his large eyes full of sorrow. He took his mouth in a hard kiss that was full on need.

“I don’t want to lose you yet, Magnus, I want us to fall asleep together. Will you come back to me? I don’t think I can stand it if you don’t.” He said, murmuring the words against his lips, not wanting to lose the feeling of them yet.

“Yes, my darling, I’ll be back with you again tonight. I’ll be with you today as well, you just won’t be able to see me. But make no mistake, I’ll make sure you know I’m there. You’re mine now, Alexander. Just remember that. We are bound to each other.”

He reached up a hand and laid it to the side of his face.

Alec wanted to cry. God, this was so unfair. Why did it have to be this way? He felt tears start to prick his eyes and Magnus’ looked up at him softly.

“Sshh, my heart, it’s alright. We have each night together. From just after midnight till the dawn, I’m all yours. Come, lay back down and close your eyes. We still have a little while left. Let me hold you as long as I can.”

Magnus soothed and he gently pulled his head down to lay it against his chest, his hand gently smoothed back his slightly damp hair from his face.

Alec fought against the need for sleep that was making his limbs and eye lids heavy. He wanted to be aware of the comforting warmth of Magnus’ body on his but as he lay there, letting his hands lull him into a state of utter relaxation and contentment he felt his eyes close for the last time and he drifted off, his last thought being how much he wanted this feeling to never end.
Alec woke two hours later, still in the same position he had been in when he had fallen asleep. He frowned as he leaned up on one arm, rubbing his eyes. Why was he up the wrong end of the bed? Then the memories of last night came back to him in a flood of emotion and he cried out, slumping to the bed again. Magnus. His Magnus and he was gone. He knew he would have him back later tonight, but his arms craved him now. He wanted to wake up to him, to see that fine featured face lying beside him, soft with sleep and satisfaction. Tears of frustration stung his eyes and he let them fall. It was so unfair after sharing such a beautiful evening together that they could have this too. He felt a cool touch to the side of his face, like a soft breeze and when it can again, he knew without a doubt his man had come back to him in the only form he could. It wasn’t enough but it was all they had and he took small comfort in that.

“Good morning, Babe.” He whispered softly into the morning light that filled the room.

He smiled when he felt the gentle touch of lips to his cheek. He laid there for a little while longer, loving the gentle caresses that he felt over his body, fascinated as he watched the hair on his chest flatten from an unseen hand.
Chapter 12

He sat up slowly and looked at the time. Seven thirty. The he remembered. Simon was coming to help him with the dining room.

“Time to get up, babe. Simon will be here soon.”

He stood up and headed towards the drawers to dig out clothes and felt something soft hit his back. He turned quickly and looked down and saw Ted laying behind him. Someone was jealous.

He picked up his old childhood friend and sighed.

“Really Magnus? Do you honestly think that was necessary? There is nothing between Simon and I, I promise you, okay? You don’t have to be jealous. Now, you behave today, please?”

He stood with his hands on his hips waiting for a sign of a reply. He felt the now familiar sensation of an invisible kiss on his cheek and then his brow and smiled.

“That’s more like it. I’m going to have a shower.”

He headed for the bathroom and felt the waistband of his boxers being pulled back and the elastic snap back, against the lower part of his back.

“Babe, behave yourself.” He tried to sound stern but it didn’t really work.

He showered and dried off, standing in front of the foggy mirror about to shave when he heard a squeaking noise in front of him. As he watched, a heart appeared in the condensation of the mirror and he grinned as the letters ‘A’ and ‘M’ appeared in the centre. The words started to form below it.

DON’T SHAVE

Alec laughed and shook his head. Seems Magnus liked the rough look. Okay, he’d give him that. He dressed and headed down stairs to grab something to eat before the work began. He got a cup down from the cupboard and started the coffee maker then went to the fridge and got out a tub of yogurt. He leaned against the counter and waiting for the coffee and felt two arms go around his waist. He smiled around the spoonful of his breakfast and felt the gentle pressure increase.

“I miss you too, babe. I can’t wait for tonight.”

He heard the sound of a car pulling into the driveway and knew that it was Simon. He was about to head towards the door when he felt a firm grip on his crotch. He gave a jerk and stopped.

“Magnus! Geez, cut it out. You don’t have to worry, okay? Now stop it. I’m yours, alright? And that’s your property, I get it.”

He waited for the pressure to ease and when it finally did, he went to the door.

Simon was his usually smiley self as he walked up the steps and passed him into the house, reaching out to put a friendly pat on his shoulder.

“Morning, Alec, ready for some more hot and steamy fun?” He said as he went inside. He must have noticed Alec’s funny look and he gave a chuckle. “The wall paper steamer? You know, hot, steamy? Sorry, bad joke.”
Alec gave a weak laugh, more out of relief than anything. He was still worried about what Magnus was going to think about Simon’s humour, however. A few seconds later, he got his answer. He turned shut the door when he heard Simon give a yelp. He looked at him and saw him rubbing his hand.

“Must have gotten a hit of static electricity. I was leaning on the couch. Ha, that was some jolt.” He said.

Alec just gave him a nod of acknowledgement. When he closed the door, he raised his eyes to the ceiling. It hadn’t gone unnoticed to him that the hand that had gotten ‘zapped’ was the same one that he had touched Alec with. Magnus.

“Stop it.” He mouthed before turning back around.

“I was just about to have a coffee, do you want one?” he asked Simon. That was pretty innocent, right?

“Yeah sure. Milk with two thanks.” He said, smiling. “Hey, why don’t I get the steamer and stuff ready while you get that?”

“Yeah, good idea. It’s in the laundry.” Alec told him and they both headed for the kitchen.

Doorways are only so wide and they found this out when the both tried to go through the kitchen door at the same time. Simon gave a chuckle and took a step back, waving Alec through after the bumped sides. Alec went through and screwed his eyes shut for a few seconds, knowing that this wasn’t going to go down well either.

“Don’t do anything stupid, Magnus.” He mouthed as he stood at the counter, getting another cup down.

Simon walked behind him on his way to the laundry when he heard him give a yell. Oh God, now what?

He turned and saw him rubbing his shin. A kitchen chair pushed at and odd angle into the room away from the table.

“Must have gotten my big foot caught on the leg and I banged my shin into it. You know what they say about big feet.” He said, giving Alec a wink.

Alec wanted to run over to where he was and clamp a hand over his mouth to stop him from making anymore flirty jokes but he knew that was totally out of the question. Dare he asked?

“Ah, no what do they say?” He said, his voice going a little higher than he had meant it to.

Please don’t let it be had, please don’t let it be bad, he chanted over and over in his head.

“Big feet, large….” He started and Alec found himself holding his breath. Oh Shit, he was gonna die.

“Shoes.” Simon said, dramatically.

Alec let out a relieved breath and gave a weak laugh. Ha ha, yeah, funny. Let’s hope the jealous ghost boyfriend thought so too. Could he call him that?

Simon went into the laundry and Alec went back to getting their coffees. He was about to put a spoonful of sugar into Simon’s cup when he saw that some had been spilt on the counter top. He
watched in fascination as an unseen finger wrote in the fine white grains.

IDIOT!

Underneath the word and arrow was pointed towards the laundry door.

“It that for me?”

Alec jumped and spun around to see Simon standing behind him. Oh damn! He’s seen the sugar, he thought and his mind raced to think of how he could cover it up. But how the heck was he going to explain why this? Good luck with that one, genius, he thought.

Simon pointed towards the it. “That coffee, is that mine?”

Alec gave a small laugh that sounded just a little too loud. Simon’s brow creased as he took the cup from him.

“Just exactly how many of these have you had this morning, Alec?” he said, one eye brow raised.

Great now he was acting crazy enough for him to notice.

“This is my first one, actually. Had kind of a restless night.” Alec told him, taking a sip from his cup.

“Yeah, being up half the night really sucks.” He said, nodding.

Alec half choked on his mouthful of too hot coffee and spluttered. He covered it up with a throat clearing noise.

“Yeah, makes me hard. I mean makes it hard. To get up the next day, I mean.” Oh God, stop. What the hell was wrong with him this morning? Shouldn’t he be super relaxed after that mind-numbing orgasm last night?

There’s your first clue, Sherlock. The whole mind-numbing thing should ring a bell.

Geez, maybe Magnus’ crotch should come with a warning. After handling, do not operate heavy machinery or try to talk in declarative sentences. His mind went back to last night and the way his hard length had felt in his hand, silky skin over hot iron. Fucking sexy as hell. Mouth watering so.

He even gave a shiver. He felt a small pinch on his backside that made him jerk and almost spill the contents of this cup.

“Are you okay there? You looked miles away. If you’re too tired we can do this another day.” Simon said, looking back at him, slightly concerned.

“No, no, that’s fine, I mean I’m fine. Once I get a caffeine hit, I’ll be good to go.” He said, giving Simon a smile that he hoped would detract from the colour that heated his cheeks.

Nope. Didn’t work. He was still looked at him as if he didn’t believe what he had just said.

“I hope you aren’t coming down with something. You look a little flushed.”

He even went as far as walking up to him and putting a hand on his forehead. Oh shit, here we go again.

Cue one very possessive ghost.
Alec wanted to cringe, waiting for the next fit of spectral outrage but a few minutes passed and all stayed silent. Maybe Magnus had calmed down about Simon’s presence.

Nope. Wrong again.

Suddenly a loud beeping came from outside. Simon spun around and frowned.

“That’s my truck alarm, what the hell…?”

He started for the door and had almost reached when it flew open with force and smacked him right in the forehead. He gave a yelp and flew back, rubbing his head. Alec cursed under his breath and went over to him. The truck’s alarm still blaring out in the driveway. Thank God, he didn’t have neighbours.

“Shit, are you okay? Let me see?” Alec said, inspecting his brow.

There was a small red mark but thankfully nothing permanent.

“The wind must have caught it. These old places shift so much the door frame is probably warped. I think I’ll live. I mean, I might pull through, if you kiss it better.” Simon looked up at him through those dark rimmed glasses making his already large eyes look bigger still.

Alec gave a chuckle. He had to admit, Simon was pretty cute if you liked the whole nerdy type but he just didn’t light any fires in him like Magnus did. The ghost was a complete pyromaniac when it came to him and he was more than willing to hand him a box of matches.
He would have been lying if he denied that having someone that possessive and jealous over him wasn’t a major turn on, but he really didn’t want to see anyone get hurt either. Feeling slightly rebellious, Alec went and made a mistake that was of biblical proportions. He leaned over and put a small kiss to the red mark on Simon’s forehead making the electrician give a rather girly little giggle before he rushed out the door to see to the truck alarm.

Just as he reached the bottom step a huge crash came from the kitchen and Alec jumped. Fuck! Now what?

He ran to the kitchen to discover the shelf in the cupboard that held all his glasses and cups hand given way and somehow pushed the doors open and fallen out onto the counter and the floor below. Shattered glass and crockery was everywhere.

“Fuck, Magnus! What the hell? It didn’t mean anything.” He said as quietly as he could through gritted teeth. “Anyway, you shouldn’t have done that to Simon. It wasn’t nice.” He said grabbing the broom and sweeping up the jaggered shards.

He heard a noise on the counter and saw the sugar container tip over, spilling its contents over the surface. Great! Another mess. He gave a groan and went over to see what was going on with that now.

YOU ARE MINE! DON’T TOUCH HIM AGAIN!

The words had been written in the spilt sugar as before. Message received, Magnus, loud and clear. Alec have a huff and looked up to the ceiling.

“Okay, okay, sorry, babe. Okay? I’m new to all this stuff, ya know? What do you want me to do to prove it? Get it tattooed on my forehead or something?” He said shaking his head.

Once again, totally the wrong thing to say to a possessive ghost.

When he first felt the sensation of two strong arms going around his waist, Alec grinned and closed his eyes, hugging his arms to him as if he were holding them close to him. Aww, he loved Magnus’ need to touch him. Even in this form, or lack of it, it felt nice to feel his arms around him. Phantom kisses ran down the side of his neck and he shrugged his shoulder and wished for all he was worth that he could feel Magnus’ hair beneath his fingers and how it tickled the side of his face.

Then he drew in a sharp breath as he felt a sting to the slope of muscle that ran from the base of his neck to his shoulder.

“Argh! Geez, Magnus!” He hissed through gritted teeth and then he heard someone clear his throat behind him.

Crap! The stinging sensation along with the arms disappeared immediately.

Okay, explain this one, genius!

He turned around to see a very confused looking Simon standing in the doorway. His eyes scanned the mess that was still all over the floor and counter top.

“Did I just hear you say Magnus?” He said, one eye brow raised. Think quick, think quick.
“No! ‘course not. I said madness, geez, madness. I mean, look at this mess? Great timing for a shelf to give way, huh? Let me get this cleaned up and we can start.” He said, and he went to start sweeping again.

He swept the results of Magnus’ temper tantrum into a pile.

“Where’s your dust pan and I’ll hold it for you?” Simon asked and Alec turned his head in the direction of the laundry.

“Yeah, it’s in there.” Alec said and he turned back to see Simon looking at him strangely.

He frowned. Oookkaay, what was that look for?

“Alec, do you want to tell me something?” He said. Alec was lost, what in the world…?

“About…?” He asked him, shaking his head.

“About why you have a hickey on the side of your neck? I thought you said you were single.” Simon replied, frowning.

At first, Alec thought Simon was seeing things or trying to be funny but the realisation dawned on him. The stinging sensation he had felt earlier. Damn it, Magnus! Apparently, this was his version of Alec’s offer to get tattooed. He was determined to mark him as his territory. His mind raced to find an explanation that Simon might buy, the trouble was, he was fast running out of excuses.

He’s never told so many white lies in one day in his life, and it was still morning!

“What? No! Ha ha, I guess that’s what it looks like, doesn’t it? No, I was clearing up in the attic and I put a box up on my shoulder and it pinched my skin, that’s all. I don’t have a boyfriend, I can assure you.” Please believe me, he prayed as he smiled back at Simon.

Then he thought of what Magnus might think of what he had just told him. Could he actually say that Magnus and he were together now when it had only been really one night? He had a feeling Magnus would think so.

“Okay, I believe you, it’s just, well, it doesn’t matter now. I think we’d better get on with this wallpaper before something else happens.” Simon said and he bent to hold the dust pan while Alec swept it in.

While he took the mess to the garbage outside, Alec turned back to the spilt sugar and went to wipe it into the sink.

YES, YOU ARE MY BOYFRIEND. REMEMBER THAT.

Was now written in the white grains. Alec smiled and something sparked inside him, filling his insides with warmth. Boyfriend. He had a boyfriend. Even if it was the world’s most unique relationship. He was still standing at the counter, grinning like an idiot when Simon came back in. He hadn’t even heard the back-door open.

“Oh, did that happen when the shelf fell?”

Alec jumped, coming back to reality with a thud. He took the dish cloth and quickly swiped the sugar over and into the sink before Simon got close enough to see what was written in it. God, what was wrong with him? He needed to watch himself.

“Yeah, must of. Are we all set to start this work, finally?” He said, spinning around to face him.
“Sure are. Let’s do this.”

The dining room was a reasonably small space and with the large table in the middle, even with the chairs stacked on top of it, they didn’t have a whole lot of room to move around in.

Now Magnus had ‘branded’ him as his and told him that they were officially a couple, Alec felt particularly mindful about getting too close to Simon or allowing him to do the same.

There were a few close calls when they were working side by side; Simon operating the steamer and Alec pulling off the paper and scraping it when necessary, when they came close to making contact. Alec was dodging and weaving like a line backer and he knew Simon was looking at him strangely when he treated him like a leper.

But the tactics seemed to of pleased Magnus who had, much Alec’s relief, left Simon alone. Alec himself, however, was a totally different matter. All morning, he had felt small touches on his body, even the odd kiss which had just about given him up.

They had been working on a particularly stubborn strip of wall paper and Alec had been standing beside Simon, scraping at the paper while he applied an extra burst of steam. He had bent his head looking down at the wall when he felt the first cool soft kiss to the back of his neck. He knew he flinched, but it was damn near impossible not to react to something like that.

His eyes quickly flicked towards Simon but he was more concerned with applying the steam to the wall. Ghostly fingers brushed the damp hair above the spot, before he felt another kiss. The little giggle escaped him before he could stop it and Simon’s eyes went up to him from where he was crouched on the floor.

“Please, let me in on the joke because honestly, I fail to see where anything about this could be funny.” He said, wiping sticky sweat from his brow.

Lie number five coming right up.

“Sorry, I was just thinking about something else, that’s all.” Alec said quickly, a little too quickly.

“Well do you think you could think about where your putting that scraper? It’s either going to end up in my hand or under the steamer, I can’t see either of those things ending well.”

Alec’s face heated. He felt like a scolded child. Simon was getting sick of his notable moments of lapses in concentration which was happening when Magnus decided he really needed to hug his waist or put unseen kisses to the back of his neck. He had been worried about Magnus hurting Simon but if he didn’t wake up to himself, he was going to be the one to do it.

“Sorry, guess that coffee didn’t work. I probably need to eat something. How about we finish this section and get some lunch?” He offered and Simon agreed.

Alec made a much stronger effort to keep his mind on what they were doing, and surprise surprise, it took a lot less time to get the rest of the paper off the wall. Alec was grateful that Magnus had seemed to of backed off as well which made it a lot easier. But even without his invisible hugs and kisses, he still found his mind wandering back to the previous night. He caught himself smiling a few times and he quickly replaced the smiles with a fierce look of determination before Simon caught him out again.

He thought he had gotten away with it too, until lunch time when they were sitting opposite each other.
He had once again, in a lapse in their conversation, allowed his mind to wander back to the way his boyfriend’s firm smooth body felt had felt against his. The way the hair on his own chest had gently tugged and scrubbed on his, making the skin colour pleasantly. The small firm buds of his nipples pressing into him. The way they had felt under his tongue. What would they feel like to draw into his mouth, the small hard nubs against his tongue in the wet heat of his mouth. He felt his cock twitch and start to swell and he ended up swallowing the mouthful of sandwich way too early, almost making himself choke.

Simon put down the remains of his own lunch to look at him through half closed eyes. Alec looked back at him, starting to feel rather self-conscious. Oh shit, he’d zoned out again, hadn’t he?

“If I didn’t know better, I’d swear you were crushing on someone.” He said, one eyebrow raised high.

Alec swallowed. So much for thinking that he had gotten away with it. Magnus said that everything showed on his face, obviously he was right. He gave a weak laugh. When in doubt, deny, deny, deny.

“Ha, yeah, no. Just a combination of that restless night and still getting used to the place, I think. Sorry I’ve been like it today.” Simon narrowed his gaze.

Alec could tell he was having trouble buying it but he hoped he could bluff his way through.

“So, did you have someone in the city? Someone that might be coming back into your life, maybe?” Simon leaned forward, resting his head on his hand.

Alec wondered if his next move would be to get a bright light and shine it into his face and tie him to the chair. He hesitated long enough to make him raise his eyebrows. Shit, after the morning that he had had, talking about what had happened back in the city was the last thing he wanted to do.

“No, not really. Nothing I want to talk about anyway. Are you finished? We really should get this finished.” He said, standing up and reaching for their plates. Simon managed to snatch the remains of his sandwich before Alec took it away. He held both hands up in a sign of surrender.

“Hey, my bad, I didn’t mean to pry, man. It’s just you’re sorta different today, that’s all.”

Alec had poured a glass of water and taken a mouthful when Simon almost made him spit the whole lot over the floor.

“Ha, you’re gonna love this, but you kinda remind me of me after the first time I got laid, that’s all.” He crammed the last of the sandwich into his mouth.

Alec’s eyes bulged as he felt the water turn into a mouthful of cement. He winced as he swallowed but he managed to do it without water going everywhere, somehow. Today had definitely not been the day to have company over, especially when said company could have gotten a job as an interrogator in the CIA.

Simon let the matter drop and they tackled the second wall. Things moved along better that afternoon, with conversation kept to a minimum. Alec still found himself thinking about Magnus but for an entirely different reason. As much as his antic had caused him trouble all morning, he had loved the near constant contact. But now he hadn’t had so much as a friendly pat on the back. He missed him.

He had to keep reminding himself that he would see him later tonight but that didn’t help him right now. How could one night with someone make you so consumed by them that you couldn’t think
straight anymore? Was it like that in other relationships or just ones with a century old ghost? He was completely at a loss with it. He had no previous experience to go by except for what Simon had just said about himself but that was hardly helpful and his experience was vastly different than the one he had. Most people when starting a new relationship were concerned with what interests they both shared or whether they liked action movies or romances, not that one of them could only appear as human for a few hours each night and through the day was a bodiless entity with a jealous streak a mile wide. He was going to have to just play this all by ear.

By five in the afternoon, they had actually finished the whole room and after helping clean up, Simon left. Things had been a bit weird between them all afternoon and Alec had felt a tension that hadn’t been there before lunch. He hated to say it but he was glad when he left.

He flopped down onto the couch after shutting the door, contemplating what he was going to have for dinner but the thought of cooking even something simple didn’t appeal at all. He remembered seeing pasta on the menu board at Papa’s Pizzas and decided he could make the effort to go into town and get some. The main street was pretty much deserted when he got there, and there was no one else in the store either. Clary was behind the counter again, her nose buried in a book. She smiled when he walked in, putting it on the counter behind her.

“Look out, it’s the mid-week rush! Hey there, how’s it going?” She asked him brightly.

“Yeah good thanks. Sorry for disrupting your reading.” Alec said, returning her smile. Clary laughed.

“That’s okay, it was only some stupid trashy romance novel anyway. What can I get you?”

“Can I get a bolognese pasta, please. We’ve been stripping wall paper all day and I really couldn’t be bothered to cook anything.”

“Oh, sounds like a big job. So, by we do you mean Simon and you?” She said, wiggling her rusty coloured brows and grinning back at him.

Okay, so had Simon said anything to her? Only the other day he could have sworn she was flirting with him.

Alec decided to play it cool.

“Yeah, he’s been a great help, thanks for giving me his number.”

Clary wasn’t finished digging quite yet.

“He’s such a nice guy too, really sweet.”

“Ah, yeah, I guess. How long is that pasta going to be? I’m kinda tired and I wanna get to bed early tonight.”

Hint, hint.

He gave a sigh of relief as Clary picked up on his dismissal and fairly obvious lack of enthusiasm for giving her any further information where Simon was concerned. Clary seemed to of disappeared into the back of the store so Alec decided to take a walk up the street to fill in time.

The evening was really pleasant, the air starting to get warmer as the summer got nearer. The main street was pretty in the twilight, tall trees, covered in white and pink blossoms lined the street, and looked beautiful against the fading blue sky. All the other stores were closed now and he seemed to
be the only other person walking around. He was peering through the window of a gift shop when someone spoke behind him.

“There you are. I’ve been waiting for you to show that handsome face again.”

He’d heard that voice before. He turned to see the beaming face of Catarina Loss looking back at him through dark sunglasses.

“Hello, Miss Loss, it’s nice to see you again.” He said, ignoring her first comment.

She gave a wave of dismissal with her hand.
“Never mind all that, although I do like a man with manners. I think it’s time we talked.”

Alec frowned. Was she just being friendly to the town’s newest resident or was this going to be another interrogation by the town elder? He tried to make light of it.

“Oh, I don’t think I’m all that interesting, Miss Loss.” He said.

“Now that’s where you’re very wrong, Alexander. There are things you need to know now you’re with him.”

Alec felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand up. This just real creepy real fast. He pleaded ignorance.

“Him? I’m not with anyone.”

He looked towards the door of the pizza place and prayed that Clary would appear and tell him his dinner was ready and rescue him. The small woman gave a deep chuckle and shook her head.

“Now, now, there’s no need to be shy around me, Alexander. I know you and Magnus have met, more than met, I’m fairly certain. And that’s a good thing. You two need each other. But you need to know a few things. Come to my house tomorrow morning and we’ll talk.”

She reached out a hand and gave his arm a pat.

“I’m so pleased for you both, I know you’ll make each other happy. You both deserve that. Ah, the evenings are so nice now. I love this weather, much better for my old bones than the cold. You best go get your dinner, he won’t be pleased with me if I keep you too long. Good night, Alexander, until tomorrow.” And without waiting for a reply she started off up the street.

Alec watched her go, and went to open his mouth to say goodbye, at least but he was too flabbergasted to speak. How the hell did she know all that? Did she and Magnus know each other somehow? And if they did, how was that possible when he had lived so long ago. I mean, she was an old lady but not that old. Was she?

“Your pasta’s ready, Alec.”

Alec spun around to see Clary’s head poking around the door of the store. He turned back around to look up the street to where Catarina had headed but there wasn’t a sign of her.

He went back and got his dinner and after a quick good bye to Clary, went to his car and headed home.

He hadn’t been lying when he’d told Clary that he wanted to get to bed early, just the reasons for his early end to the day may have been. He showered and put on a pair of sleep pants before going in and climbing under the covers. He knew he should try to get some sleep before Magnus got there but his mind wouldn’t let him.

He couldn’t wait to have Magnus in his arms once again and he felt like an excited kid on Christmas Eve. It had been a long time since he’d felt like this. Just the thought of running his hands over that smooth toned body made his skin tingle. Warm lips on his, hands lost in his hair, delicious weight against his. He groaned into the darkness and curled up on his side, trying to
contain the thought.

Then his mind went back to his conversation with Catarina. So many questions ran through his head and he thought about mentioning it to Magnus when he got there but something told him to wait. Then the doubts started forming.

What if it was something bad that she had to tell him? What if she told him that he wasn’t meant to be with him after all? What if Magnus didn’t come back tonight? He had been pretty pissed about the whole Simon thing, maybe he’d stay away to punish him. He curled up tighter, squeezing his eyes closed at the thought of that happening.

He didn’t know when it was exactly that he did finally fall into a fitful sleep but he must of at some point because the next thing he knew there were warm kisses running down his spine. He arched into it and smiled broadly as he slowly opened his eyes. A bulging bicep snaked over his ribs, and strong slender fingers slid into the hair of his chest, fisting it with just enough force to make his skin start to burn.

“About time you woke up, my love, I was about to resort to drastic measures.”

That deep, honey rich voice filled him with heat and he hummed happily. He desperately wanted to roll over but he was enjoying the feeling of that hard body being moulded against him. He reached up and took his hand in his, lacing their fingers together.

“Oh yeah? And what would those of been?” He asked, bringing the hand up to his lips and kissing the knuckles.

Magnus pressed into his back harder and he felt his hardening crotch jerk against the cheek of his butt.

Oh, yes please, he thought and pushed back into him.

Suddenly, he was flat on his back and had a large hot body looming above him, two strong arms taking the weight either side of his head. He grinned like an idiot and wriggled in delight.

“You need to behave yourself, Alexander. I told you, I don’t want to rush anything and ruin things. But I have to say, I do like this new you. Not that that shy introverted version wasn’t intriguing as well. He had my interest piquing, that’s for sure.”

Magnus looked down at him, his eyes capturing his, the heat in them rendering him helpless.

Alec went to reach up to him to pull his head down towards his so he could finally taste those sweet plump lips but Magnus jerked back. His face fell as he looked at him, bewildered. What had he done? Why was he stopping him?

“However, someone, has been a bad boy today, making his boyfriend very jealous with that scrawny excuse for a human being. I think you need to learn that I don’t like sharing and I especially don’t like miserable little nobodies touching what’s mine, either.”

His face was deadly serious and Alec looked up at him and swallowed hard. Uh oh. He should have known that there would be consequences from today, but he thought getting most of his cups and glasses shattered into a million pieces had been punishment enough.

Bzzzzt! Wrong answer, want to try who’s about to get schooled big time for a thousand dollars?

The corner of his mouth twitched, threatening to pull up into a grin but he fought it like crazy. This
wasn’t the moment for that, even if this whole scenario was making him feel like he was jumping out of his skin and his cock hard. The latter hadn’t gone unnoticed by Magnus, either. He raised his eyebrows and an evil looking grin spread across his face. The deep chuckle that emanated from him had Alec wanting to burst into flames.

“Well now, we are a naughty boy, aren’t we? Like the idea of being punished, do we? Oh my beautiful boy, I can guarantee that by the time I’m finished with you, you will be cursing my name and my very existence, such as it is. First of all, I don’t think I can trust you not to move when I tell you not to so let’s remedy that, shall we?”

Alec frowned as he moved off him for a minute and reached down to the floor on the other side of the bed and came back with something in his hand. Oh, holy shit, it was rope. Where did he…? You know what, I don’t even want to know, he thought as he saw him kneel on the bed beside him.

He reached for Alec’s wrists but paused. “First things first, I want you to take my shirt off and undo my breeches. Slowly.” He said, his voice at least two octaves lower.

Alec had to fight like crazy not to let the moan that was on his tongue breach his lips. He eased himself up in the bed a little and biting his bottom lip, reached out to take the soft material of his white shirt in his hands as Magnus knelt before him. He pulled it up, the small glimpse of tight muscle making his mouth water, he needed to see more. Needed to feel it under his palms.

Magnus grabbed both his hands and halted his progress.

“Ah, ah, ah, I said slowly, my sweet. Try again.”

Alec took in a breath and when he let him go, he slowed his impatient pace and inch by agonising inch, lifted the shirt, revealing more of that perfect torso as it went. Magnus lifted his arms and after what seemed like a life time, the shirt slipped free of him and he sat before him, magnificently bare chested. Alec clutched the still warm soft material to his face and buried his face into it, taking in the exotic scent that was pure Magnus. Earthy, spicy, hot as hell.

Suddenly it was ripped from his grip and tossed to the floor. Magnus waggled a finger before him, eyes glowering.

“Tsk, tsk, tsk, no, no. None of that. This is to teach you a lesson, remember? Besides, it’s covering that gorgeous chest of yours and ruining my view. Now, breeches, and remember, slowly.”

He sat back on his knees, thighs just parted, hands on narrow hips.

Alec leaned forward and with shaking fingers, took hold of the lacing. He undid the knot and then started to unthread the tie from each small loop. His fingers brushed lightly against the firm ridge of a hard erection, teasingly close to the other side of the thin material. He couldn’t stop the whimper escape him this time, and his hands stopped their work to gently press into it firmer. Magnus growled and flexed his hips slightly. His breathing had grown deeper.

“Keep going.” Was all he said, his voice raspy but firm.

Alec steeled himself not to rush and he finished his task, letting the lacing hang free. Sweet Jesus, he wanted him so bad. His eyes couldn’t seem to come away from the sight of that straining hard length trying to force its way out through the loose opening. His hand went to his mouth, sure he was drooling.

“Something caught your attention, Alexander? Take your punishment like a good boy and perhaps
I’ll let you have a reward.” Magnus said, his voice low and deep. But right now, we have work to do.”

Magnus straddled Alec’s hips and grabbed both his wrists. He took the length of rope from the bed and wrapped it around them before pulling his arms above his head and tying the rope to the brass bed head. He had a point of pushing his chest into Alec’s face and he smiled when he felt his lips on the smooth muscled surface.

He was very much tempted to allow him to continue, but he had other plans for his Alexander.

He pulled back, hearing a whine of frustration and disappointment coming from him.

“Oh really, sweetheart, we haven’t even started and you’re already complaining. I thought you’d be made of stronger stuff than that.”

He moved back a little so he was now over Alec’s thighs and, taking his hips in his hand, gave him a hard tug so he slid down further in the bed. Alec gave a grunt as his arms stretched above either side of his head just short of uncomfortable and Magnus gave a chuckle before bending forward and planting a soft kiss to his belly. Alec arched into it, head back and eyes closed.

The rope pulled on the brass bars of the bed. He’d been waiting to feel that mouth on him all day. He hadn’t really pictured being tied to the bed when it happened but he kinda liked it.

“Like your bonds, do you, my love? Let’s see what you feel about them in another fifteen minutes or so, shall we?”

Alec’s eyes looked deeply into his, the flames had definitely been lit now to keep stoking the fire.

Magnus kept his gaze as he wriggled up a little further on his thighs to reach the waistband of his sleep pants. He pointed one finger and put it in his mouth, slowly pushing it along his tongue and then slowly pulled it out again with a wet pop. Alec was ready to expire right then and there. Good God, that had to be the hottest thing he’d ever seen apart from the sight of Magnus in the rain, that is.

Magnus took the wet finger and touched the tip to the base of his throat, in the little dip of his collar bone and with a feather light touch, trailed it slowly down the centre of his chest, through the soft cloud of hair, down his belly, to his navel where he pushed the tip into it, wriggling his finger. Alec groaned and pulled on the rope, sucking in the muscles that surrounded it. So, it seems there was an invisible hot line from there to his crotch which jerked against the soft material of his sleep pants, wanting out of its confinement.

If he thought a damp fingertip had felt good then it was nothing compared to a hot wet tongue. Magnus bent at the waist and after making a show of licking his lips, he filled the small puckered divot with the tip of his tongue.

“Argh!” Alec called out into the dark room, gritting his teeth and squeezing his eyes shut.

His wrists strained against the rough surface of the rope and he felt the skin get rubbed hard. Sparks shot from the centre of his belly and radiated out all through him. Fuck, he longed to have his hands free so he could sink his fingers into the dark silky strands of Magnus’ hair as he licked and wriggled his tongue into him.

Magnus lifted his head just enough to raise his eyes towards his face and the carnal looking grin that curved his lips had Alec whimpering. He was breathing heavy already and his skin felt like his body had been hooked up to a power outlet, current running through his veins instead of blood.
Magnus gave a chuckled. “Look at you, Alexander, we’ve only just begun and you’re a hot mess. Oh, this is going to be fun.”

Alec gritted his teeth and glared at him. Smartass. He was going to have to do some thinking about what he could do to pay him back for torturing him like this. The fact that he was more than willing to let him do it and was enjoying every second of it already was beside the point.

Magnus sat back up and then dampening the end of his finger once more, returned it to the dark line of hair under his belly button and recommenced his slow trail southward. He made it to the waist band of his sleep pants and Alec stilled. Shit, what was he going to do to him now?

He slid the finger just underneath the elastic and traced the line of its path across his lower stomach right to his hip where he shoved the finger deeper into the groove that led to his groin. Alec cried out and bucked against his restraints. If he didn’t know better, he would have said that Magnus had run something hot along his skin, stopping just before his pubic hair started. Maddening.

He slid it back up to the elastic again and back across to the other side where he repeated his actions on the other side. The problem with that was, Alec’s ever hardening cock was lying on that side, pushing up towards the waistband of the sleep pants. The very tip of Magnus’ finger bumped against it and he yelled loudly, as if he’d been jabbed with something sharp.

“Oh, looks like someone’s been hiding his light under a bushel. And it seems he wants a breath of fresh air too. Let’s do that, shall we?”

Alec’s brains had been scrambled too much to try to work out what the hell he was talking about now. Lights? Bushels? What the hell? He had no idea and really didn’t care just at the moment, anyway.

Magnus hooked his thumbs into the top of his pants and gently started to drag them down. He slowly revealed Alec’s lower belly; his hip bones jutting free, the rest of the dark line of hair that ran down the centre of his stomach and that deep ‘v’ that outlined it. Magnus picked up front o the elastic and as if it had been waiting to do so, his hard erection sprang free into the cool air of the bedroom.

Alec could feel his face heat, still feeling a small hint of embarrassment at having the most intimate part of his body exposed to someone he’d only known a few days. The thing was, somehow, those few days felt like a life time. Magnus was eyeing him greedily, the tip of his tongue running along his slightly parted lips. He shook his head.

“He’s thinking that gorgeous rear end of yours was impressive, this is downright magnificent. And all mine.”

He bent his head again and Alec felt himself tense, pulling against the ropes again in anticipation. Jesus, he was going to put him in his mouth. Someone call nine one one right now.

He watched as Magnus hovered about his swollen tip, holding his breath to the point of seeing spots before his eyes. A quarter of an inch from its surface, he changed direction and put a series of soft kisses on the hot skin around it. Alec whimpered in frustration and writhed below him, pulling so hard on the rope that circled his wrist he could feel the burn of it on the tender skin. Somehow even that added to the feelings of pleasure that was filling every inch of him.

Magnus leaned back up and just sat there, looking down at him as he relaxed back against the pillows. A fine sheen of sweat now covering him; it felt like he had been doing some sort of
physical work, not laying on a comfortable bed with his boyfriend perched on top of him.

“Catch your breath, Alexander. You’re doing very well. But we have a long way to go and I can’t have you popping your cork too early. Where would be the fun in that?” Magnus said, one side of his mouth pulled up into a lop sided grin.

Alec pulled on his rope.

“This is supposed to be fun?” Alec asked him, eye brows arched high on his brow.

Great, not only did he have a boyfriend who was a ghost, he was a sadistic one to go with it.

“Are you complaining?” Magnus’ voice was deep and even, and sent chills down Alec’s spine. He looked down shyly and felt his cheek heat.
Chapter 15

“No, I didn’t think so. There’s nothing to be ashamed of, Alexander, for liking being restrained. It’s the sweetest form of torture there is. Embrace that side of yourself and enjoy it. Time is too fleeting not to allow yourself to experience these things, believe me, I know. Now, I think you’ve rested long enough.”

Magnus moved up a little so he was straddling his hips. He leaned forward and ran both hands slowly over his up stretched arms, his chest brushed against Alec’s face. Alec hummed in delight and kissed the smooth skin as it glided passed his lips. He rubbed his stubble covered cheek on him, bringing a deep moan from Magnus and he felt him lean into the touch.

Magnus manoeuvred himself so that the roughness brushed a nipple and Alec heard him give a hiss as it scrubbed against the sensitive tissue. Alec turned his head and gave the dark round disc a fat swipe of his tongue and Magnus groaned and his hands went to his head, burying his fingers deep into his hair, fingertips digging into his scalp. He smiled at the thought of turning the table on him, even if it was only for a little while. Magnus dropped his head as he watched him lap at him. This hadn’t been part of his plans but it did add an interesting and very pleasurable twist.

He shifted position so that he could work on the other side, allowing himself to get lost in the sensation. He felt his erection swell behind the loose lacings and it strained harder to be set free, digging into Alec’s soft lower belly. If he kept going, he was going to be the one to lose control. He groaned and pulled away, putting soft kisses to Alec’s forehead and working his way down the side of his face to brush his lips on both heavy-lidded eyes, the tip of his nose and then finally reaching that beautiful wide mouth.

He didn’t waste time and hit him with wide, open mouthed kisses straight away that had Alec pulling at the rope, desperate to take him in his arms, and hold him as close as he could get him. Magnus flicked the tip of his tongue to his lips and he felt Alec’s chest swell and he drew in a breath, face tilting further up, wanting more. He loved how responsive he was to his every move, and he hoped he would never lose that.

The next kiss had him laying his tongue on his, filling his mouth and tasting the heated wetness. God, he tasted good too and he went back for seconds making Alec moan deep within his throat. Magnus pulled back, smiling.

“You like Italian food, Alexander?” Alec fought his way back to clearer thinking and gave him a shy smile.

“Sorry, yeah. I did brush but I the garlic was a bit strong.”

Magnus chuckled and went back again, filling his mouth with his tongue in hot languid strokes. Alec took him in, loving the way their tongues danced together in a slow lazy glide.

“No apology is necessary, my sweet, I love the way you taste. Speaking of which..”

Magnus left his mouth and kissed his way down his stubbly jaw and along its hard ridge, alternating light brushes of his lips with small sharp nips. He reached the side of his face where his face met his ear. He took his earlobe between his lips and sucked the small plump flap of flesh into his mouth and Alec cried out reefing against the rope hard enough to bite into his skin.

Fuck! He’d forgotten that there seemed to be some mystical connection between his ears and his
cock and he felt it jerk and throb against his belly. He wasn’t going to last much longer if he kept this up.

Magnus released him and then traced the outer shell of his ear with his tongue, his hands holding his head still as he worked. Alec whimpered and rubbed his face against his hand, doubling the pleasure. His breath was ragged and he could no longer get enough oxygen by breathing through his nose and he dragged great inhales and exhales to and from his body in a desperate attempt not to black out.

Magnus sensed his distress and left his ear and went back to his neck covering the slope of it with kisses. He reached the small round bruise that he had inflicted on him earlier and smiled, diving back down to clamp his mouth on a spot beside it, sucking hard, turning the first bruise into a matched pair.

Alec cried out into dark, writhing at both the sting of it and the pleasure that it caused him to feel. He felt a bead of sticky heat hit his belly as it fell from his throbbing tip and he tensed his whole body willing himself not to fire the rest of it up between them.

Magnus pulled back know he had him teetering on a knife’s edge. He sat back, his rounded backside wedging his hard length between each cheek. Alec’s eyes flew wide and he tensed every muscle in his body.

“Don’t you dare move or I’m going explode.” He rasped and Magnus gave a deep chuckle, his hand cupping the side of his face.

“Already? Oh, my love, I thought you could stand more than just that. I’ve hardly touched you.”

Alec looked back at him incredulously. He was kidding, right? Magnus gave a small thrust forward and he thought he’d go mad. His muscles screamed as he held himself back. He felt Magnus raise himself up a little and sit further back so he was now on his upper thighs. He let out a sigh of relief and the level of his urgency went from defcon nine to a more manageable six.

He felt like a rung-out rag, his body sagged against his restraints, his head falling back against the pillows. Sweat dripped from his brow and into his hairline.

“Oh, my poor baby, I’ve really put you through it haven’t I? But I don’t think I’ve seen as great a sight as my gorgeous boy laid out before me, a hot sweaty mess.”

He gave a shudder of delight and Alec glared at him.

“I don’t know how yet but you’re gonna pay for this, Magnus.” He growled.

And he meant it too. The conflicting feelings of anger, pleasure and near exhaustion was doing his head in and he didn’t know which one would finally win out.

“Oh yes please. I’ll teach you how to tie the rope properly and everything.” He said, his voice high with excitement at the prospect.

He groaned loudly as he saw Magnus bend his head and kissed the top of each pec muscle before heading down towards the sweat dampened hair of his chest. He nuzzled his nose and mouth against it making Alec arch up and growl, sending vibrations rumbling through his chest, adding to Magnus’ own pleasure. He dipped the tip of his tongue onto the salty surface before going across to the front of his pec and putting his mouth on the dusky rose circle of his nipple. Alec yelped and bucked hard again, his level of need ratcheted right up to breaking point again. Magnus was ignoring him though, and seemingly without a care as to what he was doing to him,
traced the super sensitive skin with his tongue before taking the tiny hard bud into his mouth and sucking it hard.

Alec felt like his insides had been set on fire and his brain had taken a holiday somewhere else. Everything bunched in readiness to fire his release and he knew he was powerless to stop it from happening.

Magnus suddenly left his chest and looked up into his eyes, that were narrow slits behind the heavy lids. He considered him for the space of a heart beat and then without another word or deviation, he stretched out his legs so that he lay between Alec’s thighs and reefed down the waistband of his sleep pants to take his drooling thick length in his hand.

“ARGH! No! Magnus! I can’t…”

Alec fought against the rope, writhing below his boyfriend tensed to the point of being in pain. Magnus gave him a final look from under dark lashes before bending his head and plunging his mouth down over his straining cock, taking it down his throat. That was it, line crossed.

Alec cried out Magnus’ name into the dark as he felt himself let go as his crown nudged the back of his throat. He thrust forward, unable to stop himself, vaguely aware of the possibility that he was either hurting or choking him.

Magnus never missed a beat, however taking every thrust and its accompanying hot jet of liquid heat in his stride. He closed his lips over his teeth and slowly worked his way up the pulsing shaft, tasting the last of the thick saltiness on his tongue. He groaned around the girth, sinking down so his head now rested against the rapid rise and fall of Alec’s belly. He milked him with soft even pressure until he heard his whimpering cries start to quieten and his silky heated length softened and lay still against his tongue. He slowly drew it from between his lips, a soft wet noise breaking the sound of Alec’s heavy breathing as the crown left his lips.

Alec was sure he had lost sight of reality there for a while. And his brain had obviously decided to extend its stay elsewhere because he couldn’t think of a single sensible thing. He was vaguely aware of two strong hands pulling at the ends of the rope and as his arms fell heavily behind his head onto the pillows. His shoulders protested a little as Magnus gently brought them back to lay lifeless and boneless beside him. He hummed in relief but it felt strange somehow to have them there. Soft kisses worked their way up his chest before he felt the comforting weight of his man’s warm body lying on his. He turned his head, soft dark hair brushing his face and he took in a deep lung full.

“Your forgiven, by the way.” Magnus said softly against him.

He smiled when he felt Alec’s chest buck as he gave a cough of laughter.

“Thank fucking God for that. I still haven’t forgotten about returning the favour, you know. You owe me some mugs and glasses.” He drawled, his voice sounded sleepy and quiet.

“Language, young man, and I look forward to that day, er, night, I mean.” He said, smiling.

He didn’t know what time it was nor did he care, really. He was content to just lay there, sharing body heat and relishing the feel of his lover against him.

“I want to talk to you but I can’t keep my eyes open, babe. You wrecked me.” He made the monumental effort of lifting his arms and wrapping Magnus in them. Magnus made a noise that almost sounded like a purr. Alec tried to keep his eyes open but the lids were insisting on closing.
Magnus noticed the change in his breathing and raised his head. A gentle smile curved his lips as he reached up and softly stroked the side of his face. He loved that contrast of rough and smooth as his fingers trailed to his shadowed jaw. He was finally here. He had finally found him after all these decades of waiting.

He felt a dull ache start deep in his chest. He was falling hard for this precious man and he knew what the consequences of that would be. He squeezed his eyes closed as he tried not to think about that as he watched Alec’s strong-featured face, restful after his exertions. Even in the darkness, Magnus could see the colour change in his cheeks. He bent forward and kissed his chest.

“Good night, sweet prince, until tomorrow night.” He said quietly, nuzzling against him.

He wanted to take in that glorious scent of Alec Lightwood while he had the chance. Something to get him through until they could be together again.

“’Night, Babe.” Came a very sleepy reply and a small hug.

Magnus lay in the dark, pressed as tight to his man as he could get.

“Good night, my heart.” He whispered and a single tear fell to the firm surface. How in the name of all that was holy was he going to be able to tell this precious gift goodbye?

Alec woke the next morning still thinking that he could feel Magnus against his body. He smiled and tightened his arms but only found his own cool skin. He gave a cry of anguish and rolled over to the side that Magnus had been lying on and buried his face into the linen. There was still the vaguest hint of his earthy toned scent on the buttery cotton. Then He remembered that he had thrown his shirt on the floor. He flew up in the bed and looked on the floor but his hopes were dashed as he saw nothing but the floor boards.

He growled his frustration and fell back on the bed, staring up at the ceiling. It was small comfort to think that he was actually sleeping in his bed but cold brass couldn’t capture someone’s essence. His shoulders ached dully but he smiled; at least they were a tangible reminder that last night hadn’t just been a wonderful dream. He felt the base of his neck and poked a finger in the region that Magnus had chosen to brand him as his own. A small jab of pain as he found the spot had him smiling a bit more.

What would Magnus look like in the cool morning light? Would his smooth flawless skin look the same as his or was he differently hued? He had a hint that he may be slightly darker skinned from the way the light played on it. He definitely didn’t have the creamy white skin he did. When he pictured magnus in his head, he saw him with a lightly tanned glow. God, he wished he could see him in the day light. To see that golden skin glow under the sun would be heavenly. Just thinking about touching that sun warmed softness that covered that well defined muscle sent shivers of delight running through him.

He cried out into the early morning light, curling up in on himself, trying his best not to let tears of angst ridden frustration fall and make the pain even worse. It made him want to rage and lash out at something or someone. The trouble was there were no rules for this, no precedent for a relationship between a man and a spirit that could only appear whole for a few hours each night. The double whammy was that Alec had had no other relationship experience before now either so he was completely lost in all this. It was like being given all the parts to some wonderful new machine that you had been dreaming about for as long as you can remember and then find you don’t have the instruction manual.

If only there was someone who could help him sort all this out. Then he remembered. Catarina Loss. He sat up and remembered her invitation and cryptic conversation. Something told him that
she just may have that instruction manual in her possession.

By nine thirty, Alec had worked himself up into a bundle of nerves. Catarina hadn’t really given him a time so he decided that after a drive into town and a stop for directions, he shouldn’t be too early.

He put on a collared shirt this morning to hide Magnus’ handy work and stop any gossip that may be generated from the sight of two hickeys on the neck of the new guy that was supposed to be single.

He stopped at the coffee shop and bought a selection of cookies and get directions.

Catarina lived on the other side of town, the last house on the road that led out of town, you couldn’t miss it, he was told. They were right.

For someone who was supposed to be all but blind, Catarina certainly liked things bright. The small cottage itself was dark blue with white shutters, story book like. The small front yard was a riot of colour and movement. Bright flowers lined the beds in front of the house and the path that led from the driveway to the front steps. In between each bunch, were garden ornaments of every description. Pin wheels, whirligigs, metal animals, statues, even a garden gnome or two. It was hard to know where to look. He walked up the path and had just put a foot on the first step when Catarina appeared at the door.

“Admiring my garden? Ha ha, you should see it in the holidays, the kids love it. Come on in. I expected you earlier.” She said, holding the door open for him.

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t think you had told me a time.” Alec said, entering the living room.

“No, we didn’t but I thought the curiosity or the frustration would get you here quicker. You’re a surprising one, Alexander, no wonder Magnus likes you so much.” She said, as she closed the door behind him.

The first thing Alec noticed about Catarina’s house was the smell. It wasn’t a bad smell exactly, just, different. It had an organic note to it and he wondered what it was. The interior of the house wasn’t as brightly decorated as the front yard but there were several display shelves crammed with bits and pieces and the odd photo as well. The small kitchen opened off the back of the living room that was mostly taken up with a large sofa, easy chair and a TV stand with a small screen on it. Catarina shuffled out to the kitchen and he followed.

“Let’s have a cup pf tea to go with those cookies you’ve brought. You were raised well, Alexander. Take a seat.”

She motioned to a small table and two chairs that sat near the back door that must have led to the garden. He wondered if it was as busy as the front one was. Catarina certainly knew her way around the kitchen, getting two white cups down from a cupboard and then boiling the kettle and getting milk from the fridge and sugar from a container on the counter.

“So how you boys doin’ out there? Getting on well? Oh of course you are. I can practically smell it on you.”

She chuckled, putting the tea bags into the cups and pouring the hot water into each one. Alec wasn’t sure if he was meant to answer that as he watched fascinated by the fact that Catarina could perform the task with no effort what so ever. Alec went to stand up to help her carry the two
steaming cups to the table but she waved him away.

“I’m perfectly fine, thank you, young man, been doin’ this a long time now.” She put the cups down and then got the milk and sugar and brought it back to the table then sat in the other chair with a small sigh.
Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

I'm posting this chapter earlier than i normally do for a couple of reasons. the first one being I know a lot of my readers have been waiting for Alec's meeting with Catarina and her reveal about Magnus. I'm sorry if you find it long winded but i really wanted her to give Alec the whole story behind her involvement with everything. I felt it was only right to give as much detail about it as possible.
The second reason is that i wanted to give you all the opportunity to tell me if you want me to put the next chapter up to finish her story later tonight when i normally post. So let me know if you do and I will. Thanks to all my wonderful readers as well for your fantastic comments and leaving me kudos. Always love hearing from you so don't hesitate to leave a comment.
Hope you enjoy these next couple of chapters.

“Been looking forward to this since I first saw you, ya know. I knew you’d show up eventually. I’m just glad you finally did.” She gave a small chuckle. “I think that man of yours was probably things the same thing. It’s been a long road. For both of us.”

Alec stirred his tea thoughtfully and looked at Catarina. He really wished he had the courage to just come out and ask her what the hell she was talking about but he had the feeling that all would be revealed in time. Just how much time was the issue. The more hints she dropped the more intrigued he became.

Catarina picked up a cookie and gave it a nibble, before giving another small laugh. If he didn’t know any better he’d say that she was enjoying making him wait like this. Maybe Magnus got his torture tips from her. He ducked his head as his cheeks heated and a smile curved his lips as he thought about the night before.

“Thinking about him, aren’t you? Can’t say I blame you. Our Magnus is pretty unforgettable. Believe me, I’m pretty sure I own the rights to that.”

He couldn’t see her eyes behind those dark glasses but he would of bet anything that she was looking at him. How much could she see, anyway? If Clary hadn’t told him, he would never have known at all. She sipped her tea before finishing the cookie and brushing the crumbs from her hands.

“I’ll give it to you, Alexander, I would have thought you would have been showering me with questions by now. You have patience and manners, good combination. So, come on, I know you want to ask me things, so ask away. There’s no one else around here to look foolish in front of. Just us. The only two people on this earth that are connected to Magnus Bane. Ask away.”

She sat back in the chair a small smile on her lips. Alec drew in a deep breath. He wasn’t sure why he felt nervous about asking her anything. Was it because he didn’t want to sound like a weirdo talking to a near complete stranger about having a relationship with a ghost? Or was it because he was afraid of what she would tell him? Either way, he knew he needed to hear it, whatever the result.
“I guess the first thing I wanted to ask was, how do you know about Magnus? Did you live in the house once too? Did you hear about him when you were younger or something? Is he the town legend or..?” Catarina began to laugh and held up her hands in a gesture of surrender.

“Whoa, whoa there! Ha ha, there’s no stopping you once you get started is there?” She reached over and gave him a playful poke in the arm. “I imagine that’s something that he likes about you as well, is it not?”

Alec went bright red and gave an embarrassed chuckle. Wow, that got personal real fast and she might have been intuitive about some things but she obviously didn’t know that they hadn’t actually had sex yet. Thank God.

“I’ve done it again, haven’t I? Made you blush. Sorry, old lady, big mouth. Always been my problem, I’m afraid. You might say that’s why Magnus is where he is today. But I’m getting a head of myself. Now, you want to know how I know him. Well it’s because I knew him when I was girl. And don’t do the maths, young man, suffice to say I’m no spring chicken.

Magnus was the only child of one of the wealthiest land owners in the district. He was given the best of everything, best schools, best education, best everything. Very entitled young man. Of course, his parents expected him to find a nice girl and settle down, produce an heir or two to take over the family business but Magnus was too busy having a good time for that. They sent him away for his education to a fancy school in the city, thinking that would calm him down but I think that only made him worse.

He’d come back here for holidays and spent his time in the local drinking establishments, always had a crowd around him. He never ever advertised the fact that he preferred the company of men so all the local girls practically threw themselves at him. You know that he’s a very charismatic person, very good looking so you can’t blame them.

And I’m sorry to say that I was one of those girls as well. I couldn’t help myself. He just seemed to draw me in, like a moth to a flame. He’d never been with any other of the local girls so we all thought that he probably had one in the city. His parents must have been pushing him a bit hard to get himself a wife so when he asked me out when he was home for one of his breaks back home, I couldn’t believe my luck.

Oh, I spent hours getting ready for our date and he came to pick me up in his parent’s fancy carriage. He took me to the only restaurant we had here and was the perfect gentleman the whole time. I remember being so nervous about the idea of him kissing me, by the time we got back to my house I was nearly jumping out of my skin with nerves. But he never did. I didn’t know if I should have been relieved or disappointed.

So, we seemed to get into a bit of a routine after that. When he came back home each time, he’d asked me out and of course I said yes. After the third date we had, though, something had changed. He seemed different somehow. I couldn’t put my finger on it but I could tell something was going on.

I overheard my parents talking one evening about the fact that his parents were really putting the pressure on him to find a wife because they wanted to retire from the business side of the estate and let Magnus take over. Oh, my heart was pounding, when I heard that. I was sure I was going to be the lucky one who won the hand of the most eligible bachelor in town.

Just after this, Magnus came one day and picked me up and we went out to your house. He proudly told me that he had just bought it all on his own that not even his parents knew about it. I thought he was buying it for us, that he didn’t want to live in the big house on the estate when he married. We were standing in the front yard together looking at it, the sun was blazing down on us, he
looked so handsome in his fine clothes and he smelt so good, I think it got the better of me. Next thing I knew, I flung my arms around his neck and kissed him as hard as I could.” She stopped talking then and gave a shake of her head, as if she didn’t believe her own words.

Alec was fascinated. And confused. It was hard to associate Magnus as being someone’s son or what his life had been like in a completely different era. Had he ever liked girls, though? It didn’t sound like it but Alec was almost scared at what Catarina was going to tell him next. It sounded like Magnus’ parents were pressuring him into a lifestyle he didn’t want. It must have been so hard to lie a lie like that.

“I hate having to tell you what happened next but if I don’t then it won’t make sense later on. There’s a few details that I left out about things that you should probably know about. First off is that my family had been one of the poorer ones in the town. Daddy worked on the Bane Estate and Momma took in sewing and did house cleaning for the more well to do places around but neither of them made a lot of money. So, when Magnus asked me out, my parents thought they were made. And frankly, so did I.

Remember I said that when Magnus had come back home that last time he seemed different? It turned out that apparently his father had gone to the city on business and decided to call into the school and see his son. And that was all fine and dandy except when he got to his dorm room, he wasn’t alone. He caught him red handed with some boy and of course that went over like a lead balloon.

Magnus told me later on that his father just went over to where they were sitting on the bed and picked this poor boy up and threw him out the door, hard enough that he hit the wall and knocked a tooth loose. Then he grabbed his son by the front of his shirt and slammed him against the wall and proceeded to tell him what a disgusting piece of trash he was and that if he ever heard about him doing that again, he’d have a certain body part removed. I’ll leave it up to your imagination to guess what I’m talking about.

That’s when he told him that he would only be allowed back home again if he chose a wife so he could get married and forget about all that other nonsense, as he called it. Magnus wasn’t stupid, he knew his father had meant what he had said. It wasn’t unheard of that actually happening to someone that was thought to be that way inclined. And I think that he also knew that he wouldn’t be able to give up that part of him either, that’s why he had bought the house. Out in the middle of nowhere, no neighbours far enough out of town not to be too accessible, perfect for what he wanted it for.

Trouble was, he hadn’t counted on getting caught by his father. So, the house ended up being more of a prison than a haven. After been forced into a marriage he neither wanted or had ever desired to have, it became the home for him and his new wife.” He paused, more to let Alec take in what she had just told him than for dramatic effect.

Alec was stunned. He sat looking at Catarina in shocked silence. Magnus had been married? To a woman? He was almost too scared to ask and he was now fairly sure of the answer he’d receive but he just needed it confirmed.

“So, who was the woman he asked to marry?”

She gave him a look that said, ‘are you seriously asking me that after what I had just told you?’ but she gave a sigh and answered anyway, picking up on the way he was thinking.

“It was me, Alexander. I became Magnus’ wife. I wasn’t completely naive, I knew that he didn’t really love me. That he only asked me because I hadn’t been as pushy as the other girls in town and
didn’t fall all over him all the time. But I think after I kissed him that day in the front yard that
somewhere in the back of my mind I knew something more than just an unwillingness to get
married was going on. I had only ever kissed one or two other boys before that day so my
experience was very limited but when I kiss Magnus even I knew it wasn’t meant to feel the way it
did.

I think you might know a thing or two about that.”

One dark eyebrow rose over the rim or the dark glasses and one side of her mouth pulled up as
Catarina gave him a knowing look.
He almost shivered. How the hell did she know all this about him? Was he really that transparent
like Magnus had said? And if he was then how the hell was someone who was blind able to see
that?

“Yeah kind of, I guess.” He said, looking down at the cold remains of his tea.

His mind ran back to that horrible night at the bar after his parents’ funeral. Even as drunk and as
lost in grief as he had of been, he could still remember the way it felt when his lips had made
contact with Jaces’. It had been the most unemotional thing he had every felt. About as warm and
wonderful as kissing a cold rock. Even with no previous experience, He knew immediately that he
hadn’t been kissed back. The contrast between how that had felt and the way Magnus kissed him
was polar opposite.

“Yeah, I know you know what I mean. But I was still stupid and young enough to be caught up in
the romance of it all. Marrying the catch of the district and becoming a part of a wealthy family
was just way too good an opportunity to miss. All I could think of was I could have all those pretty
dresses and belongings that I’d always wanted, not to mention a handsome young husband, even if
he didn’t love me. I was also stupid enough to think that we could learn to love each other. I had no
idea the real reasons why Magnus was the way he was.

So, of course, the big day was planned and we had the prettiest wedding the town had ever seen. I
remember my face aching from smiling so hard all day. I was so caught up in the whole fairy tale
side of it all that I failed to see how miserable my new husband was. Even in the photographs after
I looked back on then, he looked so cold and sad. Then I mistook that look in his eyes for being
such a serious young man, determined to play the wealthy land holder role his father had created
for him. It was years later that I realised that determined looked was more like resigned defeat.
What that poor man must have gone through that day. He must have felt like he was being led to
his own execution. My heart aches for him now thinking about it but then I was blissfully ignorant.

But to his credit, Magnus treated me very well all day. Going through the motions all day like a
dutiful new husband. But with absolutely no feeling what so ever. Once again, I put it down to
nerves about the wedding night, although he did have a reputation as a bit of a play boy, but I have
no idea how something like that had gotten started. He’d never been seen with another girl apart
from me. I think it just got started from the way he acted when he came back home.

Our first night together was just more of the same behaviour. I don’t think there are too many
brides of their wedding night whose new husbands kept saying sorry every five minutes them. That
was the one and only time we ever slept together. Magnus couldn’t bring himself to repeat the act
and the whole thing left me cold so I was in no hurry either. If sex was supposed to be like that
then I never wanted to do it again. “

Alec shifted uncomfortably in his chair. He hadn’t really expected to hear this much detail about
all this. But he could sympathise with them both. It must have been a horrible experience for them
both. Especially for Magnus when he had already been with other men.
“So, where does Elias come into all this?” He asked her.

Had they given up and divorced? He didn’t see that as a possibility seeing as divorce was frowned upon nearly as much as being gay.

“Yeah, I’m gettin’ to that. We led very separate lives. We attended things together every now and then just for appearances but married life was far from the fairy tale I had imagined it to be. We even slept in separate bedrooms.

I did my own thing and he did his. His regular trips to the city were seen as nothing more than necessary for work so I didn’t really care. Both sets of parents hounded us about having kids but I made up a story about not being able to. They weren’t happy about it but I think that his parents were just happy to see him married and in a so called normal relationship.

It was five years into it when I found out the truth about him. I had gone out of town for my grandmother’s funeral and told him I’d be gone for at least a week. I ended up coming home early though. I remember walking into the house that day and not seeing him anywhere. I dropped my suitcase down and was taking off my gloves when I heard laughing coming from upstairs. I crept up the steps, and into the hallway. I stopped because I recognised Magnus’ voice but not the other one. And it was male too. I poked my head around the corner of bedroom door and there they were, in our bed, naked, and hands all over each other, talking and laughing as I’d never heard him before. I’d never had such a shock in my whole life.

I don’t remember going down the stairs or getting back into the car, we had one by then, and I just took off. Somehow, I managed to think of grabbing my suitcase. I drove to the city and found a motel room and shut myself in for the next three days. I don’t think I’ve ever cried so much in my life. I had no idea what I was going to do about it either. Did I tell his parents, my parents? I knew there would be hell to pay for him if I did. I don’t think I slept a wink that whole time trying to puzzle it out.

I don’t think I really loved Magnus, but I was fond of him and he did treat me well even if it was all a bit cold and unfeeling. It’s funny what you can get used to after a while. I just thought everyone had a marriage like ours. Romance was for those soppy novels and love was earned eventually, if you were lucky.

I went back after the three days was up and decided that if he could live a lie like that, so could I. As long as everything appeared normal and he kept treating me well and giving me my freedom then I would be fine.”

Alec looked back at Catarina with a pained expression. He could only imagine what walking in on that must have cost her. How did you learn to live with that sort of knowledge? He shuddered. It reminded him of how he felt in the aftermath of his kiss with Jace. It was like walking on hot coals all the time. Horrible.

“We lasted another twelve months before it got the better of me. I think Magnus knew there was something going on with me and he kept asking me if I was alright which of course I kept saying no to. It was getting close to his birthday and I wanted to invite our parents for dinner. We didn’t get many visitors so I thought I’d make an effort.

He had still been going to the city on a regular basis and I now knew it wasn’t for work. He must have been seeing him. Every time he left my jealousy grew. Not because I loved him or anything it was because it made me feel like I wasn’t enough. I couldn’t make him smile and laugh and look happy like I had seen him that day.

I had organised everything and the day before he informed me that he was going away again. I was
livid. I’d spent days cooking and cleaning for the night of his birthday and he was just going to dismiss it all to go and be with that other man.

It was our one and only fight but it was a doozy. That’s when I told him I knew his dirty little secret. He was shocked at first but I think it was more of a relief than anything for him. He begged me not to out him to our parents and that if I kept up with the charade that was our marriage, he’d give me anything I wanted. The trouble was, the thing I wanted most was a real marriage and I could never have that without ending the loveless one I was in. I told him that I wouldn’t say anything as long as he didn’t bring him to the house ever again. He was happy to agree.

So, I settled for material things. The clothes, the shoes, the jewellery I had it all. I went on holidays and even a cruise or two. But after another twelve months, even that wasn’t enough to fill the void anymore.

The end came when I came back from one of my trips away and found them together again. It was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Seven years of living a complete lie had finally taken its toll and I unleashed hell on both of them. I’m surprised they didn’t hear me in town. “
Okay, so here is the end to Alec and Catarina's visit. Be aware it does describe a death of a main character but I didn't go into too much detail with that but of course it was a big part of the whole plot so it had to be included. I hope it's not too hard to read. And I tried not to draw it out too much either. Thanks for everyone's comments and the encouragement to post this next chapter. It is a bit shorter than the others but I wanted to end it where Alec leaves Cat's house. And besides, I have to finish writing the rest of the next chapter lol. Hope you enjoy it and it answers some questions that you might of had.

Alec tensed. Oh God, what had she done? His mind was filling in the blanks with what she had told him up until now and that he had been told before. He almost didn’t want to hear it. But he knew he had to.

“There’s no excuse for what I did next and until the day I leave this earth I’ll regret it. I was just so hurt and so angry and I just wanted to take the one thing from him that I knew meant something to him. I went flying out the door and got in the car and went to his parents’ house and told them what I walked in on. Of course, they were fuming. Especially his father. I left there and went to my parents’ place and stayed there.

I found out later, that Magnus’ father and mine had formed a sort of possie and went marching out to the house and grabbed poor Elias and dragged him outside and beat the stuffing out of him before putting him in the back of a car and driving him out of town. Why he was still there and hadn’t tried to leave I don’t know. Maybe Magnus thought I’d just go somewhere and cool off and he’d have time to send Elias on his way.

My father wanted to give Magnus the same treatment and he would have except his father told him the best punishment was to cut him completely. No more money, no more family. Nothing. He did give him a good back hander though.

I ended up going back out there a couple of days later when I had calmed down a little to get some of my things. Magnus looked terrible. One eye was half closed and black and purple from where his father had hit him and I don’t think he’d eaten in that time either. I was still so angry and hurt over the whole thing I didn’t care that he was suffering. But there must have been some small spark of concern still there because I found myself not being able to let him go completely. Maybe it was the guilt I felt about giving him up to his parents, I don’t know, but I went back out there.

He was so weak and so ill I nearly died when I saw him. I wanted to get a doctor but he didn’t want me to. He thought that they had killed Elias and he thought that if he went too then they could be together in a place where no one could hurt them anymore. I had no idea if he was right or not but even as hurt and slighted as I felt I still hated seeing him like that. Pining away for the love of his life. It was a nightmare.

I stayed with him, knowing that he wasn’t long for the world and I didn’t want to see him die alone. I felt so racked with guilt over everything I just wished I could have taken it all back. But of course, it was too late for that so I did the only thing I could think of try to make amends.
The thing about my family was we came from a long line of descendants that were associated with witchcraft. Oh I know it sounds crazy and we always kept it under wraps but there was always one person in each generation who seemed to carry the gene. By the time I was born, it became more of an old wife’s tale than anything else.

My Grandmother on my mother’s side had been the last one that was supposed to of had the power, for want of a better word. I can remember her telling me once when I was very little that I was the next one and she could feel it in me. Momma always told me that she was just making up stories to amuse me so I never paid any mind to it.

I remember finding a big old book at her house once when I was a young girl and it was all these hand-written pages of spells. I thought the whole thing was fascinating, like some fairy tale or something. When she died, she left that book to me in her will. It was still in the house and I ran and got it, going through each page trying to find something that I could use to help Magnus. I came across one spell that I thought might help but the wording was wrong. So, I changed it. I tore a piece of paper from the book and wrote it out.

Your world will become his night,
In his heart you will find your light.
Unlock his soul and give him peace,
His salvation will be your release.

A tad poetic, I know but when you’re sitting next to someone that was about to breath his last, it was the best I could come up with.”

Alec felt a single tear run down his cheek. The thought of Magnus ending like that hit him harder than he thought. Jesus, what a horrible way to go. He knew that someone couldn’t literally die of a broken heart (could they?) but it sounded like the closest thing to it there could be. The spell. It was the same one that he found scrolled up in the box in the bedroom. He wanted to puzzle out the words and their meaning but he was so overwhelmed right now it was hard to pin down a single thought. Catarina gave a deep chuckle.

“Your mind sounds as busy as a box of bees right now. It’s a lot to take in, I know, but I think you needed to hear it. I hope you don’t hate me too much for my part in all this. I couldn’t blame you if you did. I hate myself for what I did. But the spell was the only thing I could do to atone for my sins. I’ve lived way too long to keep torturing myself about it all, although I will always regret the way I handled things.

I was young, naïve, inexperienced in the world. Nothing will ever justify it but I can finally have some peace now you’re here.” Alec looked up at her, in surprise.

“You see, I never truly believed that I had those abilities that my Grandmother always told me I possessed. And my mother certainly never encouraged me with it, telling me it was all just a story, stuff and nonsense. When I said those words over Magnus that night, it was the only time I’ve ever tried to tap into them. First and last. Never tried it again and never will.

Part of the family gift, if you can call it that, was being able to commune with people on the other side. So naturally, after Magnus passed, I was curious about whether my spell had actually taken.

Whoa! What a day that was! Ha ha. I went back to the house a few days after the funeral. The house and everything in it was all mine then. But I didn’t want any of it. I couldn’t live in the house where he had died and besides, it held too many bad memories for me. I had every intention of selling it. I went back to start packing things up.

I no sooner got in the door when things started flying at me. Cups, ornaments, vases, anything that
wasn't nailed down. It was like being in a war zone. I couldn't see Magnus but I could feel him there all right. And boy, was the man pissed. Can't say I could blame him.

After he had calmed down and we talked, well, I talked and then he somehow answered me in my head, I realised that I couldn't sell the house. It would never be anyone's really except his. He was bound to it and the grounds. Until that special someone finally came along, I couldn't do it. And that someone was you, dear boy. So now I finally know after all these years that my last ditched effort to make amends worked.” She leaned over and patted his hand.

The hairs on Alec’s arms stood up straight. He was part of all this too? His subconscious was standing there, arms crossed and foot tapping with a scowl on his face.

Well, duh, Brainiac, haven’t you been listening at all? You’re the chosen one. Deal with it.

So much for wanting the quiet life. What ever happened to the concept of the sleepy little town where nothing exciting ever happens? Alec wasn’t sure how he felt about his new title. It seemed like a lot of pressure to be put on one person, especially one who had never been with anyone else before. What if he wasn’t who they thought he was? He was no one special after all, well, not to his way of thinking anyway. He scrubbed his face with his hands. So much to think about. And how was he going to tell Magnus that he knew about all this? Would he be mad at him? He had no idea. Then he had a thought.

“Catarina, there’s one thing I need to know. I know that all this happened over a hundred years ago, I don’t want to pry or sound rude but how is it you’re still here? That spell didn’t back fire on you and you’re a ghost too, are you? “He almost bit back the words, they sounded so silly to his ears but Catarina just gave another deep chuckle, her shoulders shaking up and down.

“Oh, my boy, just come out and say it. Why aren’t you dead already? And you might have already answered your own question there. The truth is, I have no damn idea why I’m still kickin’. I could give you the same B.S as I give the town’s folk when the subject comes up and say it’s because I have good genes but I think the truth is more to do with what you just said.

When I cast that spell that night, I had no idea what the heck I was doing. I’m surprised I didn’t burst into flames or vanish or something right there on the spot. The fact that it worked as well as it did I put down to just pure dumb luck. But I think some of that, whatever the hell it was, did back fire onto me. Huh, probably the universe punishing me for causing the whole ruckus in the first place. Magnus passed when I was twenty-five years old, that was one hundred and ten years ago so I guess that makes me one hundred and thirty five years old.”

She gave a laugh and shook her head. Alec stared at her open mouthed. Holy crap, was she for real? She had to be, she was sitting right in front of him.

“No wonder my old bones ache in the cold now and they have more snap, crackle and pop in ’em than a bowl of rice crispies. I’m well past my expiry date, that’s for sure.” She stood slowly and grabbed the two cups from the table.

“Well, I suspect you’ve got a lot to think about now and I’ve taken up enough of your time. Go home, Alexander and mull things over. Just remember, that man has waited a long time for you and he deserves happiness. So do you. Be honest with him too. Don’t think he’s gonna be too pleased about our little chat today, but I think you deserved to know.

Love tends to make you want to sugar coat things for people so you don’t hurt then but sometimes it can’t be helped. Lies hurt far worse than any truth, this I know for a fact. He’s been on his own for way too long now so his communicating skills might be a tad rusty. Don’t let him close himself off. And don’t you do the same.
I don’t know what your deal is or what drove you out here in the first place but I know it wasn’t anything good. Now, go home. The old girl could do with some sprucing up. And watch that bathroom tap over the sink, it tends to leak something awful in the winter.”

Catarina was practically pushing him out the door and he got the hint well and truly. He paused for a minute as he reached the front step and turned towards her.

“Thank you for sharing all that with me, Catarina. I know reliving all that couldn’t have been easy.”

“My boy, if I’ve learned one thing it’s that after all this time, it’s dulled the pain a great deal. Not completely, but enough to be able to live with it. You’re right, it hasn’t been easy, but time made it easier. Go on now. And don’t be a stranger. I don’t care what that man says, you come visit anytime you like.”
Alec found himself on edge for the rest of the afternoon. He tried to take his mind off everything by starting to wash the walls of the dining room down but after he realised he’d been washing the same place for about half an hour he gave up. He managed to get some washing done but that was about it. He did think about his laptop sitting up there in the spare room untouched pretty much since he moved but if he couldn’t concentrate on a simple task like washing a wall properly then he had no chance on starting any writing.

He decided to just plant himself in front of the TV and watch that. But after finding himself falling asleep, he decided that going outside to do something might be a good idea.

He walked out the back door and looked around. There wasn’t much of a garden anymore except for Magnus’ rose bushes. He felt his skin tingle when he thought about their first meeting there in the dark, in the storm. It was like something out of a romance novel but he couldn’t help the smile that curved his lips when he thought about it.

Especially now he knew what that hard-muscled torso looked like minus a wet shirt. So hot. His fingers clenched at his sides as he thought about how it felt under his hands. And he’d get another opportunity to feel them again tonight. He hoped.

He hadn’t really been worried about what the yards had looked like before now. He was more concerned with getting the inside of the house organised but he kept thinking about Magnus’ roses and his wish that he would look after them. He went to the garden shed and found a shovel and a rusty looking hoe. Nothing like physical work to take your mind off things. Well, hopefully.

He started hacking into the over grown earth, ripping out the thick grass that covered the bed. When he got that done, he used the shovel to dig out the few bushes that he was fairly sure were beyond help and resolved that he would take a trip to the nursery at the hardware store and pick out some new ones. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he hoped that this small gesture might soften the blow of his visit to Catarina.

He worked until late afternoon and was pleased with his progress. He had kind of hoped that Magnus would make his presence known while he was working but there hadn’t been so much as a touch or a brush of cool lips on his body anywhere.

He leaned up on the shovel, straightening his back, rubbing the spot just above his backside where it felt tight from his afternoon labours and then put the tools back in the shed and went inside.

He went straight upstairs and showered before he went to get something for dinner. He decided to reheat the rest of his pasta from the night before. Now he was inside and the night had started to fall, his nervousness about what Magnus would think about today returned.

He took the bowl and went into the living room, turning on the TV. He tried to lose himself in a programme but he found himself checking the time on his phone every ten minutes and it wasn’t doing much for his appetite either. By nine o’clock he had given up and he went to bed to try to get some sleep before Magnus came.

The first thing he became aware of was that he was being dragged down the bed. He still wasn’t fully awake so it was quite a disorientating feeling to experience. Next minute…

BANG!
His backside it the floor boards with a loud thud. He cried out as his tailbone shot pain right up his spine.

“Shit! Ow! Fuck, that hurt!” He protested, lifting one cheek and rubbed his aching butt.

He unscrewed his eyes and looked up from where he sat sprawled on the floor.

Magnus was standing before him, arms crossed over his chest, legs stood wide. Uh oh, not good. Alec’s first thought was to feel relieved that he was here, at least. And he longed to wrap his arms around him and sample those perfect lips of his again but even in the shadowy dull light be could tell Magnus was not happy. Hence the dramatic announcement of his arrival.

“Language, Alexander!” He snapped.

He could hear deep angry breathing and he swallowed, wondering what his next move would be. Magnus might have limitations as a ghost but when he was corporeal, he was just as much a threat to his being as any other man.

When a hand shot up in front of him, he jerked back but he realised that it was an offering to help him up.

“Oh, for heaven’s sake, Alexander, stop snivelling on the floor, its beneath you. I need to have you eye to eye so you can explain to me what possessed you to go and visit that she devil.” He said his words curt and clipped.

That was a good sign, wasn’t it? At least he’s talking to me, that was a start.

He took the offered hand and let himself be pulled up. His tailbone gave a small zap of protest at the sudden change in position but it wasn’t too bad. Not permanent damage done.

Alec felt a different jab of pain, however, when as soon as Magnus had pulled him to his feet, he dropped his hand and recrossed his arms, this time adding the steady tap, tap, tap of one booted foot.

“Well, I’m waiting. Start talking, although I can’t imagine anything you would have to say in way of an explanation will make this any better.” He said.

Alec felt awkward standing before him in just his boxers but he didn’t dare ask if he could put on a pair of sleep pants at least. Magnus made a noise of frustration and went over to the chest of drawers and roughly yanked open a draw and grabbed a pair of the pants and threw them over to him. Alec looked at him in surprise. How the heck…? He couldn’t see his face in the dark but he could practically hear the eye roll.

“I can hear your thoughts, Alexander, well, feel them, how they affect you. You know, happy sad, nervous, angry, that sort of thing. But that’s neither here nor there. But it’s how I knew where you went today. I came to be with you and you were here. When I felt what you were thinking, I knew where you’d gone. So, tell you the whole sorry saga, did she? Did she tell you I’m this way because of her being Benedict Arnold?”

Alec looked at him, his brow creased.

“Benny who?”

Magnus gave a growl of anger and went over to the bed and sat down in the mattress. He gave a huff.
“I mean, did she tell you it was her that betrayed me to our parents?”

Alec pulled the sleep pants on and after hesitating for a minute walked slowly over towards the bed. He looked at Magnus, gesturing towards the spot beside him and he gave a curt nod and he sat down gingerly. Alec kept reminding himself that he had sort of expected this and that Cat had told him to get him talking.

“Yes, she did. She told me everything Magnus. God, it must have been awful to be forced into a relationship with someone you could never love. I’m so sorry that you went through that. It would have been so hard.”

“Hard? Hard? Hard is trying to thread a needle blindfolded this was indescribable. You have no idea.” He barked.

Alec ducked his head. No, he didn’t. But he did know a bit about one sided relationships.

“I have no doubt it was. My heart hurt for you the whole time she was telling me about it. How you were able to endure it for as long as you did, I don’t know. I couldn’t have held out for that long, that’s for sure.”

“So, you know that Catarina was my wife, then? And what she did to me?” He asked, his voice had lost a little of its angry tone but he still sounded bitter.

“Yes, Magnus as I said she told me everything. I don’t think it was really a case of doing this to you but for you.”

Magnus flew to his feet, glowering down at Alec and he knew that he had really put I his foot in it.

“For me? For me? Are you insane, Alexander? The woman cursed me to this existence. This half-life.

She’s just lucky that they don’t burn witches anymore or I’d be paying that woman a visit with arm full of kindling and a box of matches!”

“Magnus! That’s terrible! She did it to try to give you another chance. To try to make up from what she’d done. She’s very sorry for that, you know. If she could take it back she would.”

“And you believed it when she told you that?”

“Yes, I did.”

Magnus gave his of dismissal and turned away from him. Alec wasn’t sure how to handle this. He’d never had to do anything like this before and the only thing he could think of was that he didn’t want to lose him over it, even though their relationship was very new. He stood up and was going to put his hands on his tensed shoulders but thought better of it.

“Magnus, I can’t imagine the hurt that Catarina caused you to feel but it must have been a terrible thing to go through. I can see where you would lose faith in people and not trust them anymore. But I hope you can trust me when I tell you that I firmly believe that what she did, she did to try to help you as much as she could. It was the only way to try to redeem herself for what she did. It’s affected her as well you know. She just as trapped here as you are.”

“Huh, small comfort. She gets to walk around where she pleases and do the things she wants where I’m bound to this house and all the memories that it holds and even that is spoilt by the fact that I only get a few hours of existence each night. Why couldn’t she have cursed me to be able to walk
around in the daylight? Ah, I miss the feeling of the sunlight on my face and the sight of blue sky. All I get is darkness and moonlight.” Alec saw his shoulders hunch forward and he sensed that he was trying to burrow into himself. Away from him.

He couldn’t let that happen. He had to take the chance that he’d reject him if he touched him so he could offer him the comfort that he needed.

He reached out a hand and put it gently on his upper arm, rubbing it slowly. He flinched a little but he did pull away.

“I happen to love the darkness and the moonlight because I know they bring you to me. The day time gives me as much torture as it does you. I can’t seem to think about anything but you all day. I know that what happened to you was grossly unfair and that it shouldn’t have happened but if it hadn’t then I wouldn’t have ever met you. I would never have gotten to feel the way I feel when I’m with you.”

He put his other hand on his other arm and gently turned him around. He felt a little resistance at first but not much.

Magnus looked up at him. The sight of those beautiful dark eyes so full of sadness made Alec’s chest hurt.

“You don’t need to curse the darkness, babe, because I’m here to be with you in it. Night time is our time, no one else’s. We can make the moonlight our sun and with you here with me, it shines brighter than a thousand suns could. I know you’ve been hurt and have experienced loss but so have I. We can find strength together and use any power it has over us to make us closer together.”

Magnus’ face, that had at first been so angry then so sad, just crumbled. He launched himself at Alec and took his mouth with enough force that Alec was pushed backwards a step. His arms encircled his waist and pulled him tightly against him, fingers digging into his back as if he were afraid that he would vanish at any minute.

Alec held Magnus just as tightly. As hard as it had been when he slammed into his mouth and body like he did, the kiss itself was the softest and heart rendering as he had ever experienced and it was taking his breath away. It lasted for as long as Alec could stand there for without passing out from lack of oxygen from not taking a deep enough breath.

He pulled back gently, dragging in air that had them both laughing. Magnus moved back and took his hand tugging it lightly.

“I want to just be with you tonight, my love. Just to feel your body against mine. Can we do that?” He asked, his eyes looking at him questioningly.

Alec smiled softly before leaning in for a small kiss on his soft lips.

“Of course, we can.” He said softly and he covered the small space that separated them to stand before him and took hold of his shirt and pulled it off over his head.

Magnus toes off his boots and Alec started on the lacing at the front of his breeches and he tugged them down so he stood before him gloriously naked. Even in the near complete dark, Alec could appreciate the sight before him and he longed to get his hands on him but tonight wasn’t about that and he knew it.

Magnus hooked his thumbs into the waistband of both his boxers and his sleep pants and slid them over his hips and the pooled at his ankles before he stepped out of them. He felt his face heat as he saw Magnus’ eyes travel from his feet back to his head.
“As much as I love you in those loose pants of yours, nothing compares to the sight of you like this, Alexander. You’re perfection, my love.”

Alec smiled shyly at the compliment. He took Magnus’ hand and they climbed into bed and under the cool soft sheets.

Magnus lay against Alec’s broad chest, one hand going to the side of his neck. The rest of his body was melted against his side not a single gap of space was showing from his chest right to his feet. He bent his top leg and laid it over Alec’s and he nuzzled into the warm skin of his neck and shoulder with a hum of contentment.

“As much as I loved our last two nights together, being with you like this, just being able to hold you in bed, under soft sheets and feel your warm skin next to mine is beyond words.”

Magnus kissed the side of his neck and pushed his nose against him, taking in the clean freshly showered scent he carried. Alec smiled and kissed the top of his head.

“I know what you mean, babe. But I think there are a few things we really should talk about. Do you really hate Cat that much, like you said? I mean, I can understand why you would, but I would of thought that after all this time, you would have cooled down a bit.”

Magnus gave a sigh.

“I would be lying if I said I would still have no trouble pushing the woman under a train, but I don’t think I’d ever completely forgive her. I had a good life, Alexander, and she took that from me. Not to mention the man I thought I was madly in love with. I died not knowing whether he was alive or dead after they carted him off that day. Do you know how horrible that is?” Alec was quiet for a few minutes.

“So, did you really love Elias?”

Magnus lifted his head up from his chest to look at his face. He knew that look. He’d seen it in the mirror on himself a few times.

“Alexander, are you jealous? Or better still, are you jealous of someone who died many many years ago?”

Alec dropped his eyes from his and tried to look offended.

“No! no, of course not, that would be stupid...” He blustered, but Magnus wasn’t going to let it go.

“Oh, you’re too much, you are jealous. How very sweet. Have no fear, my heart, Elias was my past, but I have a feeling that you are my future, well, so to speak. And to answer your question, I did think so at the time. He was such a caring young man, much like yourself in that respect. But the more time I spend with you, Alexander, the more I realise that this, us, is something much deeper than what Elias and I shared.”

He laid back down and put small kisses on the side of his chest.

Alec smiled in the dark. He knew it was childish and wrong but Magnus’ words gave him a smug feeling of accomplishment. In his mind, his subconscious was standing there with his hands on his hips, face pushed forward and tongue sticking out blowing raspberries like a cheeky small child.

“Stop that, I know what you’re thinking young man.” Magnus said, giving him a soft slap on the shoulder but not lifting his head.
Yeah, note to self, don’t diss the ex-boyfriend when the current one can read your thoughts.

“Sorry. Couldn’t help myself. Maybe we could try and find out what happened to Elias. I’m sure we could find something out about him.”

Magnus raised his head.

“You would do that for me? Even though the thought of him makes you green with envy?” Alec smiled and kissed his forehead.

“If it means that much to you then yes, I would. I don’t think I have too much to fear from one or your exes anymore. You haven’t got too many more from your deep dark past, have you? I can cope with one or two but I don’t think I want to know if there are anymore. I’d be too scared that I’d suffer by comparison.”

Magnus gave a snort of laughter.

“Oh, I’m sure you wouldn’t, my love. Some of them pretty ordinary. Those twins, especially. It’s true what they say about them, by the way. They might look the same, even sound the same but they don’t scr...” Alec gave a yelp as if he’d been hurt and covered his ears with his hands.

Argh! Enough! I told you I don’t want to know. Too much information, babe.” Magnus chuckle and pulled his hands away.

“Apologies, Alexander, I forgot myself. Anyway, I’m sure you’ve had your fare share as well. Is there anyone I should rattle my chains at?”

When he didn’t answer Magnus leaned up on one arm and looked at his boyfriend. He frowned when he saw that he was looking away from him.

“What is it, my heart, what did I say to upset you like that?” He put a hand to Alec’s turned face and gently coaxed it back to his.

Magnus, I thought you would have been able to tell. I’ve never had anyone else before you.”

Alec felt his face heating with embarrassment. Magnus looked confused and somehow that was worse than a look of pity or disgust.

“I knew you hadn’t had much experience, but I thought you had some. Why did I get the feeling that you were running away from something or someone when you came here?”

Alec had been scared of this moment happening. It was like being caught red handed in a lie and not have a single place to hide or any excuse for it. Did he tell Magnus about Jace and what happened? Would he think he was an inexperienced idiot afterwards? And worse still, would he still want to be with him when he did know?

“Alexander, tell me what it is. It couldn’t be any worse than what I went through. I had no one to talk to about this sort of thing. You do. Me, you can tell me anything, my love, I won’t judge you, I promise. I couldn’t. Not after you have shown me the same curtesy. I’m not going anywhere either, if that’s what’s worrying you.”

Alec still hesitated. Old fears still ran just below the surface. He knew it was only fair to share his past with Magnus now that he knew his but it was still hard to get the first words out.

He took in a deep breath and steeled himself for what was to come.
“I left the city because of what happened with my best friend. Ex best friend now, I’m pretty sure. I knew he was straight, straight as they come, but it didn’t stop me from feeling the way I did. I never told him that I was gay, ’cause I was always scared that he wouldn’t want to be around me anymore if he knew. Some people get weird like that, I’ve seen it happen.

So, I kept it and how I felt about him to myself for years. But the night of my parents’ funeral Jace took me to a bar and I had too much to drink and ended up kissing him, right there in front of everyone. It was the worst moment of my life apart from losing my parents. He was okay about it, or said he was. He just brushed it off as me being an over emotional drunk but things changed between us after that. We never said anything about that moment but it’s what wasn’t said that spoke volumes.

He went back home and I was left to pick up the pieces. I tried to throw myself back into work but my heart wasn’t in it anymore and the thought that I’d lost both my Mom and Dad as well as my best friend just got too much.

I always wanted to write a novel so after I lasted a year out with very little contact or word from Jace, I packed up and moved out here after finding this place. Your place.”

Magnus sat right up this time so he was looking down at him. Alec wasn’t sure how to read what he saw on his face; it was changing so rapidly it was hard to keep up. Next thing he knew, Magnus had brought his lips to his and kissed him long and hard.

At first, he was surprised by his reaction and hoped that it wasn’t the farewell gesture that he had half been expecting.

By the time Magnus lifted his head, Alec was breathless and praying that that was the last time he experienced a kiss like that. He looked up at him, hands reaching for his face.

“Ours.” Magnus said softly and Alec frowned.

What the hell did he mean by that? At least it hadn’t been goodbye.

“Our house, Alexander. Yours and mine. Past and present combined. How could you ever think that I would leave you over something like that. For one thing, I can’t technically go anywhere else anyway but I’ve waited over a hundred years for you. Do you honestly think that I would waist that chance to be with someone who is in all likely hood my soul mate because of his inexperience? I don’t care if you’ve been with one person or fifty, the only thing that’s important is that you’re here with me now.”

Alec felt his heart swell in his chest. His eyes pricked with tears and he fought like crazy to hold them back. He let out a breath that he hadn’t realised he’d been holding and pulled Magnus down to him, hoping to return the kiss he had given him only moments before.

When the finally parted lips, they settled down into the bed once more, both with contented smiles on their faces. They held each other in the darkness, happy just share their warmth for each other.

“So, in light of full disclosure, is there anything else I should about your past? Is there anything that could come back to haunt us besides you?” Alec asked him, feeling braver now he knew Magnus wasn’t going anywhere.

“Very amusing, Alexander, but no I don’t think so. Nothing that I can think of anyway. If you want to get right down to it there’s the fact that I don’t like the colour green, I don’t drink coffee, I like a good glass of wine, red or white, I’m not fussy. I prefer to be the giver not the receiver in bed but for you, I’d make an exception, and I don’t mind being tied up, so feel free to explore that side of
Alec tried his best to take in all the information he’d just been given, feeling his cheeks colour when he thought about his ‘punishment’ the night before. He felt his crotch stir as he remembered the way the rough rope had felt on the sensitive skin of his wrists and the somehow wonderful feeling of helplessness as Magnus had worked his way around his body. A grin formed on his lips when he thought about the possibility of tying Magnus up the same way. Apparently, his cock had a good memory as well and it thickened under the soft sheet. Magnus gave a deep chuckle.
“Get your mind above your waist, Alexander, and tell me everything I need to know about you. I still have that rope, you know.”

He gave the soft springy hairs on his chest a playful tug.

“I’m really not that interesting, babe. I don’t really have a favourite colour but I kinda like blue, I hate peanut butter, I’m not much of a drinker but I don’t mind the odd beer or glass of wine every now and then, as for anything else, well, let’s just not go there.”

Alec shifted uncomfortably beside him. Even though Magnus had been really good to him about his lack of experience in the bedroom, it was still an embarrassment for him to talk about. He’d never put voice to anything like that before and he wasn’t even sure what he’d say if he did. It felt like he was expected to stand up in front of a lecture hall and give a talk about ancient civilisations when he was an English lit. professor. He felt Magnus’ soft mouth on his skin.

“Oh Alexander, I beg to differ with you. I think you’re fascinating and as for the other subject, I think you do know what you like more than you think you do. If last night was any indication, I think you share my penchant for ropes. Come on, admit it, you loved being tied to the bed while I ravished this gorgeous body of yours.”

He gave him a playful poke in the ribs making Alec wriggle and give a small laugh.

Magnus lifted up and smiled down at him. “That cute little giggle of yours, my love, is like music to my ears. Sweeter than any bird song and shoots straight to my heart. I could never get enough of it. In fact, I think I need to hear more of it right this very minute.”

Before Alec knew what was happening, Magnus was straddling his waist and had his long slender fingers, digging into his ribs making him burst into fits of giggles and squirming below him as he tried to twist, very unsuccessfully, away from the onslaught.

Alec was helpless with laughter and his sides ached from it but he hadn’t felt this happy and carefree in forever. He thrashed and flailed about as his boyfriend punished him with tickles up and down his ribs and under his arms. He hated the way he was making him laugh like a giddy school girl but he just couldn’t help himself.

Magnus was loving the sight of his Alexander wriggling and squirming before him. He hadn’t been just flirting with him when he said that he loved the sound of his laughter, he did. It filled his ears and touched his heart in such a way he could feel it swell inside his chest like a balloon inflating. He had a feeling the his new man hadn’t had too many opportunities to just let go and be happy like this of late, what with the loss of his parents and the possible end to the long term friendship he had held with Jace, who he could cheerfully choke for causing this beautiful human being so much angst and pain.

“Mag, magnus, ba.., babe! Ple…, please! St.. stop! I, can’t. I can’t breathe!” Alec stuttered breathlessly as he tried to grab his hands to still them.

Magnus was laughing right along with him, enjoying his mirth and childlike reaction to his touches. He finally stopped, and grinned down at him as he panted hard. He hated the way his big strong body felt under his weight as it fought to regulate his breathing once more. The rhythmic rise and fall of his abs pressing into his crotch in the most delicious way. He flopped forward,
wanting to get the full effect and he wasn’t disappointed.

“Urgh!”

Alec grunted as he felt Magnus’ weight fall to his chest, effectually knocking the hard fought for air from his lungs once more. His body now had to work that little bit harder to drag in the much-needed oxygen it craved with the comforting heaviness he had resting on him. He didn’t care, either.

He draped his arms over the sleek smoothness that was Magnus’ back. His hands gently running up and down the gentle undulations that were its surface.

“Am I too heavy?” Magnus asked, putting sweet little kisses on his upper pectoral muscles.

“Nah, I love the feel of you on me.” Alec said softly, nosing into the silky strands of his hair.

“Good, because even if you had said yes, I had no intentions of moving.”

He felt Alec chest buck as he gave a snort of laughter and then gave a groan after.

“Argh, don’t make me laugh any more, it’s getting painful.”

“Oh, my poor sweet boy, let me kiss it better.”

Magnus crooned then proceeded to gently kiss and mouth his way over the expanse of his chest. Alec lay against his pillow and closed his eyes in appreciation of the gentle warming sensation it was giving him. They hadn’t made love yet but he couldn’t imagine that it was feel much better than this. He hummed at the waves of pleasure Magnus was filling him with as he stroked his fingers lazily up and down his spine.

Magnus reached the valley that was between his pecs and buried his face into the soft cloud of dark hair that covered it. He wanted to experience everything it had to offer him and he took in deep breaths of the fresh scent before giving the space from diaphragm to collarbone a fat swipe of his tongue. Alec hissed out a breath, arching his back off the bed, pushing the wall of his chest into the wet heat.

“God, I love your chest, my love. It’s so strong and yet the skin and all this glorious hair is so soft and wonderful. And you taste divine, by the way. Well, you taste pretty good everywhere else too but I don’t think I could ever get enough of all this.” He purred, bringing his hands up to sift his fingers into the springy curls.

Alec made a noise of dismissal.

“I would of thought with all your experience that I would have suffered by comparison.”

Magnus rested his forearms over his chest and gave him a small slap on the shoulder, frowning.

“Now you stop that, Alexander. I may have had experienced more of life’s pleasures when it comes to this sort of thing, but I’ve never experienced you before, more’s the pity. You sell yourself too short. Your body is a work of art, my love, remember that.” He leaned down and kissed him lightly.

Alec was silent for a few minutes and chewed at his bottom lip. Magnus drummed his fingers against one muscled pec.
“Alright, out with it, Alexander. I know you want to say something. So, say it. And stop chewing that beautiful lip, it’s making me hard.”

And to prove the point, he ground his crotch into his lower belly. Alec’s eyes half closed and he gave a soft moan as he felt his own length started to take notice.

“If you keep that up I’m gonna forget what I was going to say.” He said, running a finger down the side of Magnus’ face.

To his great disappointment, Magnus sat up, settling himself on his upper thighs, arms folded. He started to give a whine from the loss of that heavenly heated weight he loved so much but Magnus held a finger to his lips.

“No, not until you say what you wanted to say. So, come on, out with it.” He sat back again, arms crossed.

“You probably won’t like it though.” He said, not feeling as brave as he had a moment ago when Magnus wasn’t making eye contact with him.

“I don’t care. I want to know what you’re thinking. You need to be honest with me, Alexander. Lies and deceit are what got me here in the first place. I won’t have that again. So, tell me.”

Alec sucked in a breath. Well, here goes nothing.

“It’s just, well, I was wondering what Elias was like? Was he like me? What did he look like? I saw him in that old photograph that was in that box on top of the wardrobe but it was pretty hard to tell from that. Was that his hair in with it?”

He chanced a look up at Magnus and saw that his expression had softened a little and he now looked thoughtful, his eyes haunted with thoughts of his past.

“If you don’t want to tell me, I get it. I’m sorry for bringing it up, it’s just you….”

“No, it’s fine. It’s only natural that you would be curious about him. I had forgotten about that box. He made it for me for my birthday when we were still in college together. It was Elias that my father caught me with when he came to visit me unexpectedly that time. That visit sparked the whole shame of a marriage thing.”

He looked off into the distance, gathering his thoughts. Alec sat patiently, wondering if he would tell him anymore or if it was too hard. A soft smile curved his lips.

“Elias was nothing like you, Alexander. He was tall and slenderly built. About the only thing you share is that he had dark hair as well, but it was curlier than yours. It swirled around his head, where yours lays flat. He had a very youthful body. I don’t think he had changed shape much since he was a boy.

He didn’t have all this wonderful soft fluff that you do. I love it so much. Come to think of it, most of my other, shall we say, acquaintances, were smooth skinned as well. I never thought about that before. Of course, the women don’t count. Totally different experience all together.”

Alec’s eyes flew to Magnus’ face. Hang on, what?

“But I thought, I just presumed that, well, Cat had been the only time you had been with a woman. I thought that you were...” Magnus luckily saved him from tripping over his words anymore.

“You thought that my wedding night was the first and only time I had been with a woman. No,
Alexander, it wasn’t. I had been with more men, it’s true, but there had been the odd occasion when I sort the company of the softer sex. And those encounters where pleasant enough, but I found myself attracted very strongly to Elias. I think it was his boyish charm that was the thing that drew me to him. He was very devoted to me, I think he would have done just about anything for me if I asked him. Looking back now, I can see where I used him terribly.

Not something I’m proud of when I think about it. He was always there waiting for me when I needed to be with someone. He put his life on hold for me each time, risking everything. I don’t think I really appreciated it. I was very entitled when I was younger. A product of my upbringing. The only child of wealthy parents. It’s true what they say, you don’t realise what you have until you lose it.

I was used to getting my own way, in all things. That included my love life, so to speak. As secretive as our lifestyle was, I was always able to find a willing partner.

I thought what I felt for Elias was love but I know now that it was nothing like it. Ours was a very shallow kind of relationship, well, it was for me anyway. I’m fairly sure it was different for him. Which wasn’t fair on my part. It was my fault that he came to the house that day.

I had let him know that Catarina wouldn’t be there. I knew we had agreed that I wouldn’t have him at the house but as I said, I was very used to getting my own way. I thought that he would be long gone by the time she got back. He arrived late the night before so we had only been together for a short while when she came the next day and well, I think you know what happened next.”

Alec now regretted that he had brought the whole thing up. Even though it had happened decades ago, it was obvious that it still held bad memories for Magnus. They had known each other for such a short time but already he felt the strong stirrings of something deeper within him. He didn’t recognise what it was and it scared him somewhat; all he knew was that it was causing him to feel very bad for making Magnus rehash one of the worst moments of his short life.

He stretched up a hand and gently touched his sad face. Magnus broke out of his reverie and covered it with his own, giving him a weak smile. Once again, he knew what Alec was thinking before he could find the words to voice it.

“It’s alright, Alexander, don’t think you have caused me grief by asking me about Elias. After all this time, it causes me to feel regret more than any sense of loss. And besides, as I said, the years have allowed me to realise that what I thought I felt for Elias wasn’t really love. You’ve helped me with that. I had to endure the storm to be able to see the blue sky again. You’re my blue sky, my love, bright with sunshine The only sort of sunshine I get to feel on my face. I feel blessed to have that.”

He leaned back down to him and gently brushed his lips to his.

All Alec could think of was how much he wanted to hold him against his body and offer him comfort even though he said he didn’t need it. He wasn’t sure of the words he needed to express the way he felt so he let his lips do the talking.

Magnus could feel himself getting lost in the kiss with every passing second. He had been so right about the way he felt when he was with Alexander. It was such a contrast to the way he had felt about Elias and he was well aware of his error in thinking that what he had with the other man was anything to do with love.

It was as if he’d had his vision obscured somehow and what he thought had been in front of him was now revealed and it was totally different to what he had thought it had been. He could feel that deeply seeded emotion steadily growing within him and he both longed for its first bloom and dreaded it. He knew that very soon that those three little words that were growing and forming
within him would burst from him and that he would have to tell Alec of their true meaning and how it would impact on their relationship.

He pressed his mouth harder against his, deepening the kiss, making the difficult thought so much harder to bear. He knew that for every minute he spent with this wonderful beautiful man that he was slowly inching towards his end and it was killing him to think about it.

As he left his mouth to trail kisses down the side of his strong jaw and to the softer, slightly salty tasting skin of his neck, he pushed the dark thoughts aside and just concentrated on the wonder that was Alexander Lightwood. He ignored the single tear that coursed down his cheek.

Alec woke the next day thinking that he still had Magnus in his arms. Even before his eyes opened he was smiling and nuzzling into that he thought was his midnight tresses. He took in a deep breath and then frowned when the smell that came back to him was all wrong.

He opened his eyes and found that instead of a that hot warm body with its silky soft skin he was clutching a pillow tightly to him. It vaguely held that exotic earthy scent that he identified as Magnus but not enough to truly satisfy him.

“Argh!” He cried out into the golden glow of the morning sunlight that filled the room. Their room.

He had always loved mornings; the soft new light, the fresh clean air, the possibilities of what would fill the day that followed. But since he met Magnus, mornings meant a deep feeling of loss and the beginning of an agonising longing to feel his strong arms around him and his body against his once more.

He squeezed the pillow tighter biting the soft material as he craved the loss of those perfect lips on his own. He felt a cool brush at the back of his neck and knew that his man was with him, even if it was only in spirit form. A small smile played on his lips. It wasn’t good enough but it was better than nothing.

“‘Morning, babe. I miss you already, you know.” He said softly into the silent room.

When he had first met Magnus and realised he could communicate with him this way, he had felt really uncomfortable about talking to someone who technically wasn’t there but even only after this small space of time, it didn’t bother him at all.

He rolled over to his back and looked up to the ceiling and felt the sheet slipping from his chest. More like being tugged from his chest. Even in this form, Magnus couldn’t seem to keep his hands to himself. He grinned and brought his hands up to behind his head, lacing his fingers together to cradle his skull. Invisible fingers danced across his chest, trailing through the cloud of hair and over his ribs and to his belly. He gave a moan and closed his eyes, imagining that Magnus was before him in corporeal form.

As he enjoyed his gentle caresses and the occasional cool brush of phantom kisses, he started to think about what he could do for Magnus to show him how much he cared. It would have to be that night, he wanted to be able to have him physically before him otherwise there wasn’t much point.

He sifted back through the conversations that they had shared and one thing stood out to him.

Magnus’ sadness at the loss of not being able to see or feel the sunlight anymore. Slowly, an idea formed in his mind and he smiled a little more broadly than he already was. He felt a sharp pinch to the side of his hip.
“Ow! Hey! Okay, okay, I’m sorry I wasn’t concentrating I know, but it was for a good reason, I promise.”

He sat up in the bed further, trying not to let his thoughts give him away. This next part was going to be hard but he couldn’t have Magnus around while he was preparing his surprise for him. He took in a deep breath.

“Ah, babe? I need you to do something for me. I want to do something special for you tonight, for both of us but mainly for you and I want it to be a surprise. Could you, um, maybe disappear completely for the day?”

Alec grimaced as he looked around the room, waiting for a sign that he had been heard and he hoped understood. It wasn’t long before he got his answer. In bewildered awe, he watched as his old teddy bear rose from the chair in the corner and seemingly floated across the room till it got about level with the end of the bed. Alec found himself shrinking back a little as if the harmless toy was some kind of vicious animal on the prowl.

For a few long seconds, nothing happened and he was left with the bizarre sight of a levitating teddy bear before him. The corner of his mouth started to pull up and his brow creased a little as he wondered what his spectral boyfriend was up to. He gave a weak laugh and was about to make some kind of remark about Magnus’ mad sense of humour when the bear was suddenly hurtling towards him at full force. He barely managed to duck to the side, the near thread bare fur of its body just grazed his shoulder before the worn stuffed toy hit against the brass bars of the bed head and fall with a soft plop onto his pillow.
Alec shrank away from his old childhood friend like it was a deadly species of spider primed for attack. What the hell…? Well, someone obviously wasn’t happy about being asked to leave even though it was for a good cause. He gave a huff and looked around the empty room.

“Bit old for a temper tantrum, aren’t we? Come on, Magnus, I did ask nicely and it’s for a surprise and I don’t want you to see, Please? For me?” He pleaded to the thin air.

Nothing.

Alec took a silent inventory of the contents of the room to see if there was anything else that he might expect to come flying at him. He cringed inwardly at the thought of the hard cover books or the photo frame that sat on the top of the chest of drawers. He felt a sharp jab in his ribs and gave a yelp.

“Okay, okay, I’m sorry for thinking that you would throw something harder at me. But can you please just do as I asked? I don’t want you to go either but I do want this to be a surprise. It’ll be worth it, I promise.”

He sat in the silence, eyes scanning the room for any response.

He felt the cool brush of a ghostly kiss on his cheek and his hair ruffled from unseen fingers and he let his tensed shoulders drop. Finally, now he was seeing reason.

“Thanks, babe. You’ll like it. I know you will.”

He got out of bed with renewed enthusiasm and headed for the shower.

After a quick breakfast and some notes to remind him of what he wanted he headed for the hardware store. Now he had made up his mind about what he wanted to do, he could wipe the grin from his face.

He was still smiling to himself as he entered the big store, grabbing a shopping cart and getting out his list from his pocket.

It took a while to get everything he needed inside before he went to the nursery outside. After consulting an attendant about the plants he wanted, he headed for the check out.

He had just turned the corner to go to the centre aisle where the check outs were, lost in thought about what he was planning, a goofy grin on his face, when he almost collided with another cart.

“Damn! Sorry! I wasn’t … Simon!”

Simon was smiling at him and his eyes swept over the contents of his cart. One eyebrow raised high on his forehead.

“Alec, hey, well, this looks an interesting project, got sick of the inside and gonna start on the garden already?” He looked at the tags on the plants, nodding approval.

Alec swallowed. He really wasn’t prepared to answer questions about everything. But now he was forced to come up with yet another plausible sounding lie.

“Ha, yeah, the weather is too nice to be cooped up inside and besides I wanted to make sure the
walls were fully dry before I started painting.”

“Fair enough, and good idea about the wall s too. If you want a hand, just let me know. I’m pretty handy with a paint brush.”

He gave a laugh. His eyes fell on the roll of artificial turf that was sticking out of the cart and he frowned.

“So, going for the easy maintenance look, are we? I would of thought that you would have liked to have the feel of real grass under your feet after coming from the city. That doesn’t look like much though. Are you just trying it out or….?”

Simon gave him an enquiring look, leaving the statement open for Alec to fill in the blanks.

Alec liked Simon but he was being way too eagle eyed right now and it was making him feel nervous.

“Yeah, yeah, just trying it out to see what it would look like, you know? I’m a visual person so it better if I can see it.”

Even to Alec’s own ears that sounded weird. He had to get a hold of his nerves or Simon was going to think something was going on.

Ah, duh!! He probably thinks that already, anyway. His subconscious was standing there hands thrown up in surrender. Wrap it up, genius and get the hell out of there.

“I should really get going. And you look like you’re going to be busy, so I’ll see you around?” Alec said, hoping their conversation was going to be coming to an end soon.

Simon gave him a strained sort of smile. “No, not really, just stocking up on a few things while I had the chance. Are you sure you don’t need a hand to get those plants in the ground or anything?” He asked hopefully.

Alec knew he was fishing for an invitation to come out but there was no way he was getting one today.

“Nah, it’s fine. I’ll just take my time and see where I want them today, I think. But thanks for the offer. See you around.”

He gave him a very fake smile and then headed for the check outs.

Alec worked all the rest of the afternoon on his surprise for Magnus. When he had arrived back from the hardware store, and before he started unloading things, he had stood in the living room and called out to see if Magnus had decided go back on his good behaviour and come snooping around but he made no sign of being there so Alec had unpacked the car of all his purchases for the morning.

By six that evening, he had finished and he stood back admiring all his hard work. He smiled and nodded his head. He hadn’t done a half bad job. He just hoped that Magnus would like it. He had really wanted to do something for him to show him that he did really care about him, no matter what shape or form he came to him in.

He went into the kitchen to started getting a light dinner ready for himself as he had food for when Magnus came.

Alec had decided that he was going to stay awake and wait for Magnus by sitting on the couch in
the dark room but he must of drifted off into a light sleep because the next thing he knew he felt the soft brush of now familiar warm lips to his. Even before he could open his eyes he was reaching up to pull them down towards him, wrapping his arms around a pair of well-muscled shoulders and loving the way he could feel their strength under his hands as they rolled under the thing material of his shirt.

Magnus gave a soft hum of laughter, the sound filling Alec’s mouth as he kissed him long and deep.

God, he was falling for this man so damn hard he was sure that when he did finally acknowledge his true feeling for him the thump would be able to be heard from a mile away.

He carefully climbed onto the couch, putting abended knee between Alec’s and gently lowering himself onto his sleep warmed torso.

Alec wasn’t sure if he was still feeling the effects of his catnap or if he was letting Magnus’ wonderful kisses make his brain feel like mush, but he didn’t care either way. He gave a groan of delight as he felt that heavenly weight settle onto him and he let his legs fall open further to accommodate him. His hands searched for the bottom of his shirt so he could pull it up and feel his beautiful bare skin under his touch.

When he did, he felt Magnus draw in a breath and somehow press his mouth firmer into his, this time, adding a short flick of the tip of his tongue. It sent shock waves of pleasure coursing through Alec’s body and ended by pooling low in his belly making his already half hard length twitch in response. Magnus moaned into his mouth and ground his own pelvis into him; the hard ridge of his own cock digging into him in a way that had him seeing stars behind his eyes.

Magnus gently pulled back and nuzzled into the side of his neck, his warm breath coming in hard gusts against his sensitive skin. Alec slowly rubbed the side of his rough cheek against him and Magnus was making purring noises as he pressed his face into him.

“Dear God, my beautiful boy, I’ve never wanted someone so much in my entire existence. I want to experience everything about you and this gorgeous body of yours. I want to cover every single inch of you in kisses, taste your delicious flavour and feel your inner heat when I bury myself deep inside you. Feel your body gripping mine as we hold each other in the dark.”

Alec wanted to explode right then and there. His cock swelled in an instant and was starting to become almost painfully hard as it pushed against the underside of his zipper in his jeans. He tilted his hips up into Magnus, the wondrous friction it caused made him moan and press him tighter to him.

He turned his face and brushed his lips against his brow, nosing the edge of his hairline, filling himself with that scent that was earthy and unique to Magnus. As much as he wanted desperately to show Magnus his surprise that he had worked on, and as much as the thought of having sex with another man was both exciting him and scaring him at the same time, he couldn’t seem to focus on anything but wanting to get Magnus into his bed and bringing his words to life.

His own breath was getting ragged and deep. His heart was pounding in his chest as if it were trying to escape and find a new home. But it already did, he just didn’t want to voice it yet, it was way too soon for that.

“I think your surprise is going to have to wait, babe. I don’t think I can concentrate on anything else but you at the moment. We need to get upstairs.” He whispered, his voice deep and raspy and so full of need he almost didn’t recognised it himself.
Magnus slowly raised his head and he could only just make out his features in the near complete
darkness. The filtered light from the front windows cast just enough light for him to see those big
hazel eyes that were blown wide and flames were practically flickering behind his heavy lids. God,
he wanted this man so badly. The need to feel his body holding him captive was almost
overwhelming to him and he found himself having to close his eyes and centre himself enough to
be able to say anything coherently. Now was the time for calm thoughts and clear thinking, even if
it was a challenge at that moment. He didn’t want anything to mar this moments for either of them.

“Alexander, are you sure about this? I don’t want to rush this and turn it into something that you
want to forget happened. Your first time with someone should be special and you need to make
very sure that this is what you want, my love.”

He reached up and smoothed the rumpled dark hair from the sides of his face. Alec leaned into his
touch, craving any and all contact he could get from him.

He was having trouble gathering his thoughts as well, but he understood what Magnus was saying.
But as cloudy as his mind felt, he knew that he wanted this, without a doubt.

“Magnus, I’ve waisted enough time in my life being afraid to feel the way I feel about wanting to
be with another man. Maybe if I had had the guts to actually get out there and be with someone
else I might not have made such a fool of myself with Jace. I’ve been thinking a lot about this
whole situation with us and the house and everything and I think that you and I were somehow
meant to find each other.

I know we haven’t been together very long, less than a week, but it feels like I’m meant to be here
with you. This whole thing still makes me nervous and I feel totally out of my depth with it but I
figure I just keep treading water and keep my head above water, I’ll get there in the end. Besides, I
have you to throw me a life line.” He gave a short chuckle. “I just thought, it’s weird to think that it
took someone who died in the past to help me live happily in the present.”

Magnus gave him a grin and gave him a look of mock indignation.

“Did you have to bring that up, Alexander? I prefer to think of myself has half alive thank you very
much. And from what I have seen over these many years, there are far deader people walking
around on this earth than me. Anyway, I intend to show my how alive I really am. Can a dead man
make you feel like this?”

He dove back down to his neck and clamped his mouth onto the side of his neck, swabbing it with
his tongue before nipping at the heated wet surface.

Alec cried out as the sensation jolted through his body as if he’d been shocked. Fuck, he was going
to burst into flames at any second. His hand clutched the back of Magnus’ head, his fingers carding
through the dark silky strands and he held his head tightly to him. He thrust up into his groin, the
feel of both their hard lengths mashing together had him so damn horny he couldn’t see straight. As
soon as he felt the flat swipe of that talented tongue of his hypersensitive skin he knew he couldn’t
wait any longer but the thought of having to go all the way upstairs made him groan inwardly.

Somehow, in between the mind numbingly soft kisses that Magnus was now working up the side
of his throat, heading for the underside of his jaw, an idea came to him that would allow them to
experience each other and give Magnus his longed-for wish. All he had to do now was muster up
the strength to ask him to get off him for a little while when he seemed fully intentioned of getting
him to come right there in his jeans and on the couch like a hormonal teenager. The thing was,
that’s exactly how he felt.

“Babe? Mag.. oh shit, Magnus? Fuck, will you stop that or there’s gonna be no need to go upstairs.
I really want you to see what I did for you. And we can bring the two things together. But you have
to get off me, babe, please. I just need to do a couple of things before you see it?"

Alec was fighting with everything he had not to just give in and let him take him on the couch but he was determined to pull this off.

Great choice of words, Lightwood, he thought to himself and the corner of his mouth twitched. Magnus gave a growl deep in his throat and halted his progress, stopping just short of his ear.

He gave a short hard tilt of his hips and Alec hand to grip the back of his shirt and tense his whole body to quell the rising need that was threatening to burst from him at any second. At that moment, he wasn’t sure even if he got up that he’d be capable of walking when he did. But he was willing to try to do what he wanted to. Magnus looked down at him an evil look on his face.

“Do you know how dangerous it is to play with a loaded weapon, Alexander? All it takes is one small slip….”

He bucked into him again, making Alec hiss in his breath and arch his back. Fuck, this was killing him! “and it’s enough to pull the trigger.”

Alec gave a growl of frustration and channelled all the sexual tension into putting his hands flat on his chest and shoving up, hard. Magnus gave a chuckle and lifted off him, standing beside him and offering him a hand up.

He pulled him to his feet and pulled him close kissing him hard and deep.

“Hmm! Magnus! That’s not helping, babe.” He said, pulling away, giving him a reproachful look.

He’d say one thing for Magnus Bane, when he wanted something, he wasn’t subtle about letting you know. He tried to give him an innocent look, but an evil grin threatened that perfect mouth.

“I stopped, didn’t I? I got off you.” He said, batting his eyelashes.

Alec really wanted to be mad at him, the frustrating smartass, but how the heck could he angry at someone who looked so damn adorable? Magnus was all too willing to take full advantage of Alec’s weakened resolve too. A deep laugh that sent chills up Alec’s spine preceded Magnus pulling him closer still and then crashing his mouth down on his hard enough that Alec hoped all his teeth were still in place after. He plunged his tongue into the wet heat and Alec felt his legs buckle. He was fighting a losing battle and the final play was looming up fast. If he kept letting him kiss him like this it wouldn’t matter if he was standing up or laying down, it was going to give the same result, and uncomfortable wet patch in his jeans.

He forced himself to pull back, panting. It took a full minute of him standing there, steeling himself before he could speak. He really didn’t want to look at his boyfriend either. The sight of a needy Magnus with his wide blown pupils, tousled hair falling provocatively over his brow, pale pink lips, puffy from hard kisses, slightly parted and warm breath coming from between them was going to be way too much to be able to resist if he did. It seemed that Magnus, though had one thing on his mind and nothing was going to distract him from it.

“I can’t think of a single thing that I could want to see more than the sight of your beautiful big strong body, striped down and laying on the bed before me. I’m sure that whatever it is that you want to show me can wait. Although, whatever it is you’ve done over there, makes for some interesting shapes in the dark.”

Magnus gestured over towards the windows where oddly shaped shadows now occupied the space where one chair used to be. He took back the space that Alec had created and reached out a hand,
trailing his fingers down the side of Alec’s face then neck and finally to his shoulder.

He smiled unseen in the darkened room when he felt him reacting to his feather light caresses. Yes, he had this man under his control every gorgeous inch of him. He took another step closer, closing the small gap even more. He started to run his hand over the gentle swell of Alec’s pec muscle and then down over his ribs and to his abs, his fingers dancing over the subtle ridges of the muscles below the material of his shirt. He frowned. What was he doing wearing the pesky item of clothing anyway? Things had gone well beyond the need for clothes.
Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

Just a small word of thanks to the beautiful Grace who let me use a line of hers from one of the wonderful comments she left me. I hope you like how i’ve used it, my sweet, and that you an everyone else enjoys the chapter.

He closed the last inch of space that was left and heard Alec give a quiet moan. His hands were around his waist and his fingers were scrunched into the soft fabric of his shirt slowly bunching the material into his hands. He leaned into him so that his chest scrubbed against the front of his shirt. God, how he longed to feel that soft dusting of dark hair on his skin, feel it tickle and taunt in the hottest way possible. All in good time, he thought to himself. Sometimes, it was more about the journey than the destination. If time had taught him anything, it was patients but this handsome man before him was testing him in that area. Big time.

He put his lips near to his ear and flicked out the tip of his tongue to catch the small fleshy lobe and felt Alec jerk a little.

“Is this little surprise of yours really worth having to put off what we both want, hmm? I mean, honestly, what could more important than feeling this inside of me?”

His voice was breathy and low and that alone would have buckled Alec’s knees but then he felt a hand cupping the straining bulge in the front of his jeans and he actually did wobble on his feet. At the same time Magnus took the small rounded piece of skin into his mouth and sucked hard.

“Jesus, Magnus!! Stop! I can’t! I can’t! Not here, not like this. W..wait, please!”

The words left him in a high tight voice, the sound trying its best to squeeze passed his clenched teeth and jaw. He had fallen against Magnus unable to stay upright any longer and his head way resting on his shoulder.

He really, really, really wanted to nuzzle into the side of Magnus’ neck and taste that silky soft skin but it reminded him that he still didn’t even know exactly what colour it was. If he could just pull himself together for another few minutes, he could find out.

With more strength and will power than he knew that he was capable of owning, he stood back up and took in a deep breath which really didn’t help because Magnus was close enough for him to be able to smell that wonderful aroma of his.

“I want you to stand here and close your eyes for a few minutes, can you do that? I just need to do a couple of things, okay?” He said, his voice a little shaky.

Magnus gave a huff of frustration. Alec had more stamina than he had thought he would have. It made him wonder just what he was going to be like when they finally did join together. He wanted to argue with him but he knew that he had worked hard on whatever this was that he had planned and while he couldn’t think of a single thing that would surpass the ultimate pleasure of experiencing that hot body of his was like from the inside, he knew that this meant a lot to him and he wanted him to be able to have the satisfaction of giving him something that he had created for him. The unselfishness of that thought shocked him; who knew that Magnus Bane, entitled and
self-centred to the end, could be capable of putting someone else’s feeling and needs before his own? He tried no to react to the thought that echoed in his mind a that second; love makes you selfless.

Magnus made a pretence of acting put out though, just for appearances he couldn’t have Alec thinking he was just going to give in to him that easily. He gave another impatient huff and a growl of frustration and then put a hand over his eyes.

“Happy now, Alexander? I hope this isn’t going to take long, or I’m going to just pick you up and carry you upstairs over my shoulder, I don’t care what you’re doing.”

He heard Alec give a snort of laughter. “Be right back, don’t go anywhere. And no peeking.” He said, his voice trailing off as he moved away from him.

“Not much chance of that happening. I’m stuck here, remember?” Magnus grumbled.

He didn’t add “but I’m more than happy to be that way if you’re hear with me, my love.” That sounded in his head. He smiled in the dark as he heard frantic footsteps going up the stairs then a small bang.

“OW! Fuck!”

“Language, Alexander!”

A mumbled “sorry” came from further up the steps and the footsteps travelled to the first floor and along the hall. Magnus frowned as he tried to think of where he was and what he might be doing. A door opening, hmm, that sounded like the cupboard in the hall, linen cupboard. Something being dragged out of it, sounds like it could be heavy, blanket maybe?

Okay now he was heading into the bedroom. Silence, no idea what he’s up to.. a draw being opened and closed, he’s getting something out of a drawer in the bedside table, the drawer wasn’t heavy sounding enough to be any bigger, what could he be getting out of that?? Oh well, all will be revealed shortly, I’m sure.

Now he’s heading back, slower this time. He’s coming down the steps, carefully, he must be carrying something and doesn’t want to trip again. He felt a slight gush of air and the delicious smell of his man walking close by and smiled wider.

A soft whump, as something was dropped on the floor near where he was. Soft but heavy, hmm, definitely a quilt or a blanket. Magnus frowned again as his ears strained to pick up every detail.

Now he’s dragging something but it’s not on the floor boards, it’s on a rug or something. This is getting more curious by the minute. And again, sounds like more than one thing being moved this time.

“Are you sure you’re not peeking?”

“No, Alexander, I’m not. What are you up to?”

“You’ll see. Won’t be long now.”

Another impatient huff.

“I sincerely hope not.”

There was a soft sounding noise and a slight breeze as something was waved about and disturbed
the air. The blanket maybe? Magnus was growing more impatient by the minute. Two more soft sounding thumps as something hit the floor that made a muffled noise.

Click.

Magnus jerked back as his covered eyes became aware of a strong light being turned on in front of him. Whoa! What the hell…? He heard Alec give a satisfied sounding sigh and then his footsteps headed back towards Magnus and he felt himself getting excited for what he might see.

Alec came up and moved behind him, standing so his chest was up against his back, the warmth exchanging between them pleasantly. Magnus smiled and leaned back into him, rubbing the back of his head against Alec’s shoulder. Even just standing here with him like this was wonderful. Two strong arms went around his body; one hand pressing against the flat of his stomach and the other going up to take the hand that was covering his eyes. He grinned as he felt his cheek brush on the side of his face.

“Ready? Okay, now you can look.” Alec said softly, putting a small kiss on his cheek and he pulled Magnus’ hand away.

At first, Magnus couldn’t see too much at all, his eyes squinting at the bright light that was filling not only the area that Alec had done something with abut the majority of the room as well. He blinked rapidly for a few seconds until his eyes adjusted from the near complete darkness to the complete opposite. He had been turned into a nocturnal creature for the past century and seeing this bright a light was hard to take.

Slowly things swam into focus for him. The first thing he saw were plants, young trees, to be exact. There was at least six of them skirting the edges of a large rug. But no, that wasn’t right. It wasn’t a rug, it looked like, grass? How the heck did he do that? What was this stuff? Smaller pots of bright coloured flowers sat around the base of the trees, giving the illusion of a spring flower bed. They were beautiful. On the strange looking ‘grass’, a blanket and two pillows had been spread out invitingly and a small table and two chairs had been dragged off to one side. A large basket sat on its surface.

But the thing that most held Magnus’ attention was the two big light stands that sat at either end of the space. He felt his heart melting. Daylight, oh dear God, the lights looked like day light. He turned his head quickly to look at his man. Alec was looking back at him anxiously. He was obviously waiting for him to say something.

For the first time in as long as he could remember, Magnus was utterly speechless. This special, beautiful man had created something for him that he never thought he’d see again. Now his eyes were blurring again but this time with was from tears. He launched himself at Alec, crashing his mouth down to his and kissing him for all he was worth.

Alec gave a small muffled yelp as his boyfriend grabbed him. He’d been worried that he didn’t like it when he hadn’t said anything but this kiss was saying more than any words ever could. He worked his mouth wide, his tongue caressing his in a type of heated wet dance. Alec melted against him, wanting as much contact between them as possible.

With great effort, Alec pulled back, Magnus chasing his mouth, wanting more but Alec hadn’t completed the scene. With shaking hands and panting breath, he fished his phone out of his pocket and pressed the screen. The lyrical twitter of bird son filled the room. Magnus’ eyes went wide and his already parted lips grew wider still.

“Alexander? How in the world….?” He started and Alec grinned, holding up his phone to show
him.

He looked at the screen, shaking his head.

“Your modern technology amazes me. It’s like a dream. A dream come true. Thank you, my heart, I absolutely love it.” He said, his eyes getting shiny.

Alec took his hand and led him to the blanket and pillows that he had spread out on the artificial grass.

This had been the moment he had been waiting for all day. Finally getting to see Magnus in the light, even if it was artificial.

He gently lowered himself to the floor and pulled Magnus down with him. Magnus hadn’t taken his eyes off him for one second. Alec thought about asking him if he could take off his shirt but there were moments in life that were beyond words, and this was one of them. He had a feeling that he already knew what he wanted, what he needed, anyway.

He reached over to him, taking the sides of his shirt in his hands and gently and agonisingly slowly, pulled the whisper soft garment up and over his head. He dropped it to the side and then swallowing hard, turned his eyes to the glorious sight before him.

There was only one word to describe what he was seeing right now, magnificent. Alec had never looked upon anything that had evoked what he was feeling at that moment before. His head was swimming with a myriad of emotions and thoughts. It was a complete onslaught and he struggled to try to process each one.

His hands ached to touch that beautiful skin that seemed to glow under the fake daylight shining down on him. Magnus was sitting before him, his face turned towards the light source, eyes closed basking in the warm heat it was giving off. He looked totally serene, relaxed, almost Zen like. He hadn’t seen what the sight of him was doing to Alec.

Alec went to reach out a hand to gently touch him, desperately wanting to do so, but he didn’t want to disturb his peace. His eyes drank in every single heavenly inch of him, the emotion pouring into him and he could practically feel it filling him up, as if his soul had been starving for this and inch by hungry inch it was being nourished by him.

Magnus’ skin was almost a golden colour, like he had been spending time in a warm climate. It was the most beautiful colour Alec had ever seen. He had no idea skin could come in that unique shade. He started at the waist of his breeches, watching with fascination at the way his rippled stomach was slowly working up and down in conjunction with his chest. The very faintest trace of a line of soft hair started just below his navel and disappeared below the waist band on his pants, making Alec want to play explorer and find where it led to. His fast swelling cock seemed to know more about that then he did.

He inched up to his ribs and that silky-smooth chest, broad and strong. The dark disc of a nipple providing direct contract yet complimenting the soft gold of each pectoral muscle. His mouth watered at the thought of taking each one into his mouth and covering the small hard nub of their centre with his tongue. He gave a shiver and his crotch tightened, his already hard erection pushing against the front of his jeans, trying to escape its confines.

Everything about him was like looking at a work of art; the broad slope of his shoulders, the clearly defined shape of each bicep, corded veins and tendons providing the surface of his skin with a sensuous texture. Even the gentle ridge of his collar bone made him want to burst into flames. Then the column of his neck, with its prominent Adam’s apple, Alec had to really work at
stifling a moan and he wondered if he would taste differently now he knew exactly what he looked like, it was something he was definitely going to find out.

He finally got to his face, as it shone where it was turned towards the light. There was no other word for him apart from beautiful. His fine features coming together in the most perfect way possible. Each closed eye with their delicate lids, slightly turned up at each outer corner, smooth brow, dark raven strands of silky hair falling over one elegant dark brow. That perfect soft pink mouth the corners turned up in a smile so soft and dream like it made Alec’s heart beat faster.

And not a blemish, scar, mark or freckle of any kind marred his surface.

Perfection.

Beauty.

Sensual.

Hot.

The only thing that could top this moment off was the sight of his open eyes…. as he watched, his breath hitched in his throat, Magnus turned his head back to face him and slowly raised his lids.

This time Alec did groan, and his hands fisted in his lap. Two deep dark chocolate orbs, so dark that even the strong light couldn’t reveal the presence of the pupils, looked back at him under dark lashes. Alec was completely speechless and his mouth went dry. Dear God, he was gonna kill him, just by looking at him.

“Touch me, Alexander, I need to feel your hands on my body.” His voice was low and not much more than a whisper.

Alec’s heart pounded against his ribs, demanding to be heard, and his couldn’t remember when the last time was that he had taken a breath.

“Can you hear that, my heart? Can you hear my soul singing to yours? Touch me, touch me and make its voice soar.”

That was it. That’s all it took for Alec to completely lose control of himself like he never had before.

He simply fell forward, his hands out to take Magnus by the shoulders and push him back onto the blanket and pillows behind him. He clamped his mouth down on his, yawning it wide and filling Magnus’ mouth with his tongue. He heard a quick intake of breath through his nose as it gently rubbed his cheek. His hand had come up and held the back od his head, slender fingers tangling in the thick thatch of his hair, ensuring his lips and tongue were going nowhere else.

Magnus moaned into his mouth, tangling his own tongue with his. Alec was slowly lowering his body down to lay on his chest, one leg bent and resting on the front of his thighs, his knee just brushing the hard mound that tented his breeches, and strained the lacing. Magnus squirmed below him, a soft noise coming from deep in his throat.

He scrambled for the back of Alec’s shirt and started reefing it up his back, running his knuckles along his back bone as he did. Alec arched his back, his body undulating into his before he was for ed to raise his head from Magnus’ mouth so he could struggle out of it.

“Oh Alexander, the feel of you on my skin is making me lose my mind. Hold me close, my love, I
cant get enough of you.” He rasped and his hand came up to pull Alec’s head back down to his so he could take his mouth again.

Alec felt like he was going to burst into flames any second. He felt hot all over and it was as if someone had taken a scrubbing brush to his body and scrubbed him red raw. Every surface of him suddenly hypersensitive the merest contact with any part of Magnus. The slightest brush of an arm or leg was enough to send sparks shooting through him like bursts of fireworks. He wanted to run his hands over the entire surface of his body but he was having trouble trying to drag himself away from his lips.

When he had kissed Magnus long enough for his chest to be heaving up and down hard starving for a decent deep breath, he took his mouth down his jaw and to his neck where he lavished attention to the rapidly beating pulse that was tapping back at him from below the surface. He mouthed hungrily at the spot, alternating small nips with sucking kisses, drawing the silky skin into his mouth, making the golden skin turn deep pink.
Okay, so I know how much everyone loves it when I cut these loves scenes off mid way through, yes, Holochan, I hear you loud and clear, so I will post this chapter and the rest of the scene in its entirety so there will be no need for any pleading comments to get the rest of it on here.
Hope you all like it. As always, please let me know what you think.

Magnus was helpless beneath him. That tiny spot was his Achille’s heel and it only took the littlest of touches for him to go into raptures of delight from it. He tilted his head back, making sure Alec had full access to him, his eyes fluttering closed and his mouth open in a silent scream of pleasure.

He titled his pelvis up, desperate for that delicious friction it caused when he ground against Alec’s hard erection. Flames engulfed him as their hardened lengths duelled together, dragging moans out of both of them. Magnus spread his knees apart, letting his legs fall open letting Alec socket into him. But it wasn’t enough, not nearly enough.

“Dear God, in heaven Alexander, I need you inside me, so badly. I can’t wait any longer, my love.” He said, his voice deep and gravelly with his need.

His hands fumbled with the waist band of his jeans, trying to wedge between them to get to the button and the zipper, but Alec was practically melted to him. He pulled back from him, out of breath and panting.

“Let me.” He breathed and he undid the button and the zip before he pulled them down over his hips.

He groaned as the front of them caught on the hard bulge from below his boxers.

Magnus could help it, he had to get his hands on him. Now. He struggled to a sitting position and took hold of the waist band of his underwear and tugged them down. Alec gave a sigh of relief as his iron hard cock sprang free of its cotton bindings. Magnus looked at him with so much hunger in his eyes as well as raw undisguised lust that he swayed on his knees.

Magnus steadied him before guiding him to the floor so he could remove the clothes completely.

In any other situation, Ale would have been mortified to be completely naked and under glaring bright lights, every inch of him out there for the world to see but tonight, he just couldn’t care less. His sole focus right now was to relieve Magnus of those tight-fitting breeches.

He pushed Magnus back against the pillows again and he saw his eyes go wide from surprise. But one corner of his mouth pulled up into a grin. Yeah, he liked that a bit too much.

“Alexander, so forceful, I love this side of you, my darling. Please, don’t stop there. I’m all yours.” He purred, the grin turning into something more carnal that heated Alec’s blood even further than it already was.

He took hold of the two ends of his lacing for the front of his breeches. He had absolutely no idea
what the hell he was doing; the only man he had ever undressed had been himself.

Now that’s not entirely true, is it?

Now why in the name of God, did he have to remember that? It seemed like a million years ago but there had been an incident back when he and Jace had been in college together. It had been one of the many times when Jace had dragged him out to one of the seemingly endless rounds of parties that happened each and every weekend.

Alec felt like he was stuck in Groundhog’s Day with each one he attended. He got stuck trying to fight of some over enthusiastic girl that wouldn’t take no for an answer when he tried to say he wasn’t interested and spent a miserable night sitting in a corner somewhere watching his best friend and crush, get drunk and get handsy with some more than willing girl.

After dragging his drunk ass home after one of these delightful evenings, he had managed to get Jace all the way back to the dorm before he recycled nearly the entire contents of his stomach into the toilet and onto the floor of the bathroom, not to mention the front of his shirt and pants. He had sat back onto the cold white tile head lolling back and mouth hanging slackly open. Alec had shaken his head and looked at him. Even in this state, he looked hot. It wasn’t fair. Weren’t drunk people supposed to look horrible?

He knew he couldn’t leave him in this state, so he had begun to clean him up. At first, he just felt annoyed at having to get a face cloth and wipe his friend’s face like a messy two-year-old and even when he started unbuttoning his shirt he was miffed about it but then he started noticing the widening ‘V’ of creamy white skin and things got awkward real fast.

The only saving grace had been the fact that Jace was pretty much out cold otherwise he would have been in a world of hurt. By the time he had gotten all the buttons undone, his hands were shaking and his breath had started to get ragged. He had dragged Jace’s limp form forward and slipped the soiled shirt off his broad shoulders. Jace had mumbled something incoherent and draped his arms around his back. Alec had frozen. The shirt stuck half way off and half way on and he was fully turned on.

He had screwed his eyes up tightly and tried to focus on the job at hand, praying that he could make it as impersonal as possible. He managed to get the shirt completely off him and then with monumental effort, dragged his comatose six-foot three frame to his feet and into bed. Well, more specifically, dropped him into bed.

He had taken off his shoes and socks before he paused. Oh, holy Jesus. He had to get his pants off him. He could feel his entire body shaking as he looked to the ceiling and wondered what the hell he had done that had been so bad that he was being punished in this way. Being in a crush with your best friend, straight best friend no less and knowing that you would never have your feelings reciprocated, and having to strip him down to his underwear was just the sickest form of torture imaginable.

Alec had huffed out a breath, and decided that this was going to have be like removing a band aid; the faster its done the less it hurts.

He started undoing the stud and zipper on Jace’s jeans with his head turned to the side at first but after coming in contact with parts of Jace that sent shivers up his spine, he decided that looking what he was doing was probably better.

Everything was going fairly well right up until he it was time to pull the snug fitting pants off him. Thinking back, he should have taken his time and dragged them off slowly. It might have been more angsty but then at least what ended up happening would have happened.
He went to the end of the bed and took the cuffs of the pants firmly in his hands and yanked down hard. He ended up flat on his butt on the floor, pants in hand. He had gotten to his feet and stood up, looking at Jace to make sure he hadn’t been pulled in two or anything.

Fuck!

Alec felt his legs buckling at the sight that greeted him. Tight pants that required that much force to removed them meant that the law of averages said that in all likelihood whatever was worn underneath said pants, was going to be pulled off with them i.e., underwear.

The offending garment hadn’t come completely off but they had managed to get about half mast which made them sit below his hips. Below his pubic hair. The base and about an inch of his generous endowment showed above the elastic. This time, Alec did hit the floor. This was way too much to handle. He had sat on the floor for a full fifteen minutes cursing his own twitching length as it sat up and took notice of what he had just seen.

Long story short, he had grabbed the blanket from the end of the bed and thrown it over him, shielding him from any further distress and spent the rest of the night trying desperately to unsee what he had just seen.

His fingers had faltered at the lacings and Magnus, had noticed. He grabbed Alec’s hands and sat up before him.

“Alexander, if this is too much for you, we can stop. I may have to sit in a cold bath but we don’t have to do this if you’re not ready.” He said softly, looking up at him.

Now Alec felt stupid for letting his stupid memories get in the way. That was the past and that’s where those memories belonged.

“No, its fine, Magnus. I want his, I was just being stupid, that’s all.” Magnus squeezed his hand tightly.

“You aren’t stupid, my love. Let me guess, a bad memory? Something to do with that friend of yours?” Once again, Alec’s thoughts had been as transparent as a pane of glass to him. He smiled softly and gave a nod.

“That man has a lot to answer for, doesn’t he? Just so you know, I’m nothing like him, Alexander. I wouldn’t dream of rejecting you in any way. Unlike him, I love the feel of your lips on mine, your hands all over my body. Your warmth pressed into me. I want you, Alexander, any way I can get you.”

Alec looked into those dark fathomless orbs and knew that without a doubt that Magnus meant every word he had just said.

He kissed him soundly before going back to his task and unlaced the ties. When he had gotten them undone, he moved to his feet and rid him of his boots and rather odd looking long socks. He marvelled at Magnus’ thin sinewy feet. How the hell could feet make his dick jump before him? He put soft kisses on the bridge of each one before going back and taking the waistband of his breeches in hand.

He gently worked them down over his narrow hips, slowly revealing where that tantalising trail of hair ended. Magnus raised his backside and Alec took a deep breath and pulled them down to mid-thigh.
Magnus’ thick erection breached the open front of the pants and rested in the dark nest of soft hair at the bottom of his belly. The sight of him was far different from having his hand gripping its swollen girth in the dark. Magnus was certainly a very gifted man. Alec felt the colour rising in his face as he gazed upon him, like a child looking into a toy store window, if you were going to see a naked man, a naked aroused man, for the first time this close, then he couldn’t think of any better than what was before him.

The tip of his tongue came out to run over his lips that had gone dry where his mouth felt like he was drooling from the corner of his mouth. He even wiped a hand to his chin to check that he wasn’t. He heard Magnus give a chuckle as he kicked his legs and worked the breeches completely off. He lay before him, one hand resting behind his head, the other laying slap against his smooth stomach. The smug son of a bitch was enjoying his discomfort way too much.

“I’m glad you two have finally met. Meet my best friend, my worst enemy and the greatest judge of character I’ve ever known. As you can see, we are inseparable and where he goes, I follow. He is rather shy however, so you made need to coax him out of hiding. When he does come out of his shell, so to speak, he’s rather fearless and has been known to go exploring in dark, wet confined spaces. The tighter the better, in fact. So, don’t be shy with him, Alexander, he responds very well to touch.”

Alec couldn’t believe that Magnus was talking about his penis as if it were a completely separate entity. He didn’t think he could ever be that bold. Yes, he had handled the thick throbbing length before but that had been in the dark, under clothing. Not under what amounted to be a spotlight. He suddenly felt very self-conscious about his own nakedness.

Magnus sensed his unease and sat up to take him in his arms and pull him back down with him.

“Small steps, my love. There’s no rush for us. Take your time. I’ll help you. There’s no need to be shy around me, Alexander. I think you’re the most sensuous thing I’ve ever seen this close. Your body is what inspired artists to paint and sculptures to carve. Perfect.”

Alec lay hugging his side, his weight resting on one forearm, the other covered by Magnus’ and resting on the top of his chest.

As he watched, Magnus moved his hand over the terrain of his body allowing Alec to map the surface with the palm of his hand. The smooth rise of each side of his chest, the small hard peak of his nipples, the fall of his ribs and the ripple of his abs.

Alec looked back at him as he paused before his belly button. Magnus looked at him for permission to go on and he willed himself to relax and gave a small nod. He watched as Magnus guided his hand slowly down to below his navel and them over to one hip and the well-defined groove that led to his groin. He slid it back across and over the bony rise of his hip. He pressed down harder of one finger so it fit into the groove of his upper groin and pushed it down towards his inner thigh.

Alec’s eyes closed slowly and he bit his bottom lip as he felt the silky smoothness. Magnus pushed his hand down as far as he could reach and the side of his fingers brushed against his balls. Magnus groaned and the hand that held his grew tighter for a few minutes. His hardness twitched where it lay on his belly. Alec was sure he was going to either going to explode or pass out.

He moved his hand back up but then came to pause just before the hidden head of his dick. It was only for a few seconds and then he lifted Alec’s hand and put it down right over the silky shaft.

Somehow, Alec’s hand automatically curled around the girth, gently squeezing. Magnus moaned
and tilted his hips slightly, wanted more. The hard-satiny warmth of him felt familiar to him and he
slowly pulled up, loving the feel of the silky glide of him against his palm. He more he worked
him, the further back the foreskin retracted and the harder his own cock got. It nudged suggestively
against Magnus’ hip, a bead of precum smearing over the smooth golden surface.
Magnus took his hand and pulled Alec down to his mouth gently brushing his lips to his, in small
feathery kisses. But each one was slowly growing with need and intensity and before long the
gentle touches became hard, needy and wide mouthed. Tongues became involved and Alec knew
he wasn’t going to last much longer at this rate.

The urge to rush things was almost overwhelming, he felt like a kid with a new toy, wanting to test
all its boundaries as fast as possible but he knew that a lot of what he was feeling was his
inexperience. And his nerves were an ever-present threat.

Magnus’ soft almost constant little moans of pleasure were really getting to him and he found
himself increasing the pressure on his thrusting erection. At the same time though he really wanted
to feel more of his warmth against him and he knew he was going have to sacrifice the wonderful
feeling of that hard length sliding silkily back and forth in his hand.

He left Magnus’ mouth, hot, wet and open, to trail kisses down his jaw and to his neck where he
nibbled along the corded surface to find the spot he knew would drive him wild and also distract
him while he let him go.

He moved his body up and over him, feeling his legs widen to accommodate him. His hardness
now digging into his belly. His own rock-hard cock nudging gently between his cheeks. It seemed
to know more about where it wanted to go than he did.

“Oh Alexander, I really need to feel you inside me, I can’t wait any longer, my love. I’ve never felt
like this with anyone before, it’s making my head swim. Here, let me guide you.”

Magnus went to reach down between them taking his throbbing dick in his hand and starting to
push the leaking head between his cleft but Alec stopped him. He might be inexperienced but he
wasn’t taking chances.

“Babe, wait. I have get a condom and the lube.”

He reached under a pillow and brought out a small foil square and a small tube.

“I hardly think that is necessary, my sweet and I want to feel you not a piece of rubber.”

“Magnus, we have to be safe. I’ve never been with anyone before but you have. And its latex not
rubber.”

Magnus gave a small huff but looked resigned. This was the modern world and Alec was a modern
guy. He knew things were vastly different from when he had lived and he supposed that really, he
should have been grateful that he had managed to get as far as he had without catching some
horrible disease.
As long as he got to have this man, then he didn’t really care. But if he was insisting on wearing
one of those tight rubber contraptions then he was going to have the fun of putting it on.

“Here, let me have that thing then. Why should you have all the fun?”

He took the silver square out of his hand. He grinned up at him.

“You going to have to sit back for this, Alexander. I don’t want to hurt you.”
“Oh, yeah, okay.”

Alec felt the colour rise in his cheeks. Rookie mistake. He sat back, now sitting in Magnus’ thighs. He sat up before him and tore open the packet taking out the slippery little circle and looking at it dubiously.

“Are you sure this is going to fit, my love? That weapon of yours looks was too powerful for something this flimsy.”

Alec’s heart was pounding with both nerves and excitement but he couldn’t help grinning at him. Somewhere very deep down, his subconscious was dusting off his shoulders with a smug look on his face. Damn straight it’s a weapon, fella. And the load it’s carrying has your name on it.
Chapter 23

Alec felt himself blush all over again. Fuck! Where were these thoughts coming from?!

“You have no idea how hot you look when you blush like that, Alexander. If you keep it up it’s not going to matter about wearing one of these things. Let’s get this on you so you can get inside me, shall we?”

Alec looked back at him, shocked. He really had no shame when it came to this sort of thing, did he? Before he could think of anything to say, Magnus had taken his hard length in hand and was slowly rolling the thin latex over him. It was a new sensation to him, he had never worn a condom before and he winced a little, not used to the constricting tightness over his sensitive hard flesh.

“Alright there, darling? You look a little uncomfortable? Want me to take it back off?” Magnus looked way too eager for that to happen.

“No, it’s okay, just not used to it, that’s all.” He dropped his eyes.

He hated this. Hated having to admit his naivety to Magnus.

Magnus put a finger under his chin and lifted his face back up to his.

“Don’t be shy around me, Alexander. I understand. This is all new for you. But guess what? It’s new for me too, my love. I’ve never been with anyone in this modern age before. I feel like all my knowledge is out of date and irrelevant. We’ll work it out together, I’m sure. Come, lay with me.”

He lay back down and pulled Ale back down with him so his furry chest scrubbed against his. He took his mouth and stated with slow easy kisses. Alexander’s innocence was one of his most endearing features and the more he thought about this being his first time with anyone, the harder he grew.

It wasn’t long before the slow easy kisses became hard and heavy, tongues dancing together in the wet heat and gentle thrusts started to become more forceful.

“Alex... Alexander... darling... I thi... I think you better apply some of that stuff you have in... in that tube before... before I explode... Oh God, you hake me so hard, here, feel me, see what you’ve done.”

He grabbed one of Alec’s hand s and jammed it down between them and groaned when his hand wrapped around the throbbing hot pole that was leaking in a steady stream against his belly.

Alec moaned as he felt him in his palm, sticky heat coating his skin. Had he really been responsible for causing this? His own steel bar between his legs jumped and nudged further against him. That would be a yes, then.

He fumbled for the small tube and flipped the lid. He squeezed the tube a little too hard and ended up with a palm full of the cool clear gel. Okay now he had this, where exactly did he put it? On himself? Or...? The thought of touching Magnus there got his nerves fired up, even though it made him even harder as well.

Magnus took his hand and guided him to between his legs, pushing his slippery fingers into his cleft and against the small tight muscle of his entrance. He widened his legs, spreading them wide, opening himself up as much as possible. The wet slippery heat of it made Alec want to collapse onto him and just drill into his body without care or responsibility but even he knew that he had to take things easy.
“Yes, my love, Arghh! Hmmm, Oh God in heaven that feel so good.”

Magnus’ eyes had rolled back and his mouth was open and hot panting breaths were coming from deep within him. Alec was just getting used to the feeling when he felt Magnus put pressure on one of his fingers and press it against the small knot of muscle, making it slip inside the tight heat.

“Arghh! God, yes! Hmm, move it, my love, in and out, yes like that! Gah! I’m so close, so close. You need to enter me now, my love, I need to feel you there so badly, like I’ve never wanted anything so much in my life.’ His voice was deep and shaky, barely more than a hoarse whisper.

Alec removed his finger and felt Magnus make an impatient grab for his more than ready cock and position it right his greasy iris. He brought his knees up further and clutched at Alec’s back, digging his fingers into the warm working muscles.

“No! Jesus, Alexander, don’t make me wait any longer. “He growled and he raised his hips up to take the very tip of his wide head into him.

Alec gave a gasp of surprise as he started to enter him. It felt like was being drawn into him, as if the small opening was trying to suck him inside. His heart was pounding and his own breath was escaping him in hard gusts making his open mouth hot and dry. He gave an experimental push forward and felt Magnus’ body stretch around him with a hot wet grip that was almost too much to hold back from. He moaned as he felt his muscles pulsing around him as if they were trying to draw him inside further or trying to push him back out.

Magnus gave a hiss and he felt him tighten harder around his hard length. Oh God, he was too big, he was hurting him. He went to pull back nut Magnus’ hand grabbed his backside and dug in his fingers.

“Don’t you God damn move. I’m okay, Argh! Jesus but your big! Ugh, I love it! Just take your time, I’m fine really. Move damn it!” He hissed through clenched teeth.

Alec wasn’t so sure about pushing forward but a sharp slap on his ass cheek had him thrusting forward another inch and Magnus moaned. He pushed steadily forward into the tight greasy warmth. Magnus writhed below him, gently tilting his hips up to meet each gained inch of length. Alec made in to the final two inches and he couldn’t help himself and jammed them home making them both give a yelp or both pleasure and pain.

He way his body was contracting around him was like nothing he’d ever thought possible and he could feel himself swell ever wider as he bumped against something deep I’m Magnus’ centre. He cried out and his ankles came up to lock around the small of his back.

“Move, damn it! God don’t tease me like that. Urgh! Shit, I’m going to explode!” He strained and Alec started to pull back and moved forward, tentatively at first and then as he got the hang of it and started to allow himself to relax into the wondrous slippery heat of it all he did it with more purpose, feeling the beginnings of that pooling sense of pleasure that was coming from the pit of his belly.

Alec’s cry filled the room, drowning out the bird songs that were still playing in the back ground. He felt himself just simply give in and he slammed into Magnus with full force, not caring one little bit of he was hurting him or not. He was right on the razor’s edge of his orgasm and it was still building deep within him, looming large like a bank of angry storm clouds. He might have given into his feelings but he still wanted to make sure his lover was satisfied as well. He channels some of his redundant will power that he had been using to hold himself back, to now try to stem the impeding surge of his release.
He knew Magnus was close as well, as he released his ear and braced his forehead to his shoulder, hard grunts being pushed out of him with each of Alec’s thrusts forward. Alec renewed his efforts in hopes that the extra punishing thrusts would be enough to push him over the edge. He could practically feel the man coiling up like a spring getting ready to fire.

Deep within him, the engorged head of his dick nudged at something that made Magnus gasp and sink his fingers into him again, his eyes going wide.

“Jesus, Alexander, do that again, I don’t know what you hit but it made me see stars!” He cried and Alec rammed into him again and this time felt himself nudge it as well.

Magnus cried out and gripped him outside and inside his body. He bit down on the ridge of his shoulder as he shot hot jets of warm sticky heat between them, filling the space to the point where it had nowhere to go but to start to run down the grooves of his groin.

“Fuck! Alexander!”

His muscles pulsed around Alec’s still throbbing erection milking him for all it was worth and with a final thrust forward, finally released the trigger on his orgasm.

Alec’s primal yell started where Magnus’ had stopped and he felt himself pumping hard and long into the slippery wet heat his body, the muscles still working to drain every last drop from him. Alec felt like he had been lifted to a great height before being dropped once again. Wave after wave washed over him before he collapsed forward onto Magnus heaving chest, feeling it finally coming to a sloshing stop, lapping at his strained senses like gentle waves.
He lay against his man, sweat making them both slippery and wet. He mustered up a grin.

“Language, Magnus.” He drawled, his voice heavy with exhaustion.

He gave a light chuckle and felt Magnus’ strong arms wrap heavily around him. A short bark of laughter bucked his chest below his cheek. He frowned and realised he was probably constricting his breathing and went to get off but Magnus held him firm.

“You move, and I’ll never speak to you again, my darling.” His words felt like an iron fist in a velvet glove and Alec smiled against him.

“Okay” he whispered and kissed the skin beneath him.
Chapter 24

Simon gave a yawn. Twenty more minutes and he would be home. Thank God. It had been a long day in the city. He usually evaded a trip to Gomorrah, as he liked to refer to the place, like the plague but twice a year he had to bite the bullet and do a day trip to pick up supplies that he used for his work from the wholesalers.

Freight was a killer and was getting more expensive each year so he needed to keep his costs down as much as he could.
An early morning start plus a tour of the supplier’s warehouses and add on the time that that took, plus a break to actually eat something and then the trip back home, made for a long, long day. He looked at the display on the dashboard. One forty-five in the morning, shit. That’s it, he was giving himself a day off tomorrow and besides, he was going to need to unpack and record all the new supplies he bought today.

He was coming up to the road that Alec’s place sat on and on a spur of the moment decision, decided to turn off and go past the place. Total waste of time, of course. The poor guy was probably long in bed. Dark tousled head resting on the pillows, handsome face slack from sleep, those hot wide lips, parted slightly as even warm breaths left him. One wide, broad shoulder bared in the dark room, the soft creamy skin standing out in the blankness. His long, muscled frame outlined under the sheets as he slept.

What would be like to sleep beside? What would that smooth wide back be like to curl up against? That sweet as rounded ass sitting on his thighs as he spooned into him. He felt his crotch tighten and adjusted himself and squirmed in the car seat. There was little chance of finding any of those things out for a while. The guy was totally gun shy and obviously whatever had gone on in the city to motivate him to come out here to the sticks, was bad enough that he had sworn off men for the foreseeable future. Plus, he got the feeling he hadn’t had much experience either. He grinned in the dark cabin of his truck. Wouldn’t that be something? Being someone’s first time maybe?

He rounded the bend and was expecting to have to peer into the darkness to be able to pick up even just the outline of the old girl but what he saw was totally the opposite.

Bright light cut through the darkness, shining brightly from the front windows. Simon frowned. “What the hell……?” He said to himself as he started to slow the truck down.

What in the name of God was he doing up at this hour? Surely, he wasn’t working on the place this late. Then a thought hit him. Shit, what if there was something wrong? What if the adorable dolt had tripped over a can of paint or something and was lying on the floor passed out? He shook his head. Now he was just being alarmist. He was probably just having trouble sleeping and decided to do a bit of work to wear himself out.

Couldn’t hurt to check, however. You know, just to be friendly. He ignored the notion of seeing Alec wandering around his house just wearing pyjama pants and nothing else.

Oh, yes please.

Before he could talk sense into himself and keep driving, he slowed and pulled into the driveway, cutting the lights. He cut the engine and got out of the cab, being careful to shut the door as quietly as he could. Why, he was being so secretive about his arrival, he didn’t know, maybe it was because of the lateness of the hour.
Sensible people didn’t call on their neighbours at almost two in the morning unless there was something drastically wrong. And trying to catch said neighbour in a half-naked state didn’t count.

He was heading for the front path when he looked up and noticed the trees in the window. He stopped and gave the sight a questioning look. Jesus, Alec, I know you’re new to home improvement, guy, but even a two-year-old could tell you that plants were usually kept outside the house, especially trees. The cluelessness of his really pressed all the right buttons for him. He gave a quiet snort of laughter and started up the path.

A moan from somewhere close inside the house made him freeze. Oh fuck! That didn’t sound good, maybe he was right about him being hurt after all. He mounted the steps quietly and heard another one. He felt a prickle of fear run up his spine. Now he was getting worried. He was about to knock on the door, his hand poised at the door frame but then thought better of it. What if he was on the ground and couldn’t get up?

He decided to sneak a peek inside the window. There was no curtain on it and the room was obviously well lit, he’d be able to see where he was hopefully.

He stepped as lightly as he could to the edge of the window and poked his head around the frame.

The sight that greeted him made him forget to breath.

The tops of the trees obscured his vision but they were sparse enough to get the complete picture of what was going on. Alec was laying naked on the floor alright, but it lucky for him, another man had broken his fall. His long muscular frame lay between the stranger’s legs. His body rising up and down with the guy’s hard breathing. Two well-toned arms held him against his chest, his eyes were closed and this mouth slightly open and curved into a satisfied looking grin. Yeah, he knew that look.

That was a I just came like a rocket and had the best sex of my life look. Simon’s eyes started to smart and he realised that he hadn’t blinked for ages. It was like watching a car wreck; he knew he should look away and mind his own business but he just didn’t seem to be able to. Alec said something to the good-looking stranger that he couldn’t hear and he saw his head bobbing up and down as the man’s chest bounced with laughter. He squeezed him tighter to him and his hand went to his head, fingers getting lost in that thick dark silky thatch.

He wanted to kill him.

Anger rose in him so suddenly that it shocked him back into breathing. He lied to him. He actually lied to him about not having a boyfriend, the two-faced ass. He watched and saw Alec turn his head and put lazy, just been fucked kisses to the tanned surface of his skin.

Urgh! That was it he couldn’t watch any more. He crept off the porch and down the steps and back to the truck. He got in and quietly closed the door. He sat in the dark smoke coming out his ears. How the hell had he misread that guy so much? He had seemed so nice. So quiet and sweet. It still wasn’t sitting well with him like a mouthful of food that had gone down the wrong way and was lodged in the base of his throat in a lump.

He swallowed hard and felt the dull ache of hurt feelings start to bloom in his chest. No, no, he wasn’t doing this to himself. He went to start the engine but thought better of it. Obviously, this guy was a well-kept secret and he didn’t want everyone, probably especially him, to know about their relationship.

He released the hand brake and let the truck roll silently backwards, down the slight slope of the drive, getting to the road before he started the engine and turned for home. He waited till he got passed the house before putting the lights on.
He berated himself all the rest of the way home for his stupid decision to call in to Alec’s place in the first place. He didn’t know what was worse, the sight of him laying with that other man after he told him that he didn’t have anyone or that he had been weak enough to let the fact that he had allowed himself to hope that someday there might be a chance with the tall gorgeous new comer.

He felt something run down the side of his face and he wiped it away angrily. No! He wasn’t going to do this about him. There was nothing between them, apart from that one kiss, they hadn’t had any contact at all apart from some friendly brushes and good-natured back pats.

He got to his own place and roared up the driveway, not caring about his neighbours at that minute in the slightest. He got out and slammed the door, stomping into the house. The tiredness he had felt only a short while ago had gone, replaced with the anger and hurt he was feeling. He grabbed a beer from the fridge and threw himself down in the dark living room.

Damn you, Alec Lightwood, why they hell did you have to lie to me about your boyfriend? He took a look pull on the bottle and tried to calm himself down. He knew he should be getting some sleep but he was still too worked up.

Three beers and a lot of internal dialogue later, and Simon had decided that tomorrow when he had calmed down completely and hopefully gotten some sleep, he was going to march his ass over there and confront Alec about why he thought it necessary to lie to him.

He swayed to his feet, not sure if it was the fact that he was a light drinker and that three beers were more than he usually had in a week, or that it was now four in the morning and he was dead on his feet. He staggered towards the bedroom bouncing off walls and various pieces of furniture like a pinball before finally making it to his bed and falling face down onto its surface.

As he lay there waiting for the blessed relief of exhausted sleep to carrying him off, he murmured his last thoughts in the dark.

“I could have loved you, Alec. I could have given you that.”

Alec hadn’t realised that he had actually dozed off until he felt Magnus gentle hands brushing hair back from his face. He squinted into the bright light and stirred in his arms.

“Good morning, my heart, have a nice little nap, did we?” Magnus said softly, leaning up to kiss his forehead.

Alec smiled and stretched. He suddenly gave a gasp and stilled. Shit! He was still… was he actually…. Magnus gave a deep chuckle and help him close.

“Yes, my heart, we’re still joined together. It’s fine. I love the feeling of you inside me. Even if I have to share you with a thin piece of rubber.” Alec felt himself colour and frowned.

“It’s latex and aren’t you, I dunno, uncomfortable?”

“No in the slightest, my love. I could cheerfully stay this way forever.” Another chuckle and another forehead kiss.

Alec smiled against his chest. He loved that warm smooth surface against his cheek and hearing the steady beat of his heart right near his ear. He turned his face and kissed him, letting the tip of his tongue just touch the warm skin. He could faintly taste the salty tang of sweat from their hot as hell love making.

Was sex always like that? That good? Or was it only like that with Magnus? He felt him trail his
fingers up and down his back and he arched into it, lifting his head and smiled when he found that Magnus had met him half way so that he could join his lips to his. It was a soft, lazy kiss but full of feeling and the beginning of another fresh bloom of heat. He felt his half-softened dick twitch deep inside him and Magnus gave a soft groan and gave an answering contraction of muscles.

“Shit, babe, your gonna make me hard again if you keep that up.” He said, nuzzling into his neck.

“And that would be a bad thing, my darling?” He gave a deep chuckle that sent shivers up Alec’s spine.

He tightened around him again and Alec gave a groan, resting his forehead on the chest.

He looked back up at Magnus with a heated gaze and parted lips. If he was any more turned on than this his tongue would be hanging out. Magnus ran a finger down the slope of his nose and gave it a playful poke.

“Oh, Alexander, I love that face of yours, if you were anymore delicious, you’d be good enough to eat. Now, there’s an idea.” He wiggled his eyebrows and opened his mouth and bared his perfect teeth, zeroing his eyes into the slope of Alec’s shoulder that looked prime for a nice dark hickey.

Alec gave a giggle and then suddenly stopped and cursed under his breath.

“Damn! I forgot the other part of your surprise! Hang on!”

In one swift movement, he pulled out and away from Magnus and got to his feet. He heard a rather pained yelp from behind him.

“My God, Alexander! Slowly, that should have been done slowly. I don’t particularly want to be walking like a cowboy for a week. Not a good look.”

Alec grimaced. Rookie mistake number two. He turned slowly, an apologetic smile on his face.

“Fuck, sorry, babe. I wasn’t thinking,”

He could see that Magnus had been trying to frown at him but it wasn’t quite working. One corner of his mouth twitched up.

“Clearly, and language Alexander.”

“Sorry.” Alec said quietly, and turned back to pick up his jeans.

He was about to pull them up when he remembered he was still wearing the condom. Shit! Okay, he could do this. He carefully rolled it off, almost dropping it twice as his fingers slipped on the greasy surface. He raised an eyebrow at the contents and felt a rather proud grin momentarily spread across his lips. Was there always going to be this much in one of these things? That was a pretty good effort.

“Is there anything wrong, Alexander?”

Magnus’ voice broke him out of his moment of self-indulgence and he startled. Shit, how bad would that look if he got caught doing this? He tied a hasty knot in the end and reefed his jeans on, quickly enough that he almost unmanned himself in the process. A short squeak escaped him and he bite his lip and squeezed his eyes shut.

“What are you doing, my love? Are you hurt?”
"No, I'm fine." He said hastily.

He could hear Magnus shifting behind him. Next minute a warm hand slid down the back of his jeans and cupped the cheek of his butt, massaging it gently.

“You have the cutest backside I’ve ever seen, my heart, I can wait to get the opportunity to sink my teeth into it.”

Alec turned slowly, colour in his cheeks and kissed him. He hadn’t meant for it to get any further a simple soft thank you for the compliment type of kiss but Magnus was making it into something far hotter.

He relaxed into him, hands snaking around his waist. Manus pulled back a little and suck in his bottom lip, capturing it between his teeth. Alec felt his knees buckle slightly. Jesus, this man had a direct line to his pleasure centre, that was for sure. But if he didn’t make a break for it soon, they were going to run out of time.

He put his hand on his shoulder and pushed back gently. “Babe, I want to show you the rest of our surprise. I’ll be quick I promise.”

He gave him a final quick peck and headed for the kitchen.
After disposing of the condom and washing his hands, he grabbed the bottle of wine and two glasses from the table and headed back. He handed the bottle to a smiling Magnus and then grabbed the basket from the table and sat down on the floor unpacking the contents.

Cheeses, crackers, fruit and a some finely shaved cold meats were spread on the blanket between them. Magnus opened the wine and poured out two glasses. He handed one to Alec and sat the bottle down. He held up the glass towards him.

“To us, my heart, and to your first taste of a new world. I know it’s only been a very short while that we’ve known each other but it seems a lifetime and I’ve loved every minute of it with you. Thank you for my wonderful, thoughtful surprise, Alexander, I love it more than words can say. You’ve given me two things that I thought I could never have again. The sunlight on my face, well, close enough to it, and someone that I could give my heart to. To us.”

Alec worked hard to choked back tears. He didn’t know much about Magnus’ life he had before he became what he was but he knew one thing. They sure had a way with words back then.

“There’s no way I can top what you just said Magnus but thank you, I’m glad you liked it. I have no idea what other couples are like and I know our relationship is pretty unique, but I don’t think it could get much better than this.”

Magnus beamed back at him. “Oh, I don’t know, Alexander, I think you have a very interesting spin on the English language. But if you keep cursing like you do I’ll be forced to take you over my knee.”

Alec spluttered around the mouthful of wine he had just taken and looked at his boyfriend wide eyed. Then a grin spread across his face.

“Is that a threat or a promise?” He said cheekily. Now it was Magnus’ turn to look surprised.

“Oh, someone’s learning, aren’t they? You’re a quick study, my heart. Only a few days together and you’re already coming out of your shell. Get over here, anyway. What are you doing all the way on the other side of the room?” Magnus complained.

He held a hand out towards him and Alec smiled and got up to move over to his side of the blanket. He laid down in front of him, on his side, so that Magnus’ warm body was pressed tightly into his back.

“I think you’re exaggerating a little, babe. I was only on the other side of the blanket.” He reminded him. Magnus pouted.

“I don’t care, it felt that far away to me. And to answer your earlier question, it can be either one of those options. I think I’d get just as much enjoyment from them either way.” He bent his head and pressed a soft kiss to his lips.

Alec grabbed a cracker and a piece of cheese and held it up to Magnus’ lips and he bit down on it, smiling at him around the mouthful of food.

“You might not have a command of the language, my love, but you have excellent taste in wine and cheese. This is all delightful.” He said, reaching over Alec for another piece.
“Why thank you, Sir, I’m glad you like it. How about we lose the birds and put some music on.” He stretched up to get his phone and giggled when Magnus ran his fingers up and down his ribs.

“Ha ha, stop that! Let me pick a song.” Magnus snatched the phone from his hand.

“Hey!” He frowned but the look on Magnus’ face as he held the screen before him made him lose any annoyance he had.

“What is this infernal thing, anyway?” He turned it over in his hands.

Alec grinned and lay his head down on his arm and rolled onto his back taking the phone back off him. This should be interesting. Explaining to someone who lived over a hundred years ago how an iPhone worked.

“Well, it a lot of things really. A telephone, a camera, you can connect to the internet, listen to music, see what time it is, heaps of things.” Magnus still looked confused.

“That small device does all that? Impossible.”

“You know that it plays music, you fooled with it before, remember? When Simon was here and that other time?”

“Language, Alexander!”

Alec dropped the phone and frowned up at him. “What are talking about I didn’t swear! All UI said was Si..” The look on Magnus’ face told him he had hit a raw nerve. He couldn’t help a bit of teasing though.

“Don’t tell me that the confident Magnus Bane is jealous of a, what was it you called him? Handyman?”

Alec reached up and gave his smooth cheek a pinch. Magnus bent forward and kissed him long and hard, to the point where his brain was starting to feel like it was melting.

“Let’s see that horrid little man being capable of kissing you like that, shall we? Oh Wait, that might not have been the best turn of phrase I could have used.”

He frowned and looked off into the distance. Alec couldn’t help the giggle that escaped him. Magnus lifted his chin in the air in a haughty fashion and looked down his nose at Alec.

“He ever touches you like that and I’ll make Marley’s ghost look like that Casper that everyone keeps calling me. The very thought. Huh! I’m the stuff of nightmares.” He said indignantly.

Alec couldn’t help it. He burst into laughter and grabbed the hand that was draped over his side, bringing it to his lips and kissing the knuckles. Magnus was looking at him like his laughter had wounded him to the core.

“Oh babe, I’m sorry, I couldn’t help it. I had no idea you knew about Casper the ghost. And yes, I’m sure you could be terrifying. You could scare the pants off me any time you like.” He said reaching up and pulling his head down to him.

He could feel Magnus resisting him a little but he still allowed Alec to brushed his lips on his softly. Alec gradually deepened the kiss and he felt him come around.

“Come on, help me pick a song.” He held up his phone again.
They scrolled through the song choices and after several attempts, mostly Magnus putting his hands over his ears and shaking his head, they settled on one he actually liked. Magnus nodded his head and smiled, listening to the lyrics of the song.

“I like it, I think it suits us perfectly. What’s it called again?” He kissed Alec’s cheek, nuzzling into his neck.

“War of Hearts.” Alec said as he smiled, hunching into his touch. They lay together in their fake garden, more at peace and happier then they had ever felt.

Alec curled into his chest, brushing his lips on its smooth surface. Magnus gently played with his hair and he closed his eyes, a contented smile on his whole face, as they listened to the lyrics.

Stay with me a little longer
I will wait for you
Shadows creep
And want grows stronger
Deeper than the truth
I can’t help but love you
Even though I try not to
I can’t help but want you
I know that I’d die without you

Magnus lay with his beautiful man in his arms looking up at the ceiling. Oh God, this song was reading his mind. Bringing his deepest feelings to life. It was true, and he knew it. He was fast falling in love with Alexander and he knew what that meant. For both of them. He scrunched his eyes up tight against the dull ache that started in his chest.

No, no, he wouldn’t think about that. Tonight, had been way to perfect for it to be marred with these thoughts. All he wanted was to lay here and feel his man beside him, feel his chest rising and falling, feel his breath warming his skin and have it seep inside him somehow to spread to every inch of him. Once again, their time together was fast coming to an end and he wanted each second to count.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Alec stirred, the sound creeping though to him from consciousness. He hugged the pillow that was in his arms tighter to him and buried his face into it, smiling. It still smelt like Magnus. My boyfriend. My lover. You know the one I had sex with last night. He gave a hum of delight. Somewhere in his sleep dulled mind, his subconscious was rolling his eyes and muttering, okay, okay, yes, we get it. You did it, yayee!!! Good for you.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Alec groaned and blinked awake. At first, he was a little disorientated. This wasn’t his bedroom, how did he… Oh yeah, last night. With Magnus. Best sex ever. Well, he thought so anyway. And he didn’t hear his baby complaining. His baby. He grinned like a madman at the thought.

Another round of banging brought him out of his reverie and he interpreted the sharp sounds as knocks. Shit! Someone was at the door.

He flew to his feet before he was still properly awake, tripping over one of his shoes.

“Fuck!” He yelped as he almost pitched forward into the hard wood floor. He looked around the
room and added a ‘sorry’ just in case is boyfriend was still lurking somewhere. Huh, lurking? More like haunting.

He ignored his thoughts and stumbled to the door and pulled it open.

Simon stood before him, one hand raised to knock again. There was something missing. It took him a minute to realise what it was. He wasn’t smiling. Usually Simon greeted him with a wide toothy grin but not today.

Alec squinted at the bright light that came through the door and rubbed his eyes, trying desperately to wake himself up. He had no idea what time it had been when he fell asleep last night but he knew it had been something ungodly. He hadn’t even had time to think about the fact that he had woken up alone, as usual. That thought sobered him up real fast.

“So, is he still here?” Simon said, his usual happy voice curt and his tone clipped.

Whoa! What was his problem? Alec frowned and tried to process what he had just said.

“Simon, what are you...?”

“Don’t try to lie to me anymore, Alec. I’ve heard enough of those. Just tell me, is he still here?”

Alec was starting to lose patience with him. He had no idea what in the name of God he was talking about and he was too sleep deprived to be playing a game of twenty questions at his from door.

Simon gave an angry huff and pushed past him into the room.

“Hey! Simon, what he hell, man? What’s your problem this morning?” He said, turning to watch the other man standing hands on hips, looking around the room.

“What’s my problem? What’s my problem? I’ll tell you what my problem is, Alec, I don’t like being treated like an idiot, that’s what. Now, where is he? Is he upstairs? Did you manage to make it to the bedroom at some point or has he slunk back to whatever rock he crawled out from underneath of.”

Alec looked at him like he’d just grown another head. The guy had lost it. Completely. Simon was about to head for the stairs when Alec finally had enough of his weird guessing game. He went over to him just as he reached the bottom stair and grabbed his arm.

“Now look, Simon. I have no idea what you’re on about this morning but I don’t appreciate being woke up at, at, at whatever time it is, to someone barging into my house and throwing accusations around and then trying to search the place for God only knows who or , or what.”

Simon reefed his arm free and glared at him. Alec had to admit as much as he found Simon a little sugary sweet, he preferred that version of him than the irrational lunatic that was stalking around his house at the moment.

Simon looked towards the living room and pointed at the indoor garden.

Ruh-roh!

“So what the hell is that then? Hmm?” He raised his eyebrows and looked at him expectantly.

Alec hadn’t been prepared to start having to concoct a plausible story to explain away why he had
a fake garden, albeit, rather messy fake garden now, in his living room. He knew if he waited too long and thought too hard about it, Simon would know he was lying. He went for his fall-back position. Angry indignation. He straightened his somewhat stiff back bone and raised is chin.

Hey, it worked for Magnus,

“Simon, what I do in my own house doesn’t concern you. It’s none of your business.” There, huh, he told him.

“It does when it involves you lying to me, Alec. Why didn’t you just tell me and it would of saved me a whole stack of embarrassment from my feeble attempts at flirting with you.” For the first time since he barrelled his way in his door, Simon actually sounded sad. Alec felt his anger levels dropping even though he had no idea what he was on about still.

Alright, that was it, he was just gonna come straight out with it.

“Simon, I have no idea what you’re talking about, man.” He said, shaking his head.

Simon stared back at him, eyes shiny. Was he about to cry? He saw his shoulders slump in defeat. The blustery anger leaving him like air from a balloon.

“The guy, Alec, your boyfriend, lover, hook up, whatever you want to call him. I know you were with someone last night.” He said, his voice resigned.

Alec felt like a bucket of ice water had been thrown over him. Oh fuck! How the hell did he know that? Christ, was he a psycho, no, wrong word, psychic, yeah, that’s the one. Or what was the other one? Medium. Jesus, if he was he was in a world of trouble. Was there much point in denying it now? And if he didn’t, what was Magnus going to say about this? He’d never said anything about wanting to keep their relationship a secret but it sort of came with the territory.

Alec’s mouth started moving before the words had filtered down to his tongue. He could only imagine what he looked like. Fuck! He was only wearing his jeans; his boxers were still in a heap over on the floor near the blanket.

Somewhere in his brain that was going into temporary shutdown from the jolt it had just taken, a know it all voice was telling him that how the hell could he tell that he wasn’t wearing under wear when he was wearing jeans. Simon might be a medium or whatever, but he didn’t think his powers stretched to x ray vision.

“H,h,h, how do you know that?” He said, his voice clearly betraying his nervousness.

He could practically hear the tick tick tick of a clock in the back ground. Another sigh.

“I saw him with you.”

Alec felt his head spin and his knees buckle. Okay, he needed to sit down, now, before he fell down. The nearest chair was one of the dining room ones. He dragged it out and sat down hard, knees spread wide and his arm rested on one thigh and he tried to rub the fuzzy feeling from his head. Jesus, Christ, this was bad.

I TOLD YOU HE HAD A THING FOR YOU, ALEXANDER!

Magnus’ voice boomed inside his head and it was so loud and clear that he jumped and looked around the room, expecting him to be standing beside him or at the very least just across the room.

He really was short circuiting if he could conjure up a mad Magnus inside his head.
Wait, he saw him?

“How did you…?” He frowned and looked at Simon.

YES, DO TELL MR LEWIS, WE’RE ALL DYING TO KNOW.

Shit! There it was again! How was this happening? Like he didn’t have enough to deal with at the moment.
Chapter 26

Simon ducked his head and looked at the floor. Okay, this looked strange.

“Um, I had to go to Gom, er, the city yesterday for supplies and I was coming him early this morning and I drove past and saw the light in the window. I thought there might be something wrong so I drove in. I heard a noise and sorta peeked in through the window and, um, saw you. Together.”

He saw Simon’s Adam’s apple bob up and down as he swallowed hard.

Alec felt himself blanch. Oh fuck! Fuck fuck! What the hell did he see? And how much?

CHRIST! THE MAN IS A PEEPING TOM, ALEXANDER, GET HIM OUT OF HERE BEFORE I THROW HIM OUT!

Alec’s buzzing head came up and he looked worriedly around the room.

“No, please calm down. It’s okay.” He said out loud before he could stop himself.

Simon looked at him like he had totally lost it.

“Calm down? I have calmed down, what are you talking about? So, who is he?” He asked.

A miniscule amount of relief settled into Alec as he realised that Simon thought he had been talking to him. Good, better that he that he was nuts, then the truth.

TALK TO ME IN YOUR HEAD, ALEXANDER. I CAN HEAR YOU PERFECTLY. NO NEED FOR THAT, THAT WORTHLESS PERSON TO KNOW ANYMORE THAN HE ALREADY DOES. GET RID OF HIM.

Okay, okay, just let me handle it okay?

“Simon, I’ve only had a few hours’ sleep and my brain is about to explode. Can we talk about this later?”

“It’s a simple question, Alec, who is he?”

THAT’S IT!

From out in the kitchen, something shattered. They both jumped and looked towards the door. Simon looked at Alec and the both headed out there. A cup was smashed into a million pieces on the floor hear the opposite wall of the cupboard where they were normally kept. Oooh boy, not good.

“How the heck did that happen?” Simon said, frowning.

Alec looked around the empty room. He knew only too well how that had happened.

Magnus, let me handle it, please!

He pleaded with his boyfriend inside his head. A possessive Magnus was not something he wanted to deal with right now. Simon really had to leave.
“Simon, please, you really need to go and I’ll come see you later. I really need to deal with a few things and then I’ll come, okay?” He asked him, practically willing the man to agree.

Simon looked back at Alec and had just opened his mouth to say something when there was another crash nearby. This time, a glass.

Any normal person knowing the history of the house would have been screaming out the door as fast as they could go but for some reason, Simon wasn’t fazed by it at all.

“Alec, what the hell’s going on here? Are you in some kind of trouble?” He asked, frowning.

Only if you don’t count the fact that my ghost boyfriend who has a filthy temper when jealous is about to start pitching those glasses or something right at your head if you don’t do the right thing and leave.

CORRECT TO THE LETTER, ALEXANDER, GET HIM OUT

Alec winced at Magnus’ words and put a guiding hand on Simon’s arm to try to get him moving in the direction of the front door.

Don’t go nuts, babe, I’m just getting him to leave, okay?

Alec heard a low growl echo around his head.

Simon started to move forward and Alec gave an inward sigh of relief as he made his way to the door.

“so, you aren’t even gonna tell me who the guy is? At least tell me that much.” Simon said, over his slumped shoulder as he reached the front door.

Damn you, Simon, why did you have to play good Samaritan last night.

HE WAS NO SUCH THING, ALEXANDER! THE LITTLE WEASEL WAS HOPING TO CATCH YOU IN YOUR UNDERWEAR OR SOMETHING!

Yeah well, he got a whole lot more than that, didn’t he?

DON’T REMIND ME OF THAT FACT.

Simon was still standing there in the threshold of the door, looking at him. It looked like he was determined to get the information from him before he left. Alec sighed and rubbed his hand over his face.

“Yes, Simon, he’s my boyfriend, now, can we do this later please?”

He saw the finely built man slump even further before him and he looked like a kicked dog. He started to feel the first threads of sympathy for him.

DON’T YOU DARE, ALEXANDER, THE SNIVELLING LITTLE WEED DOESN’T DESERVE ANY SYMPATHY.

Yeah, he supposed not, but he couldn’t help it.

“I talk to you later, okay?” He said softly to him.

Simon didn’t answer, just nodded and turned and headed for his truck.
Alec waited till he saw him drive off before he shut the door and leaned heavily against it, sliding slowly to the floor with a thump. He tipped his head back and closed his eyes. Not how he had wanted to wake up this morning.

“You let that worthless trash inside my house again, and there will be trouble, young man”

Alec looked around the room. Ah, this was too much to deal with when you’d only had a couple of hours sleep, if that. He frowned and pinched the bridge of his nose. Hang on, first things first.

“Magnus, what’s up with me being about to hear you in my head? How did that start?”

He felt fingers brushing back the hair from his forehead. It felt good after the morning he’d just had. Soothing. At least Magnus had calmed down.

“I think it might have something to do with us taking our relationship to the next level, my darling. Don’t you think it’s wonderful? I can finally speak to you through the day without having to resort to manipulating electrical devices. Thank goodness, that takes way too much energy.”

“Yeah, I do think it’s great, but a head up would have been better and I think volume control needs work.”

“I didn’t know this was possible, Alexander. I don’t make the rules with this sort of thing and besides, I was upset. The man was being obnoxious.”

“I agree the guy was being a bit pushy, but to be fair, he was upset.”

“I told you, he doesn’t deserve any sympathy, Alexander. Don’t you go letting him get to you like that. He did the wrong thing and I don’t want him sniffing around the only thing in my life that I care about.”

“What’s the matter, don’t you trust me?”

“Don’t get fresh with me, young man, and yes I do, it’s him that I don’t trust. He’s in love with you, Alexander. I can practically smell it on him.”

Alec gave a disbelieving snort. Simon in love with him, now he was getting carried away.

“I am doing no such thing, Alexander, and I don’t appreciate you thinking that.”


“I’m sorry, okay? It’s just I think your exaggerating things a little. I don’t think Simon feels that strongly about me. Likes me a bit maybe.”

“Alexander, you truly have no idea, do you? You’re a handsome, sexy man, my love, irresistible. It’s no wonder the man is acting the way he is.”

Alec blushed and a small smile crept over his lips. He didn’t mind Magnus thinking that about him but it made him feel uncomfortable thinking Simon did.

“So, you can see where he’s coming from then? There’s nothing worse than unrequited feelings, Magnus, believe me, I know about it.”

“Yes, well, I suppose I can see your point but I want it made perfectly clear that you belong to me, and me only. Call me an entitled, spoilt only child, but I don’t share what’s mine. Except for my heart, with you.”
Alec felt that cool whispery feeling of a ghostly kiss and smiled touching his cheek.

“I know, babe. I wouldn’t do that to you. I think you’ve ruined me for anyone else, anyway.”

“Good.”

“So, you don’t have a problem with me going and seeing Simon later then?”

There was a few minutes of silence and Alec thought that Magnus had gone until he heard a sigh.

“I wouldn’t say I don’t have a problem with it, but I know that resolving this is important to you. But if he touches you, the man is will be in a world of pain, believe me.”

“That’s gonna be difficult when you won’t let him here and you can’t go there, isn’t it?”

Alec gave a smirk and looked around the room. An unseen finger jabbed him in the ribs and he jumped, giving a yelp.

“Don’t be cheeky, Alexander. I’m sure I could arrange something.”

“I’m sure you could, babe. You have nothing to worry about, believe me. Now, I’m gonna haul my ass off this floor and get a shower and something to eat and clean this up before I go.”

“So, can I wash your back for you, my love? I’d be happy to lend a hand, you being so tired and all.”

Alec gave a chuckle and pulled himself up, wincing at the way his butt was aching from sitting on the hard floor boards. He felt two hands cup his cheeks and he hummed. He might not be able to see him, but Magnus had great hands even in this state of being.

“I think my poor baby needs a massage. What about here, does this need attention as well?”

He gave a jolt as he felt a gentle squeeze to the front of his jeans. He felt his dick twitch and begin to harden. Deep chuckles echoed in his mind.

“Oh yes, it definitely does.”

He grinned like an idiot all the way upstairs to the bathroom.

Alec thought about what he was going to say to Simon all the way over in the car. He stopped off at the coffee shop and got two large cups and headed for his house.

Simon’s place was old as well but he had done a lot of work to it and it looked great. A simple garden ran across the front of it’s dark blue grey boards but it was full of flowers. The mostly red and white blooms stood out in front of their dark back ground. White shutters and door frames contrasted well and he loved the stained glass in the old windows.

He parked out the front and taking the two hot cardboard cups headed for the front door. He had just set foot on the top steps when the door opened.

Simon looked calmer than he had earlier that morning and he came out to quickly grab one of the cups from him.

“Come in.” He said, holding the door open for him.

Alec stepped inside. The interior of Simon’s place was done in all earthy colours. The walls were a rusty brown and the accents were all leafy greens and shades of ochre. If he had been responsible
for this, he’d done very well. Simon sure had an eye. He waved him to a seat and they sunk into the soft greeny grey fabric sofa. Simon had taken a matching chair across from him.

They both sipped the hot liquid quietly, neither wanting to be the first one to speak. But eventually, it got too much for Simon and he ended the silence.

“So, have you known this guy long? Did you meet in the city?”

Alec took a few seconds before he got his head around what he’d just said. He had given how he thought their conversation might go and decided that in spite of coming off sounding like a crazy person, he owed Simon the truth. He hated the thought that his naivety had led to Simon getting his feelings hurt. He hoped that he hadn’t led him on, he hadn’t thought he had but now he wasn’t so sure.

“Ah, no we met since I moved here.” Simon frowned over the rim of the coffee cup.

Alec knew he was coming off sounding cryptic but he was finding it hard to talk about all this. Apart from Catarina, no one else knew about him and Magnus. Simon was trying his best to fill in the gaps.

“So, what? You met online or something?”

“No, we didn’t.”

Alec studied the edged of his cup and waited steeled himself, waiting for the inevitable question. It was stupid, he knew to keep evading him like this but his nerves were holding him back. He knew what it was going to sound like when he finally came out with it and he wasn’t looking forward to seeing that look on Simon’s face. In spite of all this, he liked Simon’s company and he was the only other guy in town that he’d met.

“Alec, I’m considered a newcomer to this place too. I’ve lived here for three years now and they only stopped referring to me as the new guy when you turned up. But I’m pretty sure that we are the only two gay guys in the place. If this guy snuck in sometime, believe me, someone would have noticed.”

He was getting frustrated with him, he could tell from his voice. Oh well, it was nice knowing you, Simon.

“It’s sorta complicated.” He began.


“He actually died about a hundred years ago, Simon I’m with Magnus Bane.”

There it was. It was out there. He felt himself release a breath that he hadn’t realised he’d been holding. As worried as he was about what he’d say, it was kind of a relief to say it finally.

“You mean a relative of Magnus Bane’s, like a descendant or something.”

“Um no, like the Magnus Bane. The original.”

He looked at him, watching his face. He certainly was a lot calmer than he thought he’d be. That’s because he doesn’t believe you, idiot.
Simon shifted in his chair and gave a small laugh.

“Well, I got to hand it to you, Alec. If you had to come up with a story about him because you
didn’t want anyone else knowing about him, this was a doozy. Certainly original, I’ll give you that much. And I particularly like the way you’ve taken the history of your house into consideration. Very good.”

See, told ya.

“No, I’m not making this up Simon. I know it sounds crazy but it’s true. Magnus showed himself to me a couple of night after I moved in and things sorta, went from there.”

“Come on, Alec, even if I did believe in ghosts, I know that they aren’t meant to be seen like I saw you two the other night. The guy was flesh and blood, every inch of him.”

“That’s because when he comes to me each night he is. Look, I don’t know how this works either, but all I know is that through the day, I can’t see him, and then from just after midnight till dawn, he’s real. Well and truly real.” Raised eyebrows for emphasis.

Simon gave a sigh and shook his head. He definitely wasn’t buying this at all.
Chapter 27

“Well, as I said, ten points for effort, Alec, but I didn’t take you as someone who would resort to such elaborate efforts to hide his personal life from everyone.”

Alec frowned. Of all the things that he had imagined Simon would have said, flat out not believing him wasn’t one of them. He didn’t like it either.

“I know this is all really out there, but I’m telling you the truth, Simon. You’re giving me more credit then I deserve when it comes to concocting stories, believe me. I couldn’t have made this up if my life depended on it.” The he thought of something. “If you don’t believe me then go asked Catarina. She was Magnus’ wife.”

Simon burst into a loud bray of laughter.

“You want me to ask the town’s oldest resident that yes, I grant you is a fair age, to confirm a story about a guy that everyone knows was supposed to be gay that now is supposed of been married? Catarina is a sweet old lady but I think she lives in her own little world most of the time. Yeah right.”

Alec glared at him. He had expected shock, some denial even to be pushed out the door with the number for the nearest shrink in his hand, but this was just rude. He’d come here to try to do the right thing and he hadn’t even tried to believe him.

“Look Simon, I’m sorry if you don’t believe me, I can’t say I blame you all that much but it’s the truth whether you do or not. You don’t know me all that well so I guess that makes it easier to discount what I told you but I’m not going to sit here and be laughed at.”

He got to his feet, half drank coffee in hand. Simon stopped laughing and stood up, reaching out to him.

“Hey, Alec, come on. Look, just tell me the truth and we’ll forget all this.”

He just wasn’t getting it, was he? Alec pulled his arm away from where he went to grab him. He didn’t have to put up with this. He was too tired and too pissed off to deal with it.

“I’ve already done that, Simon. If you don’t believe me then I can’t do anything about it. I’ll see you later.” He went to the door and pulled it open. Simon charged for the door to stop him.

“Really Alec, you’re gonna mess up the start of a friendship all because you want to hide this guy from me? Is he really worth all this?”

“I’m not messing anything up Simon, And I’m not hiding anything. For the first time on my life I’m actually being out there and honest. If you can’t take that well it’s not my fault. And as for is Magnus worth all this, hell yeah he is. Our relationship is more real than a lot of others I’ve seen out there, I can tell you that much.”

He went through the door and down to the car.

Alec stewed the entire way home. Magnus was right, Simon was an asshole. Well at least if he didn’t believe him he wouldn’t have to put up with him anymore. Not that he had been hard to put up with. He had enjoyed Simon’s company but he had to wonder now how much of it was only because he was attracted to him.
He got back home and went in and slammed the door. He threw himself down on the couch and let out a breath.

“I take it things didn’t go well?”

Magnus’ voice inside his head startled him for a second and he relaxed. He doubted that he’d ever get used to having someone else inside his head, rummaging around in his brain like they were searching for a favourite piece of clothing.

“You could say that. I prefer the word disaster, actually.”

He felt his hair being ruffled and the cool brush of lips to his forehead. God, what he wouldn’t give to have Magnus in his arms right now.

“I know, my darling, I wish I could be there for you as well. But we still have a few more hours yet. So, what happened, exactly?”

Alec told Magnus about their short conversation and how Simon hadn’t even tried to believe him.

“I told you the nasty little fellow was no good. I know ours is a very unique relationship but he could have at least attempted to understand.”

“I know, right? Anyway, who cares? As long as I have you I don’t need anyone else.”

Magnus didn’t reply for a while and Alec started to wonder if he had gone for some reason.


“Yes, my love, I’m here. Alexander, I know you’ve only been here for a short while but you really should think about getting to know the other town’s people. They aren’t all bad. I’ve monopolised your time too much.”

Alec frowned and sat up, looking around the room.

“No, you haven’t, and even if you had I don’t care. I want to be with you Magnus, and it kills me that I can’t see you more often than I do. Besides, I have this place to get in shape. I don’t think I can count on Simon for anymore help. Why would you say that? Are you getting sick of me?”

The feel of two familiar arms going around his neck made him smile and then he felt a phantom kiss on the side of his face.

“No, my love, no measure of time would be long enough to spend with you. It’s just I have my limitations, and I don’t want you to end up being the new town recluse, out here all alone. I wouldn’t wish that on even the dreaded Simon.”

Alec gave a small snort of laughter.

“But I’m not alone. I have you. I’m just tired, I think. My paranoid tendencies get a boost when I haven’t slept long enough. I might have a nap I think and then start putting some paint on the walls. Can you stay with me?”

Another cool shivery kiss.

“Yes, my heart, I’m not going anywhere. I’m right here.”
When Alec woke, he felt much better. He had fallen asleep to the sensation of fingers gently caressing the side of his face. With his eyes closed, he had no problem believing that Magnus was sitting beside him doing it. He stretched and looked around the room.

He smiled and absently reached up to put his fingers in his hair. It wasn’t the same sensation though and he immediately yearned for the feeling of Magnus’ fingers instead. He looked at the time on his phone and saw it was three in the afternoon. It was getting closer to their time together but not close enough.

He sat up and looked at his blank walls. At least getting a coat of paint on the walls would hopefully take his mind off the near constant craving he had for the feel on Magnus’ hands on him.

He organised drop cloths for the floor and grabbed the can and opened it up, stirring the contents. He’d chosen a heavy creamy colour that was bordering on a light tan. It reminded him of Magnus’ gorgeous golden skin tone.

He smiled as he remembered how that skin practically glowed under the artificial sunlight. How warm it felt to touch. How good it tasted under his tongue. His hand started to ache and he looked down to see that he had a death grip on the flat paint stirrer. He winced and took his hand off it, inspecting his palm. A deep red groove cut across the flesh. Yeah, so much for not thinking about Magnus.

He poured some into a container and then grabbing a brush, headed for the wall to start painting around the door frame.

He put a playlist on his phone, bluetoothing it to the speaker, in an attempt to help him concentrate on his work. But an hour in, and all he could seem to think of was his boyfriend. God, he was obsessed. He didn’t know where Magnus was now or where he went when he wasn’t making his presence known, but if he were here, he was sure he’d get a kick out of the fact that he seemed not to be able to think about anything but him.

The playlist failed to live up to expectations and by the time he had painted around the edge of the first wall, he found himself almost aching with the need to have his man in his arms. It was starting to get late anyway, so he packed up the paint and took the brush and the container outside to clean them up.

Was it always like this? Did other couples just think about each other twenty-four seven, like he seemed to do with Magnus? He wanted to scream in frustration. He was so out of his league with all this and the only person who may have had the answers now thought he was bat shit crazy and didn’t want to talk to him.

Maybe if he had handled the whole thing differently; but he didn’t know how he could of. Short of tying the guy to a chair and shining a bright light into his eyes he couldn’t see a way to force Simon to believe him. The only other person who could answer questions, maybe, was off doing God only knows what, God only knew where.

He turned off the water and threw the brush into the container angrily and went inside.

By nine that evening, Alec had worked himself up into a state, that made him feel like he was about to burst if he didn’t see Magnus soon but at the same time, he felt irrationally angry that he wasn’t around when he needed him to be.

He wasn’t tired because of his sleep earlier that day, but he ended up going to bed anyway and
trying to settle himself with a book. The next thing he knew he was being woken up with soft kisses to the side of his face and jaw.

Magnus.

Everything seemed to work on automatic pilot where he was concerned. His arms reached up and pulled him down to him from where he was kneeling beside him on the bed. He crushed his chest to his as well as his mouth, hungry for his kisses.

“Hmm, Alexander, I get the feeling you missed me, my love.” Magnus murmured, as he pulled back a little and let Alec cover the lower half of his face in hot urgent kisses that sent tingles all through him.

“You have no fucking idea. I want you so bad I can taste it.” He said, his voice deep and husky.

Magnus groaned and melted a little more. He loved the sweet innocent Alec but this darker, more primal form of him was too damn hot.

“So, aren’t you gonna go off at me about swearing?” He asked, working his mouth along the ridge of his jaw to just below his ear.

“I would but in this setting, it’s kind of a turn on.” Magnus admitted.

He was smiling and moving his head so that Alec could get right where he wanted to.

“But I’ve been a bad boy, I think you need to punish me.”

Magnus almost combusted right there and then. Jesus, hard and horny Alec was too good for words. Why hadn’t he met him before? He braced himself as he felt Alec’s mouth edging towards that irresistible trigger spot right on the slope of his neck.

“I think we can arrange something there.”

He cupped Alec’s head as he edged slowly nearer to where he desperately needed him to be. His fingers gently massaged his scalp as he felt the soft silky hair sliding between them.

Just a little further, yes, yes, close, come on now, another half an inch would do it, nearly there, God he was going to burn.

“Urghh!”

Magnus’ eyes rolled back and his head felt forward, suddenly feeling too heavy for his neck to support it. Hot wet lips and tongue assaulted his senses as bolts of lightning shot through him, hitting him straight in the groin. His dick jerked and swelled in his breeches, immediately awake and paying attention. He thrust forward into Alec’s hip, hissing out a burst of hot breath through clenched teeth. He needed to feel that creamy soft skin and hard muscle under him, right now. He pulled away, feeling the sting of the broken suction on his neck. Alec whimpered and frowned.

“I need to lose the clothes. I want to feel you against me.” Magnus said, his voice shaky and low with desire.

“Best idea you’ve had all night.” Alec started reefing at the hem of his shirt with impatient hard tugs.

“Careful, my heart, this is the only shirt I own and I don’t think there’s a wardrobe department in
He sat back and Alec sat before him, tugging the soft cotton over his raised arms. He held the still warm softness to his face and took in a deep breath. His eyes fluttered closed in a lazy blink.

“You smell so damn good, I wish I could keep this so I could smell you when you aren’t with me.”

He dumped the shirt on the floor beside the bed. And then his hand went straight to the lacings on his breeches. His fingers deftly undid the ties and unthreaded them, then paused to rub the flat of his hand against the hard ridge behind them. Magnus groaned and put his own hand over his, pushing it harder against it.

“That didn’t take long. I think your best friend here is eager to go on that exploration trip you talked about the other night. I just might know of a dark tight space he might like too.”

Magnus looked back at him, just picking up his features in the dark. He wanted to die all over again.

Alec was looking at him with such heat, he could practically feel it radiating from him. Those big hazel eyes looked back at him, a solid black in the darkness and pupils non-existent. That wide dusty rose mouth lips parted and the tip of his tongue running over their surface. The man was a God.

Alec tore out the rest of the lacings and tugged the breeches down so that his hard erection sprang free.

“Aww! How adorable, he’s shy. Let me change that.”

Before Magnus could move or say anything else, Alec had dived down to his crotch and taken him into his mouth. Fireworks exploded in his head and he cried out, taking his head in his hands, teeth clenched tight.

“Teeth, Alexander!! Jesus, don’t take his head off, my love. Easy! Please!”

Alec gave him a sheepish grin and looked up at him. Live and learn. No teeth, got it. He carefully curled his lips over them and went back down on him. He slowly and carefully worked his mouth up and down the hard shaft, loving the way the silky skin slipped and slid over his tongue.

Magnus didn’t know how he was staying upright still. The feel of Alec’s hot wet mouth surrounding him felt like the entrée to the main course. And he couldn’t wait. But he knew he had to take his time. He didn’t want it to be some frantic joining, full of heavy breathing and grabby hands and not to mention pain for Alec. He wanted something better than what he got for his first time.

He resisted the urge to thrust into his inexperienced boyfriend’s mouth, not wanting to make him gag and spoil everything. He smiled down at him and carded his fingers into his hair, making them disappear into the dark silk. He’d never allowed anyone to be their first time giving oral sex; but he would have allowed Alec anything.

He was being so careful and sweet, his inexperience making it all the better. But if he kept it up he was going to get a mouthful and he definitely didn’t want that happening.

“That’s the quietest you’ve been all night, my love. I’ll have to remember this for next time you get over chatty.”
Alec pulled off with a wet pop, lips shiny and Magnus took in a sharp breath. Christ, the man was going to be the death of him. Again. Can you die twice when you are technically dead already? Who gives a shit? He’d do it happily.

“I thought you’d like me talking to you about this stuff. Maybe I’m saying the wrong things.”

He draped his arms around Magnus’ neck, resting them on his shoulders and leaning right in to put his lips near his ear.

“I want you inside me. I want to feel what it’s like to have you buried deep to my core.” He whispered, his lips brushing the shell of his ear.

That’s it, call the undertaker. He was gone again.
“Oh, my heart, you can talk to me like that anytime you like. I think it’s time you let me take things from here, don’t you?”

He put up his hand and held it to the side of his face, while he slowly scrubbed his smooth cheek to Alec’s rough one. God, what he wouldn’t give to feel that sandpaper scruffle against the inside of his thighs. Definitely going to have to teach him that trick, he thought as he smiled in the darkness.

He pulled back and took Alec by the broad shoulders, easing him back down to the surface of the bed. He positioned himself between his legs, pushing them wide. At least Alec had saved him the trouble of getting those pesky pyjama pants off him. He lay before him, gloriously naked, like a fallen statue. So hot, it was making his mouth water.

He reached out his hands and went straight for the cloud of soft springy hair on his chest, curling his fingers into it and smiling.

“I could do this all night, just this. You have the best chest I’ve ever seen or felt.” He crooned, as he spread his fingers wide, covering each pec.

“As good as that feels, babe, I hope you don’t intend to actually do it. I’ve been waiting for this all day and this is torture.” Magnus gave a soft laugh.

“Well, didn’t you just say you wanted me to punish you for being bad? Consider this a wrap over the knuckles.” That cheeky darkness came back and Magnus froze.

“I’d rather a spanking.”

This must be some kind of record. He was sure his heart had stopped again.

“Oh Alexander, you do surprise me. Seems I’ve corrupted you with my bad ways. I should be a cautionary tale to you over what could happen when you indulge in these sins of the flesh.”

“Hey, it’s a whole new world now, Magnus. Sin is in and I’m already late to the party. I need to catch up.”

Magnus groaned and leaned forward, going straight for his throat and mouthing his way down from his jaw to his shoulder while Alec writhed and whimpered below him.

He cut straight down to the rise of his chest, hovering above the pink disc of his nipple. He looked up at Alec under dark lashes and saw him swallow hard. He heard his breath hitch before his clamped his mouth down over it, worrying the small hard nub with his tongue.

Alec cried out, arching his back and hands going to his head, holding him tight. He strained his neck looking down as Magnus nursed at him with steady but gentle suction. He moved restlessly beneath him, unable to keep still or stop the noisy moans from leaving him.

His brain mind was starting to cloud but his body felt like it was being hooked up to a power source and gentle waves of electricity was being pulsed through it. He felt his rock-hard length leak against his belly and he desperately craved more. He felt a strong hand take hold of his swollen length and start pulling at him gently. Fuck! He was going to explode right then and there.

Something cracked open in him and flooded his entire body. Something dark and carnal.
“I want you inside me, now!” Alec barked in a gravelly voice that sent shivers up Magnus’ spine.

He had to look to make sure that it was still the same sweet boyfriend he had seen when he had first come into the room. It looked like him but this version of Alec Lightwood was so much more darker and hot as hell. Tousled dark hair, parted soft lips, wide chest heaving up and down. He loved it.

“Oh Alexander, as much as I absolutely love this forceful, dark side of you, my darling, we have to take our time with this.”

Magnus let his erection go and dropped his hand lower between his legs, gliding a finger between his cleft watching his reaction.

Alec’s eyes went wide for a second and he clenched his butt cheeks tight. Automatic reaction to being invaded in a place he had never been touched before. He closed his eyes and Magnus saw a tic in his jaw as he began to unclamp his finger. The man certainly had some muscle control down there. That was going to prove interesting.

He slowly pushed deeper and began gliding his finger back and forth over his tight entrance. Alec hissed and arched his back, tilting his pelvis up to push against the touch that sending jolts of pleasure tearing through him in a way he would never have believed possible. Fuck! That felt so good! He ignored the very faint voice in his head that was an echo of his past, telling him he shouldn’t be doing this, that it was wrong.

How the hell could this be wrong when it felt this good and so right. His whole body was screaming; Yes! This is what I was missing.

But after a few minutes, even that wasn’t enough, he needed more. What of, he had no clue, just more. He began tilting his hips back and forth, wanting something to happen but not sure what. His body was screaming for it but it was a foreign language only it knew. Beyond frustrating.

“No! I need more, I want more of you. Now!”

He didn’t recognise the voice that he heard. Deep, raspy, breathy. Very unAlec like. Magnus seemed hell bent on driving him to the brink of madness, however.

“Ah, ah, ah, now, now. Patience is a virtue, my love, and besides, I told you the ‘I’ve been five days in the saddle’ cowboy walk only ever looked good on John Wayne.”

Alec ceased his movement for a bit.

“You know about John Wayne? Huh! He was my dad’s favourite actor. Do you know any of his movies? What was your fav….”

Magnus leaned up and slammed his mouth down on his. He felt Alec relax under him, his big body going soft. There, that was much better. He pulled back, leaving his lips with a soft wet noise.

“Well you just be quiet and focus on what we’re supposed to be doing here, Alexander? Apparently, you get to this level of horniness and turn into chatty Charlie.”

Alec gave him a lazy smile.

“Was he one of your old boyfriends?”

Magnus was about to berate him for the comment when he saw the grin on that handsome face. He was sure he could forgive this man for anything. This will take the talk out of him, he thought.

“Now, where is that wonderful little tube of stuff you used on me last night?”
Alec was fast becoming incapable of coherent thought and speech, thanks to Magnus’ constant attention to the small knot of muscle between his cheeks, which he had stopped clenching altogether now. He didn’t know why he had been so worried about being touched there. It was wonderful.

He reached up a hand beside his head and felt around under the pillow beside him and pulled out the tube.

“How very convenient. Why would you have something like this under the pillow of your…. You know, never mind, I don’t need to know that.”

Magnus gave him a raised brow look and took it from him.

Alec’s face heated in reaction to what Magnus’ words inferred long before they impacted on his brain. Ha ha, he thought……. Oh shit! He thought I was using it to… fuck!

“No! no, I don’t, I mean I haven’t, I’ve never…” He stuttered and stumbled over his words as Magnus studied the small tube in his hands.

“It’s alright, my love, no judgement here. I get the need to let some steam out of the pot every now and then.” He turned the plastic container over in his hand, frowning.

Alec wasn’t paying attention.

“But, I’ve actually never, you know, let the steam out before.”

Magnus stopped fumbling with the tube and looked at him.

“You mean you’ve never given yourself release, Alexander?”

Alec averted his gaze and suddenly found the edge of the sheet fascinating.

He didn’t say anything but shook his head.

Magnus immediately felt bad for inferring it now, the poor guy. He didn’t want him to feel embarrassed. He put the tube down and put his hand up to his face, gently turning his gaze towards him.

“Ale,… Alexander, it’s okay. There’s no shame in that. In fact, I think you need a medal for not doing it. I’m surprised my best friend as skin left on it really.” He looked at Alec face. “Sorry my love, did I say too much?”

Alec really didn’t know whether to feel horrified by his boyfriend’s admission or burst into laughter.

He chose silence instead.

“Anyway, enough of that. Where were we?” He leaned back down and picked up the tube.

“Ah yes, now, what’s the secret to getting into this thing?” He asked Alec, frowning at it.

This time, Alec did smile. He took the small container off him and holding it up in front of him, used his thumb to flip the lid.

Magnus smiled and took it from him. “Ah, tricky little bugger. I’ll know for next time, wont I.”

He squirted some into his hand and was reaching down to apply it when Alec stopped him.

“So, what did you use for lube when you were, you know, ah, um…”

He didn’t really want to say the word. Thankfully Magnus did it for him.
“Alive? Well it was nothing much like this stuff, that’s for sure. Similar but not as good. This stuff wasn’t around much when I was, er, active, you might say. If the moment called for it then oils tended to be used. Plain oil was best, the perfumed ones tended to be a little harsh on delicate skin. Getting a rash in those places was a rather nasty side effect and kept you out of the game for a while. The alternatives were quite greasy and required a lot of effort to remove afterwards. But you don’t need to know too much more, suffice to say this modern substance is world better. Shall we go back what we are supposed to be doing?”

He raised an eye brow and Alec gave him a nod.

Now he had gotten to this point the nerves had returned. Magnus, as usual picked up on it.

“We can stop here, Alexander. We can wait.”

But Alec was determined to do this. He had thought of nothing else all afternoon and in spite of the nerves, he did want to.

As an answer to his question, he took Magnus’ hand and pushed it down between his legs, letting his fingers sink between his cheeks. The gel was a little cold be it warmed up quickly. Magnus started the same slide back and forth that he had been doing earlier.

It didn’t take long before Alec was right back at that place, eyes closed, head back, breath heavy, skin on fire. When he started moaning softly and tilting his hips back and forth, Magnus took the next step and gently inserted a finger into his entrance to the first knuckle.

Alec stopped his movement and his eyes flew open. Oh, Oh wow. He could feel the tight ring of muscle clenching around the intruder, not sure whether it wanted to be pushed further in or pushed out. Magnus distracted him with a kiss and kept his mouth busy as he gently pushed further in. Suddenly the resistance lessened and his finger sank in to its base. Alec felt breathless from the new sensation. He broke away from Magnus lips and bit down on his lip, trying to get a handle on it. It was like he had very little control of over what his body wanted to do. He could feel his muscles clenching and releasing around him and warm waves of strange pleasure was lapping through him.

Yeah, he could do this. This was good. He made a concentrated effort to relax as much as he could and the small laps turned into small waves. He began to moan softly and found himself tilting into it. It gave him a sense of some dark, forbidden pleasure and once his body had gotten a taste for it, it begged for more.

As Magnus mouthed softly as his neck, he withdrew his finger almost completely and Alec whimpered, not ready to feel it’s lose yet. But when he started to push back in, he had added a finger and the small waves grew in strength. He could feel his body trying to fight the width but in a good way and he thrusted up wards, wanting to take the full length of them again.

Magnus gave a deep dirty giggle.

“Greedy boy.” He growled and Alec groaned, his words adding to the slow build up that was starting deep with in him.

Somewhere in the back of his mind, he knew he was missing something.

Before he completely lost all sense of time and space, he reached under the pillow and grabbed a small silver packet. He slid it near them on the bed. Magnus broke his contact to look at the little square like it was something disgusting.

“Alexander, you don’t honestly expect me to wear that thing, do you?”
“Yes, Magnus we have to be safe.” Magnus gave him a look.

“My darling, I know you’re new to all this but I can’t get you with child, my love, no matter how many times we try it.” Alec gave him a sour look and an eye roll.

“Come on, Magnus, I’m not that stupid. I mean, safe as in not catching anything. I know I’m safe but you’ve had a lot of other partners.”

“All of which were over a hundred years ago. I hardly think I’m carrying anything deadly or otherwise now.”

“Maybe but it doesn’t hurt to be safe.”

“I’ve never worn one of those nasty little torture devises and I don’t plan on doing so now.”

“Magnus, don’t be stubborn. They aren’t torture devises. Think of them as the proper equipment to go exploring with. I mean, you want your best friend there to be safe, don’t you? You wouldn’t go sending him off into parts unknown without some protection, would you?”

“Well, it’s worked up until now. In spite of his somewhat shy personality, he’s quite a resilient little fellow.” The corner of Alec’s mouth twitched.

“I wouldn’t exactly say little, babe. Think of it as a dress code then. He has to have a coat on to get into the world’s most exclusive establishment.”

Magnus gave a snort of laughter.

He huffed out a breath and snatched up the silver square. The things he did for this man. He shook his head and studied the edges. Alec took it from him and tore it open and handed it back to him.

As if he were handling some sort of deadly creature, he got the small slippery circle out of the foil and looked at it, face screwed up unhappily. Alec was trying not to laugh. He really was making a big deal out of it.

“That’s not going to fit, Alexander. I’m telling you now.”

“Babe, one of those fit me last night, I don’t think there’s going to be a problem.”

He may have had Magnus beaten a little in width but Magnus won hands down length wise.

“Are you inferring that my best friend is in any way inferior to that, that, weapon that you posesse?”

“What? No! no way. But they stretch, babe. I’m sure you won’t have any trouble.”

Magnus looked dubious about the whole thing and he looked at Alec. He knew he wanted to say something to him, but he had to work up the courage to do it.

Come on, sweetheart, out with it.

Alec gave his lips a nervous lick. “Um, so, I, ah, I can put it on you if you like.” He said shyly.

Magnus gave him a soft smile. There you go, that wasn’t so hard, was it?

He handed over the offending item and moved back a little as Alec sat up.

“Please, by all means, my love.” He said.
He watched as Alec hesitated for a few seconds. Come on, don’t lose your nerve now, he thought to himself. Have some mystic life line to his boyfriend’s mind and emotions did come in handy sometimes.

Alec looked back at him for reassurance and he gave a small nod of consent. He reached out and took him in hand before putting the small slippery circle to the exposed crown and then gently rolled it back towards the base. He sat back, and gave a relieved sigh.

“See? Nothing to it.”

Magnus still wasn’t convinced and looked down at his covered erection with concern.

“How’s he going to breath in there?” He said unhappily. Alec forced back a laugh.

“I really don’t think that’s an issue, babe.” He said and lay back down before him.
Chapter 29

Magnus looked down at him and just the sight of Alec laying before him, his eyes picking up the small amount of light coming in from the window, making them shine, was driving him nuts. As long as he got to have the experience of burying himself in him, he didn’t care if his dick turned blue from lack of oxygen.

Okay, time to get serious.

He leaned down over him, his hands and knees taking his weight. All traces of humour left Alec’s face as he looked up into his eyes. Instead, it was replaced with something more heated, full or unspoken desire and want.

Alec watched as Magnus’ eyes blazed with need. Even in the dark he could see the flames burning behind those dark rich orbs. He was ready. This was it. The moment he had been dreaming about for most of his adult life. His mouth had gone dry and his heart was pounding in his chest fit to burst from behind his ribs. Oh God, let this be everything he had been hoping it would be.

Magnus bent his head and began kissing him, starting of soft and gentle, easing him into a more relaxed state. Alec loved these type of kisses, light and full of gentle feelings. But gradually he needed more and Magnus answered by deepening the kiss, widening his mouth and giving him small tantalising flicks of his tongue.

Alec heard himself give a low noise in his throat that got lost as it was swallowed up by Magnus who swallowed it whole, letting it fuel his desire. The longer his kissed him for, the more his mind began to cloud and its focus narrowed to only the hot sexy guy above him like a searchlight pinpointing an object in a foggy landscape.

Alec groaned when he felt that wondrous feeling of a warm heavy body settle on his own, anchoring him in place which was just as well because he was starting to feel like he was about to lift off, his soul rising to match his level of pleasure.

He was teetering on the edge of full blown need and he could feel his body waiting for the slightest signal to tip him over that edge and it wasn’t long before he got it. Magnus let his weight rest fully onto him now, pinning him to the bed. His legs spread wider, their groins socketing together, Magnus’ hard erection sliding into his cleft and seeking his entrance. Alec whimpered and clung to him harder, his fingers digging into the golden skin, feeling the muscles working below the surface.

As usual, Magnus sensed his need and left his mouth, panting and open to dive for his ear. He took the whole thing into his mouth and filled its inner shell with hot wet tongue. Alec cried out into the darkness and thrust upwards, his iron hard length sliding between them, the delicious friction sending lightning strikes of pleasure coursing through him.

Then the dam broke on his emotions and he felt the white-hot need flood every inch of his body and he growled against Magnus’ neck, burying his face into the soft surface, his mouth clamping down in the slightly salty skin. He heard him, take in a sharp breath and felt him push his hardness against the small greasy knot of muscle.

Alec’s eyes went wide and he felt himself jolt as he felt him start to enter him. A kind of panicky feeling took over him, he felt out of control, his need taking over. Agonisingly slowly, he felt himself being stretched and his body once again seemed to be debating whether it wanted to be
taken like this or not. His breath came in short pants and he fought with himself to relax but some basic instinct had the small ring of muscle trying to fight against what he wanted desperately.

“Relax for me, baby.” Magnus whispered to him and he furrowed his brow in concentration, as he tried to fight back control over his own body’s responses.

Magnus gave a deep chuckle.

“I’ll give you an ‘A’ for effort, Alexander but that’s not going to help.”

He went back to the one spot that he knew would leave him boneless and brainless. He took the fleshy softness of his earlobe into his mouth and sucked hard. Alec’s moans of pleasure rang around the room and he felt himself let go allowing Magnus to sink into him further.

He writhed below him, still trying to get a grip on the new assault on his senses. His mind working to understand it. It didn’t hurt exactly, there was a slight burning sensation but mostly it was just a feeling of fullness. He could feel his muscles gripping around the swollen head of Magnus’ cock, now feeling as though it was trying to drag the rest of him in.

Suddenly, something just let go and any further resistance was gone. Magnus gave a sigh and sank gradually into him, filling him completely. He stilled when he reached his full length. Alec was having trouble breathing, his senses had gone into over load and he was sure he had moved to a completely different plane of resistance.

Fuck! He felt so full and bursting with the need for more. What, he had no idea, but he wanted it like he had never wanted anything else before. He thought being inside Magnus had been wonderful but this, this was a whole different level of pleasure. It washed over his whole body, making his skin feel like it had been scrubbed red raw and he could swear he was aware of what each and every single one of the fine hairs that covered him felt like. He could hear a low winey sound as he braced his head against Magnus’ strong shoulder and realised that it was coming from him.

He sounded like a whimpering child but he couldn’t seem to stop it, things had gone too far for any semblance of logical thinking. Magnus turned his head and kissed his damp cheek and began to move and the world faded around them. Alec shuddered as wave after wave of deep pleasure washed over him in ever increasing strength. The feeling started to pool low in his centre, building so it would burst free from him at any second.

He drew his knees up higher, wanting to give him as much access as possible. The new position worked and he felt almost overwhelmed as Magnus sunk right to his base. He met each thrust with one of his own and suddenly Magnus bumped into something at his core that made him lose his breath completely.

“ARGH!” He cried out, his eyes rolling back into his head as the sensation caused bursts of light to fire off before his eyes. He felt like a runaway train as that pooling pleasure deep within him filled to almost capacity. His own hard length throbbed between their sweaty bellies, leaking constantly, smearing the already damp skin with warm stickiness.

It was only going to take a few more thrusts to get him there too and he was desperate to make this last, he wasn’t ready to give it up yet. He poured any remaining will power he had left into holding himself back for as long as possible but it was like trying to hold back the tide. He felt his muscles grip and release around his hardness as they tried to milk his own release from him.

Magnus gripped him harder, bracing himself for the explosion that was mounting inside him. He nudged that place deep inside him and Alec knew it was going to be useless trying to hang on and
prolong the inevitable. He had reached that outer marker on that inner pool of pleasure and it had
to start to curve over the top of whatever contained it.

He felt Magnus take his sweaty head in his hands, his own face a riot of desire and on the verge.

“I want to see you come apart, my heart, show me your release. Make me feel it with you.” He
whispered, his voice deep and shaky with his own pending orgasm.

With eyes wide and shiny, mouth in a wide ‘O’ and brow furrowed as in waiting for the impact of
something painful, Alec held his gaze, needing him to guide him through what was coming. He felt
Magnus with draw almost to his full length and then plunge forwards hitting that deep dark place
inside him and the world exploded around him.

He couldn’t help it; his eyes screwed up tight as he yelled into the darkness, the sound echoing
around the walls. He clung vainly to consciousness as the deep waves of pleasure overtook his
entire system. He couldn’t focus on just one thing; everything was happening at once. The hot jets
shooting between their mashed bodies filling the space till it began to leak down either side of his
groin. The pulsing throb of Magnus’ release, as he pumped into him over and over, clinging hard to
his shoulders. His face contorted with it. His own muscles tugging at him, milking every inch of
him to get as much as he could.

He felt like a drowning man in a raging sea, trying to fight to keep his head above water but the
angry waves continuously trying to push him under. They were both fighting for breath and
breathing noisily as they both started to come back down. Alec felt himself slowly regaining
control; his chest pushing against Magnus’ as it pushed back. The raging sea that threatened to take
him under, and he wasn’t so sure that it hadn’t a couple of times, settled and gently lapped at his
senses.

The cries of pleasure that had burst from him, leaving his throat feeling raw and dry subsided and
he lay completely spent below his lover, a soft smile playing on his lips. He wanted to tell him, or
try to anyway, how good he had made him feel but he was still incapable of being able to speak.
He fought the feeling of wanting to drift off, the whole experience leaving him completely
wrecked.

“You have the best come face I’ve ever seen, my sweet.” Magnus said, quietly putting a soft kiss
on his sweaty cheek.

Alec slowly raised his eyes to his and gave a short laugh. He shook his head slowly from side to
side.

“Yours wasn’t bad either. Jesus, Magnus, will it be like that every time?”

“I sincerely hope so, handsome, I sincerely hope so.” Another kiss, this one lingering a little longer.

“Ugh, I’m a dead man.” He whimpered and Magnus gave a soft chuckle.

“No, baby, that would be me.”

They lay together, Magnus moving off him eventually when he thought Alec had gone to sleep.

“Nooo” Came a sleepy protest, and his brow creased.

“It’s okay, my love, I’m not going too far. But if I stay where I am, I can’t promise it won’t happen
again.”
“And that would be a bad thing?” Magnus gave a soft laugh and brushed his lips to his.

“You know what they say about too much of a good thing.”

“Yeah, it’s fucking bullshit.” His eyes flew open when he felt a slap on his bare shoulder.

“Language, Alexander!”

“Sorry. Just thought I’d slip that one in there and you wouldn’t notice.”

He smiled cheekily at his boyfriend. Suddenly, he was flooded with feelings of annoyance and then strong happiness. He frowned; the happiness he got but why did he feel like he was annoyed at Magnus? He shook his head and pulled his warm body closer to his own, his nose burrowing into his hair. He always smelt so damn good.

“Something wrong, my love?” Magnus asked him, trailing his fingers up and down his arm.

“No, nothing at all.”

He pressed a kiss in the silky strands and settled down further in the bed. His sex addled brain wanted to over think what he had just felt but he was too sleepy and his mind seemed of taken a coffee break somewhere else.

“So, after experiencing both now, what do you prefer? Upstairs or downstairs?” Magnus asked him softly.

He didn’t see Alec’s forehead furrow as he puzzled over his question. That was pretty random but okay.

“Well, I’d have to say upstairs is looking pretty good. Our bedroom is up here so there’s that and the fact that there’s not much to do up here. So yeah, upstairs, definitely.”

Magnus gave a snort of laughter and Alec’s eyes opened and he looked down at his upturned face.

“What, may I ask, is so funny about that?” Magnus leaned up and kissed him hard. He pulled away to see Alec frowning at him.

“Oh Alexander, my beautiful boy. You’re so adorably clueless sometimes. I wasn’t talking about the house, sweetheart, I was talking about making love.”

Alec still frowned back at him, still not getting the connecting between the two things. Upstairs, downstairs? What was he…. Ooooooh, now he got it. He felt his face colouring and was glad of the dark to hide it. But he should have known better.

“I know your blushing, Alexander. I can feel it.”

Alec was flooded once again with very strong feelings of happiness, no that wasn’t right. It was more like a very strong feeling of attraction, bordering on, dare he say the word? Love. Wow, did he actually feel that way this soon for him?

“Oh, I get it now. And I think I might have to revise my earlier statement and say downstairs but upstairs is great too. Please say I can go upstairs again too.”

He looked eagerly at him. Magnus smiled and kissed him. As he said before, he’d give this man anything he asked for. Even that.
“Of course, you can. You’re the only man I’ve ever let touch me like that. The only one who I’d ever feel comfortable letting touch me like that. Trust is a big thing for me, Alexander. Once it’s been broken, I find it very hard to get it back again.”

“I could never do that to you, babe, you know that.” He held him tight.

“I know, my darling. I can feel that about you.”

After a few more lazy soft kisses, Alec lay holding Magnus tightly to him. His face nuzzled into his neck, smelling his skin and occasionally stealing a taste of his golden skin. He didn’t want to sleep but his eyes were growing too heavy and he couldn’t fight it off any longer. Just before he lost himself in his dreams, Magnus’ voice came to him, soft and whispered.

“My Alexander, you have no idea how close I am to falling in love with you, my darling. And it’s killing me to think it.”

His brow creased a little but he was too sleepy and sated to try to work out what he meant but the last few words. Alec’s last waking thought was that his boyfriend was that his man loved him and it flooded through him like a warm internal blanket around his heart.

Good morning, my love. Sleep well?”

Alec smiled as he stirred awake. His eyes fluttered open and he saw that he had turned in his sleep and was facing the door. The room was flooded with sunlight but the greatest feeling of warmth was coming from behind him. Magnus was with him. His breath hitched. Wait. Morning, light. Magnus was still here! Fuck!

“Language, Alexander and yes it still counts when you think it.”

He rolled rapidly to his other side, eager to see his beautiful man bathed in the glorious golden light.

But that side of the bed was empty. As usual. But he’d heard him. He’d even felt him. He could even smell him, for Christ’s sake. Maybe he’d gone to the bathroom. He was about to throw himself out of bed when he felt a hand on his back. He sighed in relief. He must have been hiding. Ha ha, crazy guy. He spun back around but once again found the bed empty. Now come on! This was getting ridiculous.

Magnus, what the hell is going on? I can feel you here but I can’t see you. What the…?”

He threw his hands in the air in frustration. He looked straight ahead of him because he could smell that exotic sandalwood/earthy smell of him right there.

“I think we may have unlocked another gift, last night, my love.”

His shoulders slumped when he realised that it was his mind that was echoing his words, not his ears. He felt so frustrated he could have cried.

“But how…?” He started to ask but felt another wave of frustration wash through him. He stilled.

“Alexander, what’s wrong?”

He ignored Magnus’ question and tried to put his finger on what was wrong with the way he way feeling because something wasn’t sitting right about it. All of a sudden the feelings changed to one of concern. What in the name……? Then it hit him, somehow, not only could he ‘feel’ Magnus’
presences, even when he wasn’t visible to him, he could feel his emotions as well. A irrational rage ran through him.

Who made the rules up for this sort of thing? It was so vastly unfair. Why the fucking hell couldn’t he have him through the day? It sucked five ways from Sunday.

“Language, Alexander!”

Magnus’ words echoed in his head, as loud as if he was standing beside him and from what he was feeling he was.

“I know this is hard, my love, but it’s all we have at the moment. I don’t know who makes the rules either but when I find out I intend to write a very strongly worded letter to them.”

Alec gave a high-pitched bray of laughter.
“Yeah, right, Magnus, that’ll show ‘em. You do that.” He raged as he stomped around the room, the heat from his anger coming off him in waves.

He felt a hand on his back and he shrugged it off.

“It’s not enough, Magnus. This isn’t fair. Surely there must be something that we can do to bring you back here for good or let me go there.”

“No! Alexander! No! Don’t you ever think about trying to get to me. If something happened to you, it would definitely be the end of me. Promise you won’t do anything rash.”

He could feel his mixture of anger and concern. He stood with his head in his hands, scrubbing his face.

“Alexander, promise…”

“Alright! Alright! No, I won’t do anything stupid. But this is getting beyond frustrating, babe. I want you so much and now I can feel you and your emotions not to mention smell you, it’s the cruellest thing not to be able to see you too.”

Tears stung his eyes and he rubbed at them roughly.

He felt gentle caresses to the sides of his face and the soft cool of ghostly kisses on his skin. He felt some of his mixed-up emotions drain from him. He closed his eyes; it was easier to believe Magnus was really there when he did. A soft smile gradually made his lips curve and he felt the cool shivery brush of a kiss on them. It was such a strange sensation but it had the same effect as it he had actually been there.

He reached up, wanting to take him into his arms but of course, there was nothing to hang onto. Cool kisses ran down his neck and he tilted his head into it, visualising in his mind that he was brushing up against his boyfriend’s head, feeling his smooth cheek against his rough one.

Hands ran down his chest, then his ribs and onto his hips. He had completely forgotten that he was naked. But he didn’t care either. He felt a gentle pressure pressing him back towards the bed.

“Lay down, my heart, I want to try something.”

Alec blinked his eyes open and backed the rest of the way back onto the bed. He lay flat on his back, chest gently rising and falling, eyes closed. He felt the mattress shift beside him and then his whole body felt cool as if a fan had been turned towards him when he had wet skin. But it was different to that too. He could feel the coolness but not the cold. It was so weird. But he knew it was Magnus and he went with it.

He felt pressure on the inside of his thighs and knew he was pushing his legs apart with his hips. He widened them as much as he could and now he could feel that same delicious sensation right against his half hard cock. He sucked in a breath as he felt the sensation moving down his body before it disappeared almost completely. No! he was just getting into it. He went to voice his protest and call out to Magnus but he could still feel him before him and he realised that he was kneeling between his outstretched legs.

“I don’t know if this is going to work, but I’m going to try it anyway.”
Magnus’ voice sounded in his mind. He could feel his arousal and it was fuelling his own, and his hardening length swelled some more. A cool breeze and a rustle of movement had him opening his eyes. The top sheet on the bed was billowing in the air before him as if there was a strong breeze blowing it up from underneath. Alec watched wide eyed as the sheet settled floating in the air, before it reached about three feet above the surface of the bed.

Alec’s eyes went wide as he saw the soft material fall over a rounded unseen shape. Oh, dear God, it was Magnus. He could see him! Well, not really just his outline but it was close enough.

“Babe! I can see you! Your outline! It’s crazy.” He was radiating happiness and he felt Magnus’ as well.

“This is taking a lot out of me, my heart, I don’t know how long I can keep it up but I’m going to try something else. Stay still. Lay back.”

Alec nodded vigorously, not thinking that he probably couldn’t see him. He did as he was asked and looked up to the ceiling, his chest rising and falling rapidly with is excited state. His tongue came out to wet his dry lips and he tried with all his might to lay still.

At first, he closed his eyes, an automatic response when Magnus touched him in his unseen form; he felt his hand go around his erection and he jolted s little. Okay, he could do this. He just had to try to stay still. And quiet.

Slow, gentle hands pulled at him and his mind blew apart once more. Oh Jesus, he was going to fail, badly. He frowned, setting his brow in concentration but the more he felt it and the harder he got the hoarder it was to keep still and not make a sound.

He gripped the sheet below him, fisting them into the soft buttery material and he felt himself start to thrust into the Magnus’ hands. He had to look, he couldn’t help it. He slowly opened his eyes and saw his outline and the regular jab from under the sheet as he worked his swelling length. He groaned and started to writhe as his desire grew.

He tried to stop but as Magnus increased pressure and frequency, he found it impossible. He was losing it fast and it was overwhelming him at how he got to this place so fast. His panting breaths started o turn into grunts of pleasure and he bucked into each milking tug. He was trying to hold himself back for some reason and it was driving him insane.

“Let go, my love, don’t hold back any more.”

He heard Magnus voice in his head through the haze. Magnus’ own growing need was filling him as well and he thought it was going to make hims brain explode from the doubly strong sensation.

He lifted the sheet, looking down towards his groin and his eye went wide as he saw his throbbing, iron hard erection standing in mid-air, the satiny skin of the shaft rippling as the invisible hand worked him. That was it.

He came with a loud cry, head back and eyes screwed shut. He felt Magnus continue to work him as the wave after wave of pleasure poured out of him. Hot stickiness dripped down on his belly and thighs as he pumped hard.

“Oh God! Oh God! That, that was, ah, shit, that was so ……”

He couldn’t put it in words and he lay there, panting and sweaty. Suddenly, the sheet fell to his legs and lower body and he raised himself up, still fighting to regulate his breathing. He couldn’t feel him anymore.
“Magnus?”

Nothing.

“Babe? Are you okay?”

Again. Nothing.

Alec felt his stomach clench. He was gone. Fuck! He threw himself backwards to the bed and brought his knees up to his chest, groaning as if someone had just hit him right in the gut. The pain felt about the same. So not fair. He needed him in his arms or just to know that he could lay beside him even if he couldn’t see him. Even his ghostly presence was a comfort. He felt hot tears run from his eyes and he reached out towards the empty side of the bed. His fingers splayed out. His whole body was yearning to feel that warm soft skin with its underlying firm muscle, like a majestic mountain under a blanket of snow.

This had to end, there had to be a way to have him with him like a normal couple. To be able to enjoy each other each night and then to see that beautiful, small featured face looking back at him the next morning, golden skin glowing in the new light. There had to be a way.

Catarina. Catarina could help them. He was about to get out of bed, his hopes newly piqued.

“I’m gonna fix this, babe, for us. I know you won’t like it but I’m gonna go see Cat. She can help, I feel it.” He said to the empty room.

He knew he wasn’t there, the jab of disappointment and loss hitting him in the chest. But on some level, he hoped he could hear him.

He’d just swung his legs off the bed to get some clothes and hit the shower when he heard a knock at the front door. At first, he frowned, thinking that it was Simon, coming to have another go at him but there was something about it that was different.

Shit. He looked down and saw the evidence of his pleasurable morning all over his thighs and belly. He didn’t have time for a shower so he just grabbed a pair of boxers and cleaned himself up as best he could before pulling on jeans and a t-shirt, sans underwear, and went quickly down stairs to the door.

The frantic knocking was still there as he pulled the door open. Clary stood before him, eyes red and wet. She’d been crying. Oh fuck! Please tell me it’s not Simon. Don’t tell me he’s done something stupid.

“Alec, I’m sorry to have to come out here but I didn’t have your number.”

Her voice was shaky and weak. His heart began to pound. Oh God, this wasn’t good.

“It’s okay. Clary, what’s wrong is it Simon, is he okay?”

He was chanting please, please, please, over and over in his head. He was still mad at him for what he’d done but he didn’t want to see anything happen to him.

Clary frowned. “No, he’s fine. Alec it’s Catarina. She sick, really sick. The doctor doesn’t know what’s wrong with her and she’s refusing to go to the hospital before she sees you. She’s asking for you. You have to come.”

Fuck! This was ten times worse then something happening with Simon. Cat was his last best hope
for getting Magnus back to this time to be with him.

“Shit! Yes, I’ll grab my shoes and come straight away.”

He left Clary at the door and went to find his sneakers. Jesus, what had happened to her? She looked fine the few days before when he had seen her at her house. Well, she is over a hundred and thirty years old, she can’t live forever. Couldn’t she? He stilled as a horrible thought hit him.

She and Magnus were linked somehow, weren’t they? What if this meant that there was something happening to Magnus as well, that’s why he disappeared so suddenly from him this morning. A hill ran down his spine. Oh, dear Lord, no! No! This couldn’t happen.

He shoved his feet into the sneakers and flew out the door. He told Clary he would follow in his car and they headed off together.

All the way to Cat’s house with its crazy coloured garden, his stomach was tying itself into knots. He couldn’t lose Magnus. He just couldn’t. It was way too soon. He hadn’t even had a chance to be together properly. Surely fate couldn’t be that cruel.

They pulled up out the front of the house with its riotous front yard; a direct contrast to their general mood.

Clary came up to him, wiping her eyes still and gave him a weak smile. They entered the open front door and went through the living room and down a hall way to the first door on the right.

The walls were a strong magenta pink and covered in framed photos. There was very little space between them. Green curtains hung at the window and the quilt on the bed was a bright satin yellow. Catarina certainly liked colour. How the hell had she slept in here for all these years without having nightmares? The large bed with heavily carved posts at each corner dominated the room. Catarina looked almost lost in it. She looked like the dark centre of a sunflower surrounded by its bright yellow petals.

“He’s here, isn’t he? The beautiful boy is here. Come here, his Alexander. Come here to me.”

Alec felt tingles run down his spine and his skin was covered in goose bumps. He’d been over near the door well out of range of the big bed and even if he had of been closer, Cat was supposed to be almost blind anyway. But she knew he was there, she knew it.

Another older lady was sitting beside the bed, holding her hand and looking down worriedly at her. Alec hesitated and the old woman looked up from Catarina.

“Come closer, young man, she’s been waiting for you to come. He haven’t got much time, the Dr Howard wants her in the hospital as soon as possible.”

Catarina made an indignant noise from the bed. One hand coming up to give a dismissive wave.

“I’m not going to any damned hospital. Can’t do anything for me anyway. Ain’t goin’ anywhere just yet, I still got some time. Get over here, his Alexander and talk to me. I got some good news for you.”

Alec swallowed and looked at Clary who was looking at him like she’d never seen him before. She frowned.

“What she talking about, Alec, who’s he? He who?” She whispered to him, leaning closer.
“Who’s he, he who, you sound like a damn hoot owl, girl. Go make us a cup of tea. This don’t concern you any. Best you keep yourself busy. Our boy here will tell you in his good time.”

Clary’s cheeks coloured a little and she gave Alec an apologetic look and went back through the door to the kitchen.

Alec walked slowly over to the bed and stood beside it. Catarina turned her head. For the first time, she wasn’t wearing her glasses. Alec startled a little when he saw the eyes that she had kept hidden behind the dark glasses. If he didn’t know better he would have said they were fake, contacts or something. Her irises were white, like crystal white. It was as if she’d had blue eyes and they had been bleached out. Tiny dark pupils doted each centre and they looked straight at him. It was quite unnerving. Catarina gave one of her chesty deep laughs.

“They’re somethin’, aren’t they? Now you know why I where those dark glasses. I started out in life with brown eyes, had ‘em right up until that night with our boy. After that, my sight started to fade out along with the colour and my inner sight grew stronger. Ha, ain’t that a kick in the pants for ya? Life give you something precious, some wonderful gift but you have to give up something in return.” She gave a sigh. “Like everything, I suppose. No matter what you do, you have to pay the piper eventually. Anyway, that’s not important.”

She patted the bed beside her, and Alec sat carefully down on the high mattress.

“He still got that big ol’ brass bed in your house? He’s had that since forever. I only ever slept in it the one night. Hated it. All I can remember was how it kept squeakin”. Still doing that, is it?”

She gave another deep chuckle, this time coughing hard after wards. The older lady took a glass of water from the bedside table and offered it to her but she waved it away.

“Stop your fussing, Gertie, I’m fine. I’ll have that cup of tea when little missy brings it in. Can you go out and see what she’s doing? I have my doubts that the poor little thing even knows how to boil water.”

She gave the woman’s hand a pat and she smiled down at Catarina and went out.

“Gertie is my neighbour. Kindest soul I’ve met in a long time. Knew her Momma, and her Grand momma too. Comes from a long line of nurturers. But let’s talk. How are things going with our boy? I hope he’s treating you well. That temper of his can be fierce.”

Alec couldn’t help the small snort of laughter at the mention of Magnus’ temper. She got that right, that’s for sure.

“Yeah, he’s treating me fine. And yes, I’ve seen that temper in action. It’s cost me a cupboard full of cups and glasses.”

She smiled down at her. Catarina chuckled.

“Yep, sounds about right. I come across it a few times myself. May I suggest getting some plastic ones. Save ya some money. So, you two have grown close, hmm? Ah, I can tell. You don’t have to go into the details of it, not that you would, sweet boy. But I can’t tell that things have gotten serious between you two. I can smell it on ya.”

Alec ducked his head and felt his face heating. Sometimes it was a case of be careful what you wish for. He’d longed for someone to talk to about Magnus and their relationship, but he hadn’t counted on this. Cat certainly didn’t hold back any thoughts she had on the matter.
“Now there, I’ve made you blush. No need to be shy around me, Alexander. I’ve lived too long for things to shock me. And besides, I have a feeling I’m lying in this bed cause of the way you two feel about each other.”

Alec’s head flew up and he looked at her in shock. What did she mean by that?

“Now, now, don’t go getting all riled up about it. I always knew that this time was coming. The living can’t live forever and I’ve had a pretty good go at it.”

Clary came into the room with two cups. She handed one to Alec, even though he hadn’t asked for the tea and sat the other one down on the bedside table next to Cat.

Cat struggled up in the bed and Alec and Clary helped her, in spite of her protests about doing it herself. Clary turned the handle towards her hand and went to help her lift the cup.

“Now listen here, young missy, I ain’t that far gone yet. You just go on out and make sure that Gertie isn’t tryin’ to clean my cupboards out or somethin’. Me and this handsome young man need some time alone.”

He gave Alec’s thigh a pat and he smiled shyly smiled at her.
Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

Just a short chapter to finish off Alec and Catarina's conversation so i don't leave you all hanging again haha. Thanks to which every one of my readers it was that mentioned the possibility of the eclipse. I wasn't going to do it but as you can see, i changed my mind. Thanks for the idea. Hope you enjoy it.

Clary gave him a look and one side of her mouth quirked a little as she left.

“Now, that’s better. What was I saying earlier? Oh yes, I don’t want you thinking you’re to blame for me bein’ here. As I said I always knew this was what was supposed to happen. As I said, everyone has to pay the piper and I’ve just been handed the bill, that’s all.”

Alec looked back at her, still not following entirely. How could anything between he and Magnus have anything to do with how Cat was feeling?

“As I told you, I was pretty much a novice when I cast that spell that night. I had no idea what the heck I was doin’, all I knew was that I had to try to make up for what I’d done to him. Give him another chance at finding love. The love he deserved.

I was like you, didn’t have a damned clue about any of it. Luckily, though, my Grand momma knew me a little better than I knew myself and left me all her books. I’d never looked at them before, didn’t think they had anything to do with me but that next day I went straight to ‘em and started reading.

That’s when I found a letter she had written to me. It was in one of the books, the first one I picked up, actually. It was like a crash course in having The Sight, as she called it. Took me a while to get my head around but after I read that and some of the other books she left me, I came to realise that what I had don’t came with a price. Can’t say I wasn’t shook, cause I definitely was. But I slowly got used to the idea.

By doing what I had, forever linked me and Magnus. For as long as he remained in the form he is, I would live. And when he finally found the proper home for his heart, someone who would love him just as much, that’s when I got my marching orders. Didn’t expect it to be so long, but it is what it is.”

Alec sat still as stone beside her, his head reeling from this information. He didn’t know what to say. All he could think was that he was causing this sweet old lady to fade away.

“Now, listen here, I told you, don’t go blaming yourself for this. Do I look like I’m worried about it? As I said, I always knew this time was coming an I think a hundred and thirty odd years is well and truly a fair crack at it, don’t you? I knew it was you that first day I saw you. And I’m so glad you’ve finally arrived. He deserves it, and so do I.”

She patted his leg again and smiled.
Alec felt tears running down his cheeks and he hadn’t even realised he’s been crying. She might be okay with it, but he wasn’t. It was a hard burden to think that your happiness meant the end of someone’s existence. It was a hard price to pay.

“I don’t want you goin’ and holding yourself back with our boy about this. It’s the way of things and it’s meant to be, simple as that. You go do anything foolish and it’ll cause no end of trouble. You two were meant to be together, Alexander. Nothin’ you can do gonna change that. For either of you.”

She drank the rest of her tea and put the cup back down on the cupboard and sank back down in the bed.

“Now, I think it might be nap time but before you go I have to tell you something. In three days’ time you two are gonna get an opportunity to be together in the day.”

Alec took in a sharp breath. What?

“But, but, how? I thought he could be alive through the day?” His heart was pounding at the mere possibility of something like that. It was as if Cat had read his mind. Who knew, maybe she had in a way.

“In three days’ time, there’s gonna be an eclipse. Day becomes night, not for long but long enough that he should be about to come to you in solid form. Take advantage of it, Alexander, don’t waist the gift.”

Her voice was starting to drift off and her eyes were closing. He felt panicked. But there was still so much he wanted to ask her.

“Cat, how is all this going to affect Magnus? Will I ever get a chance to be with him properly?”

The words flew from his lips before he could stop them. His heart beat hard for a couple of beats before she answered.

“Read that spell, ask him. He knows.”

She whispered as she drifted off. Her face dropped more to the side and her eyes where closed completely. Oh Shit! Please tell me she’s not…. Then he noticed that the yellow quilt was slowly rising up and down above her chest. A soft smile curved her lips.

He let his shoulders slump a little. Thank God. She was asleep.

He got up carefully from the bed and took his cold cup of tea out to the kitchen where Clary and Gertie was sitting at the table. They both turned to look at him as he walked in, faces worried.

“She’s sleeping.” He told them and they both relaxed. He put the cup in the sink and then turned back towards them.

“I have to go but can you please let me know how she is?” He asked them. Gertie gave a nod of her head.

“You must be very special to her. It’s all she kept saying, was get his Alexander here, I need to tell him something. I don’t begin to understand what she was talking about but she wouldn’t rest until I got Clary here to go get you. I hope she got to tell you what she wanted you to know. It seemed real important to her.”
Alec smiled at her. “Yes, she did, thanks.”

He started for the door and Clary got up and followed him out. Here we go, she was going to give him the third degree. He could practically feel the curiosity rolling off her.

They managed to make it all the way out to the front yard before she said anything. He had been expecting the first barrage to hit as the stepped onto the front porch.

“Alec, who’s the he she’s talking about? Is it, is it Simon?”

Alec almost laughed. Boy, was she way off.

“No, Clary it isn’t. Look, I don’t really want to go into it. It’s, it’s sorta complicated and the last time I tried to explain it to someone they thought I was nuts so, I’ll spare you. I really have to get back, okay? Thanks for coming and getting me.”

He headed for his car but Clary wasn’t ready to give up just yet.

“But, but, what if I promise not to say anything couldn’t you just….”

“Sorry Clary.”

He gave her an apologetic smile. Maybe Clary would be a little more understanding but he wasn’t taking the chance. He needed to get back and hopefully tell Magnus about what Cat had said about the eclipse.
Chapter 32

All the way back to the house, Alec was at war with himself. He wanted desperately to be happy and excited about the possibility of seeing Magnus in the day. Even if the day would be dark. But on the other hand, he hated the thought that because of the way he was starting to feel about him that it was causing Cat to start fading away, like a bright and beautiful flower too long in a vase.

He didn’t want to be the cause of anyone’s end. Especially the end of the only person who understood about he and Magnus. That deep seeded ache had started up again in his chest. He had hoped never to feel it again but was there now, like an unwanted house guest.
He pulled into the drive and flew from the car and into the house. He stood in the room and tried to still his mind so he could pick up if Magnus was there but he felt nothing.

“Magnus? Babe? Are you here?”

He didn’t know why he had called out to him, he already knew the answer. This morning’s little escapades must have really tested him. He really hoped he wasn’t going to have to wait all day to talk with him.

He went to make himself a coffee and grab something to eat before he started to paint. He had to channel some of his nervous energy into something.
He’d gotten one full wall done and had started on the other before he felt the air change around him somehow. He was here. Finally.

“Miss me, baby?”

The words sounded in his head and he dropped his paintbrush into the container and smiled.

“Yes, I did, babe. A lot.”

“Good. Always leave them wanting more, isn’t that what they say? So, I see you’ve been industrious this morning?”

“I’ve tried to be. Like the colour?”

“I do actually. Gives the old place a well needed face lift.”

“Magnus, I have something to tell you.”

Alec sat on the covered arm of the couch, his gaze looking directly in front of him where he sensed Magnus to be. His familiar scent grew stronger and he felt soft shivery caresses on the side of his face. He leaned into them.

“Why do I sense that I’m not going to like this, Alexander?”

“It’s good news, I promise. But first I have to tell you. I went to see Cat. Magnus, she’s fading fast. The Dr wants her to go to hospital but she’s refusing. Says that they can’t do anything for her and she wants to stay where she is.”

The caresses stopped.

The room felt quiet but Alec knew Magnus was still there, just not speaking. He could feel the very mixed emotions that were running through him and he wished with all his might that he could take
him in his arms and hold him. He wanted to say something but decided not to. Magnus had to reconcile the way he felt about things himself.

“How did you find out about Catarina? Don’t tell me you have some mystic, mutual bond with my ex-wife.”

“No, nothing that special, I’m afraid. Clary, a girl from in town that knows her came and told me that she was asking for me.”

“Why was she asking for you? What did she say?”

He felt the apprehension very strongly that was in concentrated form right in front of him.

“Magnus, she had good news. There might be a way we can see each other in a few days’ time. In the day, well, sort of.”

The concern was replaced with frustration.

“Alexander, just spit it out. Don’t hold this information to ransom from me. What hair brained scheme did the old girl come up with now?”

“There’s going to be an eclipse when the moon covers the sun. Night in the day time. Cat thinks you’ll be able to become whole, even if it’s for a short time.”

“Pifflle! There have been quite a few eclipses over the last hundred years and it’s never allowed me to become corporeal before. What’s so special about this one?”

“I have no idea, she didn’t say but why would she mention it if it weren’t possible?”

“It’s probably her guilty conscious talking. Grasping at anything to make herself look better before she leaves the world behind. She’s never bothered trying anything to get me back before, I don’t know why she’s bothering now. It’s only a temporary thing anyway. What would be the point?”

Alec stared opened mouthed. Was he kidding?

“Magnus, it’s what we’ve wanted. Being able to actually be together in the day time. Even if it’s going to dark, it’s still the day. That’s the point. Cat said she had her grandmother’s books, maybe I could borrow them from her and see if I could find anything that could bring you back full time. There must be something.”

Anger flared within him.

“Alexander, don’t you dare try anything like that. Messing around with things that shouldn’t be messed with is what got me here in the first place. If anything went wrong and something happened to you, I’d never forgive myself, or you.”

Alec couldn’t understand his reluctance to try any avenue they could to give them what they both craved. Then he sensed that Magnus was hold something back from him.

“Magnus what is it? You know something about this, don’t you? You know how to break this spell, why won’t you tell me?”

“Because, because I can’t. I can’t risk losing what we have. It’s not what I want either but it’s better than the alternative.”

Alec wanted to tear his hair out. It was a good thing he couldn’t get his hands on him right then
because he’d be tempted to wrap them around his throat for being so cryptic.

“ Magnus, for Christ’s sake, just tell me. ”

He felt a wispy air shift in front of him and Magnus’ scent got a little less. He had turned his back and walked away from him a little. He could feel conflict raging with in him. This was something big if it was causing him this much distress.

“I, I can’t, Alexander. I can’t do it. I won’t tell you. Just be grateful for the time we get to spend together and be done with it.”

Alec threw his hands in the air and stood up from the couch like he had a spring underneath him. Was he serious? What the hell was wrong with him?

“Fuck! Magnus! You ask me to be honest with you and trust you and you can’t trust me with something about this? Are you crazy? If there’s a chance that we could be together properly then we should take it. Unless, unless that’s not what you want. Is that it? You don’t want to be with me anymore? What was I? Just another notch in your bedpost? Let’s just fuck with the little virgin’s head and then walk away.”

Rage like he’d never felt before mounted in him like a volcano. Oh boy, he’d pushed the big red button this time.

“Is that what you think? Is that truly what you think I feel towards you? How the hell could you have misread me that badly, Alexander? I’ve never, never felt the way I do about you with anyone. I’m falling in love with you, you stupid boy, and it’s killing me to hold back from that.

There isn’t a time that I don’t think about you. Even when I’m like this you’re all I can think of. It’s maddening. It’s like I only started existing since I met you. How dare you say that to me. I have my reasons for not saying what I know or what I think I know about this and it has nothing to do with being together in the real world. Just know that it’s not something that I want to entertain and leave it at that.”

Alec stood blinking in the empty living room. Oh. Okay then.

His head was buzzing from what Magnus had just said and he was fighting to process it. But the only thing that he could focus on was what he had said about falling in love with him. His heart was racing and his breath was shallow. Dear God, could he have this? Was it possible to be with someone like this?

The turbulent air stilled between them and he felt Magnus’ anger levels drop. But then he thought about what else he had said.

“If that’s true, then why are you holding back? Is it because you think I don’t feel the same? Because if you do you’d be wrong. I feel the same way, Magnus. I keep trying to tell myself that it’s way too soon that this whole thing is crazy and impossible but I can’t help myself.

Babe, if this is all we can have and it means that I get to only have you each night then I can live with that. But if there’s a chance that we can be together, they why wouldn’t we try it?”

“Because it would risk losing you, Alexander and I can’t do that. It’s like I’ve dived into the deep end and the water is so nice and warm and inviting and as long as I keep paddling slowly, I can keep my head above water. But if I stop and just give in, yes, I get the whole warm wonderful effect of it but I lose myself in the process. That would mean I lose you too and I can’t, I won’t do that.”
Alec moved closer to where he knew Magnus was. The earthy scent filled his nose and he took it all in, letting it fill every inch of him.

“Babe, what if I was there to pull you out? I wouldn’t let you go under like that.” He said softly.

Warmth burst through him and filled not only his body but his heart and soul as well. It was such a strong feeling and Alec didn’t know he could contain it. But he knew what it was. Love. Or the closest thing to it.

“My darling, Alexander, I would be scared of pulling you under with me.”

The words were so soft and quiet and he felt a hand cup his face and the cool shivery sensation of ghostly lips brushing his.

“Ugh!”

Alec wanted to fall to the floor. His whole being ached for wanting to hold this man or the idea of this man that was before him. He wanted to take him in his arms and cover his mouth with his, take in that strong sandalwood smell about him and feel those big strong arms holding him against that wide smooth chest. It was the worst kind of agony.

More cool silvery kisses covered his skin and he moaned softly, his eyes closing and his hand going up to touch the place where he felt each one.

“Oh Magnus, I can’t wait for tonight. When can it be dark so we can be together. I want you so bad. To feel you. Smell you. Taste you.”

Alec breathed, swaying slightly as invisible hands held his arms.

“I know, my love, I know. I want you too. But this is what we have, my heart. This is what we must endure if we want to be together. Just like this. We can’t go beyond it or it will all be over and I don think I can take that. I can’t spend eternity without you, Alexander. Don’t ask me to.”

That strong warm caring, comforting feeling was washing through his like warm waves of tropical waters. The words were on the tip of his tongue and bursting to be said.

“Magnus, I lo….”

NO! NO! DON’T SAY THAT, ALEXANDER. PLEASE! DON’T UTTER THOSE WORDS TO ME.” Alec’s eyes

Flew wide and he staggered back a few steps. His head was reeling and he was fighting the need to let his buckling knees to give way and send him to the floor. He didn’t understand, why had he stopped him? He had just confessed to feeling the same way. A hand went to his temples and rubbed at the faint dull ache that was beginning to make its presence known.

The thing that confused him even more was that he still felt that warm wash of love coming from him and something else nipping at its edges like a small yappy dog. Fear.

“Magnus, why? What’s wrong with saying it out loud? I can’t help what I feel any more than you can. Why can’t I tell you I lo….”

A roar went through his head loud enough that it made him screw his eyes up tight and clutch his temples. The dull ache suddenly became a full-on headache.
“I TOLD YOU, ALEXANDER, DON’T SAY IT. NOT NOW, NOT EVER.”

Alec felt stinging tears pierce his eyes and begin to roll down his cheeks. But he didn’t understand, and it was killing him not to know the reasoning behind this outburst.

“But you told me you felt the same, Magnus. I don’t understand. I don’t get it.”

“I know. I know. But its best you don’t. You asked me to trust you, now I’m asking you to trust me, Alexander. Don’t say those words to me. You know how I feel about you, I know you can feel it inside you, that will have to be enough.”

Magnus voice sounded shaky but still strong and deep. He meant what he had said. Every word of it. Suddenly his presence was gone. Alec sucked in a ragged breath and looked around the room.

“Magnus?!” But there was only silence and the air had settled once more. Alec felt his chest start to ache as his eyes scanned the room wildly. No, no, why did he go? Why?

“MAGNUS!”

He practically screamed his name. But it didn’t bring him back. Alec gave a howl of pain and gave in to his knees as they folded underneath him. He slumped to the floor in a heap. His shoulders shook with sobs now and he felt like someone had reached into his chest and tried to remove his heart.

He clutched his hands to the spot that felt like a gaping wound and only met with hard muscle and bone. He could feel the rapid thump, thump, thump of his heart below but it felt more like an echo than a proper beat.

Fucking hell, this wasn’t how today was supposed to of gone. How the hell had it gone so bad so quick? He’d gone from deliriously happy, to sated and contented to hopeful and excited. Then someone turned the dial and all he felt was pain and confusion.

He stayed in a heap on the floor for he didn’t know how long. Had he lost Magnus? Would he be back tonight? He prayed with everything thing he had that it would be that way. It was true. You didn’t know what was important to you until you lost it. The worst part was that he didn’t know if he had or not.

When he couldn’t cry anymore and his legs had lost their feeling from being scrunched up underneath him, he hauled himself to his feet and staggered to the kitchen. With shaky hands, he took one of his few remaining glasses and held it under the tap, filling it and then downing the whole thing in one go. His head was pounding fit to burst now and he searched the cupboard for some pain killers. He took them with more water before he trudged back to the chaotic living room and fell back on the covered couch.

He tried to still his mind, in a vain attempt to ease the throbbing ache behind his eyes and temples.

He began to analyse what their argument had been about. He still couldn’t make sense of it. They had both confessed to the start of deeper feelings, and he knew that they just hadn’t been words. He could feel the emotion in Magnus and it had filled him with a warmth greater than any sunlight ever could. The best feeling ever. Knowing that someone loved you and that you felt the same way back.

But when he had tried to say the words he was bursting to say, that’s when he got crazy. Maybe
Magnus just wasn’t used to hearing such words of affection said to him. From what he and Catarina had told him, he had experienced nothing more than strong attraction towards and from others. He must of felt overwhelmed.

Alec had known that his parents had loved him; he had felt that. But this type of love was totally different. It was wonderful and scary all at the same time. Perhaps the shock of realising that was how he felt so quickly had him back peddling. And then he had to go and make him even worse by almost telling him that he loved him.

Maybe he was afraid that the way he felt about him would send him running for the hills too, that’s why he said something about not wanting things to end. He let out a sigh. That had to be it. It had been nervous tension not actual anger he had been feeling from him.

He sat up, rubbing his forehead. The headache was slowly fading now and he felt a renewed sense of hope that everything would be okay once Magnus had a chance to deal with the way he felt. He was struggling with it himself so he knew what he must be feeling.

He looked at his half-painted walls and thought about going back to it but he just wasn’t in the mood to do that. He yearned to be able to tell Magnus that he understood why he felt the way he did but he knew it would be a waste of time, calling into the empty room. He wasn’t there.

Then he had an idea. He flew up of the couch and out to the back garden. The rose garden stood half dug over and neglected. He went to the shed and got the spade again and with determination, he started digging at the remaining weed chocked bed.

By early afternoon, he had finished and the garden looked bare but better. He went to where he had left the potted coloured plants that he had used for their indoor garden and decided to plant them around the outside of the bed as a border.

By the time he had finished, he was hot, sweaty and dirty but he had no intention of stopping now. He needed more plants and he wanted to get some roses to replace the ones that had been too far gone to save.

He checked the time on his phone. Yeah, he had time. He raced inside and cleaned up, not bothering to change his clothes, however, and after grabbing his keys and wallet, went to the car. Alec wasn’t a gardener even in the loosest definition of the term, so he was going to choose the roses purely on colour but then he noticed that they all actually had names. He read a few labels and sensed a theme.

Falling in Love, Moonstone, Sunstruck, Moon dance, Passionate Kisses even one called Peachy cheeks went into the cart. He went to the check out and then headed for the car.

“Alec?”

He froze. His hands gripped the handle of the cart and he closed his eyes. Simon.

He turned to see him standing a little way behind him. He really wasn’t in the mood for another go round about Magnus’ existence.

“Yes, Simon?”

Alec’s tone was short and hard and Simon pulled back a little when he heard it. Clearly, he hadn’t been expecting Alec to still be sore at him.

“Ah, hey. Back in the garden I see.” He said.
No way, he wasn’t going to come up to him in the carpark like this and pretend like they were friends.

“Yeah, and they’re real roses too, wanna feel them, perhaps I’m lying about them too.” Alec snapped.

Simon’s face dropped and he looked very affronted. He held his hands up palms forward in a gesture of surrender.

“Hey man, look, I’m sorry about yesterday, really. It was none of my business and I shouldn’t of said anything. Hey, the guy looked hot, you’re lucky to have him. Hope he treats you nice. He certainly looked like he did.”

Simon tried to give him a weak smile but it didn’t last long. He could see that Alec still wasn’t happy with him.

Alec wanted to say thanks and that yes, he was hot and yes, he did treat him well but Simon’s outright dismissal of him yesterday still cut too deep. Besides, there was that chance that none of that would matter if he didn’t come back to him tonight it wouldn’t matter what he or anyone else would think. Alec could tell from the way he spoke about Magnus that he still thought he was some guy from the city.
Chapter 33

He thought about saying something but dismissed it almost as quickly as it had entered his head. What would be the point? This was not something you discussed in the car park of a hardware store anyway.

“I have to go. I want to get these in the ground before tonight. Bye, Simon.”

Alec noticed that he opened his mouth to start to say something but it didn’t get past the first short intake of breath and he closed his mouth again and just gave a small wave of his hand.

He got back home and took the rose bushes around to the garden then went inside to stand in the living room, hoping that maybe, just maybe, Magnus was waiting for him. But there was no sign of him and he felt that ache in his chest flare again.

He took in deep breath and fought back the urge to let the disappointed tears that stung his eyes fall down his cheeks. He clenched his fists to his sides and clamped his teeth together. No, he wasn’t going to do this. Magnus would come back when he calmed down.

He charged out the back door and headed for the garden again and the waiting rose bushes.

By the time it was almost dark, he had finished. He stood back, looking at his hard work. There were a few buds on the new bushes, promises of beautiful blooms in the coming months. Alec wanted to think of them as omens of better times ahead. He got the hose and watered them thoroughly before putting his spade away and heading for the house.

He tried not to think about how empty the place felt with out the presence of its original owner as he headed for the stairs and the bathroom. He showered and changed into some clean clothes before heading to the kitchen to find something for dinner, even though his stomach felt like there was a pack of wild cats in it.

The night seemed to drag even slower than it usually did. He tried to distract himself with TV but he couldn’t keep his focus on anything. By nine thirty, he had let his nerves work himself up to the point where he actually felt sick. He gave up trying to watch anything and turned everything off and went upstairs.

He lay in the dark, looking at the time on his phone every five minutes, which didn’t help his knotted stomach or galloping heart. What if he didn’t come? What if he did? Could he live without Magnus in his life? Could he stand to live in the house still? If he went to see Catarina again, would she be able to help bring him back somehow?

He mulled over each question. If Magnus refused to show himself, it was going to hurt, and hurt bad. Another question arose from that; how long would he allow himself to hope the he would return? Unfortunately, he knew the answer to that, all too easily. Forever, if he had to. He’d lived with the pain of a one-sided relationship before, he could do it again if he had to.

If Magnus did show at his usual time he had no doubt of what he would do. He would wrap himself around that gorgeous golden body and kiss him till he could breathe anymore and then take him to the bed and make love to him for the rest of the night. He’d even do it without the condoms.

The thought had his dick twitching and beginning to swell but then the next thought stepped it dead in its tracks. Could he live without Magnus? The simple answer would be no, of course, but he wouldn’t have much choice in the matter. It would be a case of existing, not living. He thought
about how he would go through the motions of each day, feeling hollowed out and a shell of his former self. He could see himself in his lowest moments, allowing himself to think of the few glorious days that they had spent together.

That ache fired up in his chest as he thought about it. Please God, don’t let that dark thought become reality.

He had mixed feelings about whether he could continue to live in the house. Obviously, Magnus would always be there, being bound to the place, so he wouldn’t be able to get away from him completely, but the thought of being in the house and knowing that he was there but wouldn’t communicate with him would be beyond torture.

On one hand, he’d want to stay to be close to him, even though he couldn’t be with him anymore but then he thought, the sensible thing would be to sell the place on, let the house and Magnus become someone else’s problem.

The thought of a stranger living here and taking over made him ache all over with anger and sorrow.

He curled up tightly on his side, willing with everything he had that Magnus would return to him soon and that he wouldn’t have to endure any of those dark scenarios.

He didn’t know when he had fallen asleep but he startled awake, his legs, tangled in the sheets that still smelt faintly of Magnus, jerking as if he had been shocked.

“Magnus?”

He tried to fight the fuzziness of his restless sleep to sense whether he had returned. He sat up in the bed, his bare chest heaving. He looked at the time; three thirty in the morning. He couldn’t feel him, he wasn’t there.

“ARGH!”

Alec howled into the dark silent room that had never felt so empty. He hadn’t come back. He was done with him. But he said he was falling in love with him, how could he just stop himself from feeling like that?

Alec no longer had the strength to fight the hot tears that were burning his eyes and he screamed out into the darkness, letting them flow down his cheeks in a river of misery. He threw himself back on the bed and buried his face into the pillow that only this time last night rest Magnus’ head. Sweet Jesus, it still smelt like him and every breath in he took killed him.

The feeling he had in his chest had powered up and had become a full-on assault on his system. The hollow pain radiated out to every inch of him and he gasped for air. This wasn’t fair, he had started to feel so happy, so contented with his new life and this this had to happen.

He pounded the bed with a fist clenched so tight his short nails were cutting into the palm. He so wanted to be mad at Magnus for doing this to him, for making him feel like this but he knew that it wasn’t entirely his fault. He had pushed things too far by almost saying what he had. Magnus had said that he was close to falling in love with him, not actually there yet. Now he had frightened him off.

He couldn’t seem to help the wet sounding high pitched giggle that burst from him at that point. The irony of it; he had scared a ghost off. Fuck! There was one for the records.

The rest of the night was spent in restless cycles of tears, anger and fitful dozing. When he did
wake the next morning, the room felt just as empty, the pain in his chest was just as hollow and the rest of his body felt like it had been hit by a truck.

Alec’s head pounded as he sat up slowly, squinting into the golden light, pinching the bridge of his nose. Well, he guessed that today was going to be the first of one of his scenarios that had gone through his head last night; how to survive without Magnus. And how to live without his heart.

Simon pulled up out the front of the coffee shop and headed in to get his morning heart starter. He was going to need it when he got to his first job. Mrs Harvey’s new oven rewire. The house was so full of those air freshener things that by the time he left, his head was pounding from them and his allergies had his eyes running and nose dripping.

Not to mention Mrs Harvey trying to push her youngest daughter onto him. He was grateful for the fact that the other four, Rose, Astrid and Daisy were all married and living in the city. Poor Lily was the last one left at home and obviously the woman hadn’t gotten the memo about the local electrician being gay.

Clary smiled at him as he got to the counter.

“Hey, Simon, the usual?” She asked in her chirpy, high voice.

“Yeah, better hit me with an extra shot this morning, Clary. I’m gonna need it.” He said, raising his eye brows.

She gave him a sympathetic look and soft smile.

“Let me guess? Mrs Harvey’s new oven? I thought so. She came in all excited yesterday about you coming to install it. The woman can bake, but she smells like she works in a perfume factory. I’ve had to go and pick up the slices and things she bakes for here a couple of times and thought I’d need oxygen by the time o got out of there.” She laughed as she started on his coffee.

“Ah, have you seen Alec around in the last couple of days?” Simon hoped his enquiry sounded casual.

“Yeah, yesterday morning I had to go tell him about old Cat asking for him. Why?” Simon frowned.

“He knows old Cat? How did that happen?”

“I think they ran into each other the first day he moved here when he came in to get pizza. She bailed him up out the front of the store and was telling him one of her crazy stories, I think. They must of run into each other since then though, cause she was asking for him and acting like they had some connection to each other.”

“Really? I didn’t think he knew anyone else here? You don’t think they’re related or something do you?”

Clary stopped what she was doing and gave him a look.

“Simon, I know Alec is tall, dark and handsome, but that doesn’t match his skin tone. I think they just met here, that’s all. But it was weird. I got the feeling that they had talked since that first day and for some weird reason, she kept calling him his Alexander. Ha, but who knows, right? Cat’s always been a bit out there.”

Clary went back to preparing the coffee.
Simon felt a chill run down his spine. She was calling him his Alexander? Who was the ‘he’ she was referring to too. Then he suddenly remembered something. That night he had seen Alec and the good-looking stranger in Alec’s living room, he hadn’t really been able to hear very well and to be truthful once shock had set in, he tended to go deaf. But he did hear the odd word.

He felt his face heating as he thought about how happy they had both looked, their smiles had lit their whole faces. It brought back bittersweet memories for him. He had heard the stranger’s deep happy laughter when Alec had said something that he hadn’t caught. And then, just before he had pulled himself from the window, he had heard that deep voice call him Alexander.

“Hey! Yoo-hoo! Earth to Simon? Coffee!”

His eyes that had been downcast in thought flew up as Clary’s voice broke him out of his thoughts. She handed him a large take away cup and a white paper bag.

“Have a Danish, you’ll need all the strength you can get over there. Are you okay? You looked a million miles away.”

Her brow creased as she looked at him, concerned.

“Yeah, sorry. I’m fine. Just psyching myself up for the morning. How is Cat, anyway?”

“Yeah about the same. The stubborn old thing is refusing to go to the hospital so she’s still at home. Gertie and I are taking it in turns to get her meals and things. She’s a tough old bird, I don’t think she’ll go down with out a fight, that’s for sure. I would’ve loved to of known what she had said to Alec though. She shooed me and Gertie out before she said too much to him. All I got was it had something to do with the eclipse that’s on tomorrow. I dunno. Alec sure seemed interested though.”

She gave a shrug and smiled.

“Didn’t take the guy to be into all that weird stuff that she is but hey, they guy lives in a haunted house, so maybe he was after some ghost hunting tips.”

Clary laughed. Simon gave her the money for the coffee and gave a weak laugh back.

Clary went to serve the next customer and he gave her a small wave and then headed out. He sat in his truck, sipping his coffee and thinking deeply. He was starting to play a game of connect the dots from what Clary had said and from the short conversation he had had with Alec.

Alec’s words where rattling around inside his head.

“He died over a hundred years ago. It’s Magnus Bane.”

“Ask Catarina if you don’t believe me, she was Magnus’ wife.”

He called him Alexander, Cat had called him his Alexander. Simon had never heard him call himself that before. He had introduced himself as Alec and he’d never corrected Simon when he had called him that. The fake garden, the light stands, had he been trying to recreate daylight? And if he had been, why would he do that unless the stranger couldn’t be with him in the daylight.

There had to be other or saner explanations for why he couldn’t. He worked in the city through the day and could only come her at night, he was in another relationship and could only get away then were the first two things he could think of. Or he was what Alec swore he was and could only appear at night.
Simon gave a shiver and sat up further in the seat. No, that would be nuts. It wasn’t possible. Was it?

He put the remains of his coffee in the console and started the truck. But what did the eclipse have to do with anything? He shook his head to clear it. He was reading too much into all this now and he felt like he was poking his nose in where it wasn’t wanted again. He was still smarting over the last time he had done that.

But the whole thing wouldn’t leave him completely and it was still nagging at the fringes of his mind when he arrived at Mrs Harvey’s place. She was standing on the front porch waiting for him too, waving a handkerchief like a flag. He plastered on a smile and took in a breath. He needed to stop thinking about Alec Lightwood and his mystery man if he was going to survive the next half an hour or so.

Gertie sat quietly next to her old friend’s bedside. She had been asleep for a while now and looked very peaceful in her big yellow bed. Gertie gave a soft smile and went back to her knitting. She was soon in deep concentration of her work and missed the small movements of Catarina’s eyes behind her closed lids.

“You know that I’m only hear out of desperation, Catarina. I wouldn’t ask you for anything otherwise.”

Magnus’ voice came sharp and clear to Cat’s mind. She gave a small laugh.

“No, I don’t reckon you would at that and I can’t say I blame you. He’s certainly an improvement on the last one, Magnus. Seems your taste as gotten better over the past decades.”

“Don’t you speak to me about Alexander. I don’t want him having anything to do with you and I know he’s been here. Twice. What rubbish have you been filling his head with?”

“No rubbish at all. Just the truth. A truth I think he deserves to know. Things I knew you wouldn’t tell him.”

“You won’t want to have told him about what the end of the spell means. He can’t, I won’t, I don’t want him knowing that.” Magnus stumbled over the last of his words.

“Rest easy, husband, I told him nothing of that. You need to be the one to tell him, only you. And he needs to know, Magnus. That boy is in love with you, I can smell it on him.”

“I’m no longer your husband, Catarina so kindly stop referring to me that way. It was only a title anyway, something for appearances sake. We both knew that.”

“We most certainly did not both know that. I knew you didn’t love me but I was young and silly enough to think that eventually you would learn to. Didn’t know I had competition that I had no hope of winning against. I had entirely the wrong equipment for the job.”

“I don’t remember you ever being so forthright, Catarina.”

“Livin’ as long as I have changes a person. Why are you messin’ with my thoughts, anyway?”

“Catarina, we both know what will happen if I let myself fall in love with Alexander and i am. In spite of trying to tell myself that I have to take things so and steady, I’m consumed by him. He’s all I can think about.”

“Yeah, and he’s the same way for you. The boy’s lousy with it. What the heart wants, the heart wants, you don’t get a say in that you know.”
“But I can’t lose him! I can’t just vanish from his life like that. It would kill him and me. There must be something we can do, some, some counter spell or something.”

“Magnus, you know I had no idea what I was doing when I cast that first one. It’s taken us decades to work out the way it works. The deal is, when you open your heart and allow his to fill yours, you get to leave this form. I’m not sayin’ it won’t be hard in the boy but it’s what has to happen. The alternative is you break his heart and stay as you are, never telling him how you truly feel. Could you live with that?”
“No, no it wouldn’t have. I hate to admit that your right, Catarina. I can’t believe I said that so quickly too but the thought of not spending even five minutes with that man fills my heart with such pain. And now I’m faced with an eternity without him.”

“Your soul belongs to that man now, Magnus. Whether you say the words or not. And not sayin’ them is like owning something priceless, irreplaceable and then not insuring it. You carry his and he carries yours. You’ll never be completely lost to him or him to you. Memories live forever.”

“But it’s not enough! I want to live the life I should have been able to with Alexander. Life owes me that.”

“And since when is life fair? Life owes me a loving husband and a family. Guess we both got short changed. At least this way we can both reconcile our wrongs. That’s a hell of a lot more than some people get to do. What they hell you don’ here wasting time with me for anyway? You need to be with that man of yours.”

“We had a, a disagreement. He was about to say I love you and i couldn’t hear it, as much as I wanted to.”

“So, go, let him tell you that. Unless you tell him the same thing, nothing changes for you. Gives the two of you a little breathing room but I know you won’t be able to hold out for long. You need to say those words just as bad as he needs to hear them. Pretty soon you’re gonna have to say ‘em. Otherwise they’ll eat you up.”

“Well thank you for being maddeningly unhelpful once more, Catarina. Here I was thinking that you would be more skilled by now. God knows you’ve had more than enough time to perfect your craft.”

“Hey, the last time I tried anything the damn spell backfired and got me too. I wasn’t gonna tempt fate and risk somethin’ else going seriously wrong. As it is it cost me my eyes. Besides, I ain’t no Glenda the good fairy, Magnus. I don’t have no magic wand stuck somewhere.”

“humph, could have fooled me. I know the perfect spot for it too.”

“Yeah, and you’d be the expert at that, wouldn’t ya? Go on now, go see that man of yours before he changes his mind and starts to think that nice little electrician is less trouble.”

“He goes anywhere near Alexander, and the next time I let the handbrake off on that truck of his, I’ll make sure he’s standing behind it at the time.”

Gertie looked down at her friend. Cat had been muttering in her sleep and now she was moving restlessly in the bed. She put out a hand and gently patted the yellow quilt, hoping to still her. She settled back into a peaceful sleep once more, this time, with a smile on her face.

Alec spent the rest of the day in a mindless haze of sorrow with the occasional flare up or anger. Anger at himself for pushing things way too fast way too soon and anger at Magnus for doing this to him.

All he had eaten all day was a cheese sandwich and that was under sufferance. His stomach was too
tied up in knots to eat anything else. He’d had about four cups of coffee though which and kept him functioning long enough to paint another wall.

By late afternoon, though, his grief from the loss of Magnus in his life had finally gotten the better of him. He knew that Magnus was technically already dead but it felt like he was experiencing his demise all over again. He recognised the similar feelings that he had when his parents had died but this was different from that even.

It went right to his core and it felt like there was now a hole where his soul should have been. He fell down onto the couch and clutched at a cushion. He began to replay their limited moments together; his first sight of him at the window in the attic, the night in the thunder storm in the rose garden, their first night together, the indoor picnic. His first time ever making love to anyone. He screwed his eyes up tight, the hot tears leaking out from them anyway.

He remembered how he felt under his hands and fingers. That soft silky, golden skin, covering those well-rounded muscles, like an iron fist in a velvet glove. The taste of his skin under his tongue that made his skin tingle all over again but this time it was accompanied with pain. He couldn’t do this anymore, his head felt like it was splitting open from the tension headache he had worked up.

He didn’t remember falling asleep, but he must of because he knew what he was feeling must mean he was still dreaming. Dreaming about what it felt like for Magnus to run his fingers through his hair and down the side of his face. He smiled, eyes still closed, imagining the cool shivery kisses that he had given him before he could appear whole again.

He didn’t want to open his eyes because that would signal an end to the delicious dream and if that’s all he had of him now, then he wanted it to last for as long as he could.

He felt another cool brush of ghostly lips on his forehead before another one on his other cheek. Tears leaked from the corners of his eyes as he lay there in the dark room. This was so cruel because it felt so real to him.

“Baby, please don’t cry anymore, I’m here.”

A soft warm voice filled his aching head and Alec’s eyes flew open. He felt his entire body tense, his breath dying in his throat. He hadn’t thought that. Those weren’t his words.

He sat up on the couch, looking around the empty dark room, knowing that it was a silly thing to be doing even if it had meant Magnus was back.

“Alexander, it’s alright. I’m here. I’m back.”

He felt a cool touch to his arm and flinched in spite of knowing better. Then his heart began to pound in his chest. He could feel him. Magnus was here, he wasn’t dreaming.

“Magnus?” He croaked, his voice breaking slightly from his dry throat.

“Yes, Alexander, I’m here. Oh, my heart, what have I done to you, you look awful.”

Alec felt two arms slide around his neck from behind him. It was the most wonderful non-hug he had ever felt. He let out a breath that he hadn’t even been aware of holding and he felt his body slump forward. A smile so wide it was hurting his mouth cracked his face wide open. He could feel the dry skin on his lips splitting but he didn’t care. He gave a soft laugh and put his hand out as if he was touching Magnus’ arm, not his own shoulder.
“I thought you had left me, Magnus. Left me for good.” He said softly, looking down at his hands as they now fidgeted in his lap. He felt a cool kiss to the back of his neck, making him hunch his shoulders and stretch the grin even wider.

“No, my love. I can never really leave this place but I couldn’t stay away from you any long. I’m so sorry for causing you so much pain, Alexander. I over reacted and let my temper get the better of me. Not a new thing to happen, unfortunately.”

“It felt like you died to me, Magnus. It was horrible.”

More ghostly brushes of cool lips, this time, to his cheek. How was it possible for something that felt like a damp breath of air warm his insides like that?

“I know. I can’t tell you how sorry I am, my heart, believe me.”

“You can’t do that to me again, Magnus. If this is all we can have, then we’ll take it. It’s better than nothing.”

Alec didn’t think about how Magnus had gone silent and that he didn’t answer him straight away. All he was focused on was the fact that he had returned to him. He knew he probably should have been mad at him but he just couldn’t bring himself to feel that way.

“I can’t wait for tonight, babe. I’ll definitely be making up for lost time and also for pushing things too far when you weren’t ready,”

“It wasn’t your fault, Alexander. I shouldn’t have acted the way I did. You would think after all this time I would have learned to get a hold of my temper. But it seems not and it nearly cost me you. Things will definitely be changing from now on, though. It way to high of a price to pay.”

Alec felt the arms hold him tighter and he closed his eyes and tilted his head back, as if he were resting it on Magnus’ chest. More cool kisses ran down the side of his face and he smiled.

“You need to eat, my love. You’re pale as a ghost. And I am the expert on that so no arguing.”

He brushed his lips to the side of his temple before withdrawing his arms and giving his shoulders a pat with unseen hands.

“Now go, march into that kitchen and find something to eat. Something decent.”

Alec smiled softly and hauled himself up from the couch. But he still just before he reached the dining room.

“You aren’t going anywhere, are you? I don’t want to lose you again so soon.”

“Of course not, my love. I’m not going anywhere. I need nourishment too but not the sort you get from food. Now go, hurry up.”

Alec let out a relieved breath before he gave a chuckle when he felt a phantom swat on his backside.

He dug out a steak from the freezer and then even managed to find some vegetables that were still okay. The whole time he cooked they chatted lightly, making silly jokes about his clumsy cooking skills. Throughout the process, Alec revelled in the feel of the little touches he felt; it was almost as
if Magnus was feeding his own needs with little nibbles of contact. Taking dainty bites, trying to fill himself up from them alone.

Alec plated his meal and at the kitchen table. It was a peculiar feeling, trying to eat with the feeling of two strong arms laying over your shoulders but he loved it anyway. By the time he had finished, he felt much better and had realised just how hungry he actually had been.

It was still only early evening and midnight seemed a hundred years away. He fell back down on the couch and felt Magnus comforting presence beside him and a slight weight on his shoulder. He smiled; he had put his head there, he could even smell his hair. He longed for the opportunity to be able to rest his cheek on the soft silky strands that covered the top of it. Time was going way too slowly for him.

He flicked on the TV and surfed though the channels till he gave an excited cry and settled into the couch more.

“I love this movie.” He sighed, tilting his head as if he could rest it on Magnus’.

“It looks way too sappy, what are you watching, Alexander?”

“Dirty Dancing and it isn’t sappy, it’s cute.”

“Well I have to say the title has me intrigued. What’s it about?”

Alec gave him a quick rundown of the plot. Alec could feel his interest piquing. Ha ha, so much for thinking it was sappy.

“So, is that Johnnie? That hunk of a man with the cute ass?”

The words filled his mind. Alec looked to his right where he could feel his presence up against his body.

“Magnus! Get your eyes off his ass! And yes, it is.”

“Jealous, are we? The man fills out his pants well, but I still maintain that your butt looks better.”

“Thank you, and yes, I’m jealous. I thought you might know him.”

He could sense Magnus’ dark eyes looking at him even if he couldn’t see them.

“Now why would I know that man? It’s not like I can just go dashing off to catch a moving picture show whenever I feel like.”

“Babe, they’re just called movies now and I thought you might know him cause, well, he died a while ago.”

He was surprised at the braying laughter that filled his mind. He hardly thought that someone’s death was cause to laugh that much. It was a good few minutes before he felt a cool kiss on his cheek as if Magnus had realised he had done something inappropriate.

“Sweetheart, there isn’t some mystical place us ghosts gather at. I’m sure that wherever that man is, he’s twirling around the dance floor someplace. But it’s not anywhere I know. I don’t think I’ll ever know that.”

“As much as I’d like you to find peace, Magnus, I don’t want you to leave me either. The last twenty-four hours was bad enough. This is frustrating and gets to me every now and then but its
better than that.”

Magnus didn’t give him a reply but he knew he was still with him and that he was feeling very conflicted over something. He frowned and snapped off the TV with the remote control.

“Okay, so what’s wrong? I can feel there’s something going on with you, Magnus? Does this have anything to do with what we had the fight about?”

He didn’t answer straight away and Alec worried that he might have just started another disagreement. But it didn’t feel like that. Magnus felt calmer this time, somehow.

“Alexander, I, there’s something I think you should know. About the spell that’s bound me here and brought me to you.”

Alec felt the skin on the back of his neck tingle. Why did he have the feeling that he wasn’t going to like this? But at the same time, he knew he had to hear it. He took in a deep breath.

“Okay, what is it?”

“When that retched woman did this to me, she was a complete amateur at witchcraft, but I think she’s told you that. Anyway, when she wrote the spell out, it was done in haste and she obviously didn’t think it through very well. Do you remember the spell? It’s in that box you found on top of the wardrobe?”

Alec narrowed his eyes in thought.

“Yeah, I think so.”

“Then you probably have worked out the first line about the night being my day?”

“Yeah, that I got. But why couldn’t it have been from sunset to sunrise? Why can’t you come to me before then?”

“Because apparently twelve fifteen was when I died, Alexander. My widow really should have put more thought into it, but at least she gave me that much. And under the circumstances, that was probably rather generous of her.”

“Oh, okay, I get it now.”

“I think you could work out the second line as well. You heart has definitely been my light, Alexander. It’s like a beacon to me, guiding me to you.”

Alec felt two hands covering his own that were on is lap.

“I felt like a small ship, lost in a vast raging ocean, fearing that I would never see land again and then you appeared on my horizon and that inner light of yours shone towards me and the closer I got to you the calmer the seas became and the brighter the light got. You’re guiding me home, Alexander. To a new home, a better one that I had never hoped to have.”

He shivered as he felt a cool touch to his chest. He looked down to see his t shirt dented from it.

“Here, this is my home now, my love.” He felt cool lips brushing his own and he closed his eyes as the heart in question began to beat faster.
“I wish I could touch you like this, Magnus. I want to tell you the same thing. I think I can work out the third line because you have given me peace. Peace from all the sad, guilty feelings that I dragged here with me. About my parents and Jace, about being that way I am. I hadn’t thought about it before now but you’ve made me forget about all that. It’s like taking a deep breath for the first time in forever. So much better.”

He felt a cool touch to the side of his face and he smiled, tilting his head into it. Tonight, couldn’t come fast enough.

“So, do you remember the last line?”

Magnus’ voice had gone quiet and deep inside his head. Alec felt his body tensing. So much for feeling peace right now.

“Yeah, something about salvation and peace. But isn’t that about the peace we were just talking about?”

It was a few minutes before Magnus answered and then he felt a thumb brushing against his cheek. He reached up, touching his own face but feeling the connection.

“Alexander, I’m not sure about this but what I think this means is that, if we declare our love for each other, then, I will have to leave you.”

A deep sigh punctuated the end of his words.

Alec stilled and felt his stomach flipping over again. His mind raced over the last line in the spell that he had read on the piece of paper.

His salvation will be your release.

No. No, no, no, it can’t mean that. That would just be too cruel. Alec’s heart began to pound harder and his breath got shallow.

“Magnus why would Catarina make it so that the minute you finally find love, you have to give it all up? That doesn’t make sense.”

His eyes were starting to burn with hot tears again.

“I think maybe she did it because she didn’t get to have the love of her life so she wanted to punish me somehow. Like dangling a carrot in front of a horse to make it move. Just put it far enough out in front of it so that it can see it, smell it, even able to have a small bite of it but not close enough to have properly.”

Alec shook his head vigorously.

“No, no, I refuse to believe that, Magnus. Catarina doesn’t seem the type to play such a cruel game with someone.”

“My love, you’ve known her, what? Less than a week? I have known her for over a hundred years. Who do you think would be the best judge of character, hmm?”

Alec didn’t want to believe him but what he said did make sense. How could he know the real
Catarina? He still didn’t want to believe that was what that last line meant, though.

“Maybe I could go to her and ask her for help? I know she’s sick but maybe she could at least point us in the right direction for help.”

“No, my heart, I’ve already tried that. Catarina and I have a connection as well. Nothing as intense as yours and mine but a connection none the less. I thought she would have a solution to this but it seems she does not. She barely knew what she was doing the first time around, and I don’t think she was willing to risk anything else. Any sort of spell like this has a price. Her losing her eyesight, getting somehow bound to me and then my eventual release and subsequent disappearance is the price paid for her little dabble in an area she knew nothing about. It’s like any type of power; it doesn’t matter how much you think you are entitled to it to begin with, you have to learn to respect it, know it’s rules, its boundaries before you use it. She didn’t and this is the result. As I said before, it could have been worse.”

“Worse? Worse? This isn’t worse to you? I’ve waited my whole life for an opportunity to feel about someone the way I feel about you. It’s something I thought I would never have and now because someone coloured outside the lines, there’s a chance that I could lose that? I can’t believe that life is that cruel.”

“Alexander, what the definition of cruel is, is being bound to a place for an indefinite length of time, never feeling completely whole even when you are supposedly whole, and then after waiting over a century for the right person to come along, find that he’s the most wonderful human being you’ve ever met before and that you would give him the very moon and the stars if you could but all the time knowing that you will just completely wink out and go God only knows where and be separated from him for ever. That, my heart, is the definition of cruel.”

Jesus, when he put it like that, he was right. Alec sat back on the couch. The weight of the knowledge felt like it was a millstone around his neck. He just still couldn’t take in that it had to end like this. He knew that Magnus knew her better than he did, but he still didn’t believe that what Catarina had done was some kind of act of revenge. She just didn’t seem the type to do that. He didn’t care how well he knew her.

The thing was though, he could feel how much Magnus believed it, and it filled him with dread. Maybe it was a case of him simply not wanting it to be that way. But he also knew that not wanting something to be a certain way didn’t stop it from what it was. A pet bird could be taught how to talk and even have a conversation with you, but it didn’t make it a human being. It was still a bird.

The dreaded feeling of a deep sorrow that he knew was coming for them wanted to take over his entire being and in any other circumstance he would be all too willing to give into it and let him plunge head first into a dark place full of angst and pain but somehow in the dark raging torrent, there was a small bright light calling to him. Don’t give up, don’t give in. It was something that he rarely allowed himself to have. Hope. Hope that there would be another way, a way for them to be together as they wanted.

And he was going to cling to that with all his might. Even though in all likely hood it was a fool’s errand, setting him up for an almighty fall. But in the end, if that happened because of losing Magnus forever, he would gladly give into it.

Until then, though, he was determined to make the most of their time together. He took in a deep breath and straightened his back.

“Magnus, I don’t know how long we will have together. Nothing is guaranteed in this world and that’s true for everyone, not just us. Yes, the odds are stacked against us, but I am determined to
make the most of every second I can get with you, babe. Knowing how you feel about me, even if you don’t or can’t say it, makes me feel stronger than I’ve ever felt before and it will get me through this.

Babe, I’d rather have a few minutes of wonderful than the thought of the rest of my life with nothing at all, no memories of our time together, not being able to remember how your skin feels under my hands, what you smell like, how you taste, every damn inch of you and I intend to get as much of that as I can for as long as I can. Can you come with me on this? Can you be here with me for as long as we can get?”

He could feel Magnus’ emotions warring within him. He too was bordering on letting the darkness take over but very slowly, the urge to fight to the surface of those feelings was winning out.

“Oh Alexander, my beautiful boy. I curse and rejoice the day I first laid eyes on you. I thought the day they hauled poor Elias off from here was painful but that was no more than a stubbed toe compared to the thought of not being with you ever again. All this has happened so hard and so fast, I feel like I’ve been raised up to a great height and the just dropped back down to the earth but I’ve landed in two strong arms, yours, my darling.

I will join you on this journey together. Even though it may lead me to a place I don’t want to be, as long as I take each step with you, I don’t care. If all we have is the journey then so be it. We will enjoy every single bit of that time together. But I just want you to know, my love, that even if it ends with what I fear to be true, I will always be with you, living in your heart and you in mine. Forever.”

Alec wanted to scream in frustration right now. He had never wanted to feel him in his arms more than he did at that moment. He felt unseen arms encircle him and he closed his eyes, his head going back. God, he loved this man, so much and it was killing him not to say it. The words threatened to bust out of him yet again and he bit his tongue hard enough to taste blood.

“I know, my love, I know. I feel the same way.”

Magnus voice came to him in his head, like a seductive whisper.

“Until tonight, my love. I can’t wait to be with you.”

Suddenly, Alec remembered what the next day was.

“Magnus! The eclipse, it’s tomorrow! I almost forgot. You can come to me in day light, well, sort of. And I know exactly where I want it to happen.”

“Let me guess? In our bed, under the sheets?”

“No, the rose garden, outside. Magnus, I’ve fixed it up. It looks beautiful, or it will be when the flowers bloom in it. I want it to be there. It’s where we first met.”

He felt a cool shivery kiss against his lips and smiled.

“Alright m love, the rose garden it will be. But don’t get too disappointed if it doesn’t happen, I don’t put much stock into my ex-wife’s hair brained schemes. Past history notwithstanding.”

Alec gave a chuckle.

“I have a feeling she is right about this, though. And I also have a feeling that she might be wrong about the other as well.”
“I like this new optimistic side to you, Alexander, it suits you. But if will maintain a healthy dose of being realistic, all the same. Come, let’s go upstairs. I want to lay beside you till I can be with you properly.”

Alec grinned and rose from the couch, turned off the lights and head for the stairs. Twelve fifteen couldn’t come fast enough.

Clary was curled up on her sofa, a soft fluffy blanket covering her jeaned legs and rainbow coloured socked feet. Her big orange cat, Marmalade, was curled up in front of her, purring loudly and she was absentely stroking his soft head as she watched the movie on TV.

Dirty Dancing was one of her favourites and she was just about to get to her favourite scene where Baby gets taken from the corner by Johnnie and they go up on stage. She sniffed quietly into a scrunched-up tissue and waited with baited breath for the iconic line that never failed to send shivers running down her spine.

“Nobody puts Baby in a corner.”

“Oh, oh, God, so sweet. Argh! Marmalade, why can’t real life be like that?” She croaked as she dabbed at her eyes with the tissue.

Marmalade made no sign of caring one little bit about his owner’s plea and slept on, his purr vibrating through Clary’s fingers.

Baby and Johnnie had just begun their dance routine when there was a knock at the door.

Clary frowned and looked at the cat shaped clock on the wall. Nine thirty. Who the hell called on people at this time of night? The she had a thought. Shit! Catarina! Oh God, maybe it was Gertie. She carefully lifted the sleeping Marmalade to the end of the sofa, the cat waking long enough to give her the stink eye for being disturbed and she headed for the door.

She kept an old baseball bat of her brothers near her door, more for peace of mind than anything, and she gripped its worn handle, just to be on the safe side before opening the door.

Simon stood on the other side of the screen door, looking hopeful. He gave her one of his big toothy smiles that never failed to fill her with happiness.

“Hey, Clary. Sorry for calling in this late but I really wanted to talk to you and it wouldn’t wait till tomorrow.”

Clary unlatched the door and pushed it open and he stepped inside. He looked down at the bat in her hand and gave her an enquiring look.

“Playing a night game, were we?” He joked, his grin going lopsided in a way that made Clary want to scream.

The guy was adorable and she had to remind herself constantly that they were never going to be any more than just friends.

“Ha, ha, yeah. Come, take a seat.”

She put the bat back near the door and followed him over to the sofa. Simon carefully took a seat beside the sleeping pile of orange fur who raised his head to glare at him for disturbing him yet again. Simon gave the cat a few soft pats and he settled back down but added a few impatient flicks of the end of his tail.

Clary grabbed the remote and turned off the movie, right when Baby was about to leap into
Johnnie’s arms.

“I forgot that was on tonight. I should have been watching it.”

“Simon, just spit it out, I know you have something on your mind, so out with it.” Clary said, sitting sideways on the other end of the sofa, one leg bent and resting on the seat before her.

Simon took a deep breath. He felt like what he was about to say was betraying a trust that he had been given for safe keeping but he felt he had to tell someone especially in light of what he really wanted to say to Clary. So, here goes nothing, he thought.

He began to tell Clary about his little trip back from the city the other night and his unscheduled stop at Alec’s house. Clary sat before him, her large eyes not even blinking as he told her what he had come across when he got there. He half expected to see a box of popcorn suddenly appear in her hands, eyes glued his while she popped the snack into her mouth, fully engrossed in it all. The girl was way too into this.

He ended the story at where he had driven off down the road; there was no way he was going to tell her about the little pity party he had thrown himself when he gotten back home.

“But that’s great, isn’t it? That he has someone. I mean the poor guy looked like a lost soul when he first came here. I wonder who he is though and the weird thing is, Catarina seemed to know about him too. Do you think they could be related or something?”

Simon then told her about his very short, sharp conversation he’d had with Alec the next day. He didn’t bother telling her about the smashed cup or glass from earlier that day. He then told her who Alec had said he was, waiting for her reaction.

He had expected shock, at the very least or shivers of fright or even pity for Alec that he had felt the need to take advantage of his house’s sad past and use it as a way to cover up what he was doing but instead it was him that had the shock.

Clary was bouncing up and down on her bottom ion the sofa like an excited little girl.

“Oh my God, that is so cool! I wonder what it’s like to have a ghost for a boyfriend? Wow! Talk about the ultimate long-distance relationship.”

She gave a squeal of delight and an excited shiver.

Simon looked at her like she had just recited the alphabet in Russian. Was she serious?

“You don’t honestly believe that story, do you?” He asked, astounded.

“Why wouldn’t I believe it? Come on, you’ve lived here long enough now that you know all about that house and its history. Magnus has been waiting for years to find his true love and now he has. Aww, it’s so romantic.”

Clary smiled and looked wistfully into the distance.

“Clary, I hate to break it to you, sweetie, but there is no such thing as ghosts.” Simon said, looking at her like a knowing parent.

“Of course, there are. This place is full of ‘em. Mr Johnson from the real Estate office swears he saw the ghost of old Mrs Macgilllacutty when he was showing the place to someone a few years ago. And then Mrs Pierson is always saying she can hear her Dad’s footsteps in their old house
each night.”

Simon gave her a sour look.

“Mrs Pierson also said that she thought that velvet Elvis picture she has in her living room spoke to her as well. Please tell me you don’t believe that.”

“Well, she may have been exaggerating there, but who knows? She is a big fan, maybe the King did say something to her.”

Simon shook his head. Maybe this hadn’t been the best idea after all. He had wanted a sympathetic ear, not a full-on introduction to the Ghost Appreciation Society.
He decided that he had gone this far, he might as well keep going.

“So, could you tell me what you heard Catarina tell Alec?” He said quietly, as if he didn’t want to be over heard.

“Not much really. But there was something about the eclipse tomorrow. As I said, she made sure I was out of the room before she said too much.”

“So, what are you doing tomorrow?” Clary looked at him and frowned.

“Why? What are you thinking about doing?”

Normally, she would have jumped at the chance to spend time with Simon. Even if she couldn’t be with him the way she really wanted to, she valued their friendship. But there was something about the way Simon was acting that had her feeling wary.

“Well, I was just thinking that there is only one way to find out who’s right about the whole mystery boyfriend thing. It sounds like to me that Catarina thinks that the Eclipse means something special for the two of them. So, if this is the real Magnus and he can only come to Alec at night then maybe that’s what Cat told him about the eclipse for. That he could use that time to appear in the day.

So, I was thinking that maybe we could check it out. Go up there tomorrow and see what happens. Personally, I think the only way this guy is going to appear is in some flashy sports car with the top down and his hair blowing back but we’ll see.”

Clary looked at him in surprise.

“Okay, so who are you and what have you done with the really Simon Lewis? Come on, you honestly aren’t thinking of doing that are you? Why in the name of Christmas, would you want to…”

Clary paused as the penny dropped for her. Now she got it.

“This is all because you have a thing for him, isn’t it? You like the guy and he’s told you he’s taken and you don’t want to take no for an answer.” She said, nodding sagely.

Simon felt his face heat and he looked down at his hands. Clary’s theories on things might be a bit out there but she had his number true enough. There was no use denying it now, she’d just keep at him till he caved anyway.

“Something like that, yeah, but its more the fact that he lied to me about being with someone else. It just gets to me, you know.”

“Simon, I think he had good reason to, look at the way you reacted when I said I believed him. Let me guess, now he’s not talking to you, is he?”

“No, he isn’t.”

“Yeah not surprising and now you want to go and spy on the two of them again? Are you crazy? Can’t you just make a trip to the city and find a guy of your own?”
“She had a point. But Simon was determined now to prove her wrong and catch Alec out in his crazy story.

“They won’t see me, I’ll be where they won’t be looking and anyway, if the other night was any indication, they’ll be too busy with each other to notice much else. Come on, Clary, aren’t you in the least bit curious about this guy? Why he wants to hide him from us? I bet you any money you like he’s married or in another relationship.” Simon raised an eyebrow and nodded slowly.

Clary looked at him and sighed. All this time he had lived here and he still refused to see the truth about the old Bane place.

“Alright. I’ll come with you but only because I don’t want you going and doing anything stupid. Besides, your gonna need someone to bring you back around when you faint from seeing your first ghost.” She laughed.

Alec lay in bed facing the window. A soft smile curved his lips as he outstretched his hand before him. A whispery cool touch brushed the back of it. The mattress dented in a grove from the pillows down to the foot. They still had an hour to go before they could finally be together.

He supposed that he should have been mad at Magnus for the way he acted the day before but things seemed different now. They seemed to of passed another milestone in their relationship and the way he felt about him had changed, greatly.

“I know what you’re thinking about, my love. And your right you should have been angry with me. Our time apart was hard on me as well.”

“I don’t care about that anymore, babe. All I care about is that you are here with me in whatever form it takes for that to happen. I prefer the form that lets me touch you, but hey, I’ll take whatever I can get.”

He smiled at the empty space and heard Magnus’ deep laugh in his mind.

“I know what you mean, Alexander. As much as I love that I can at least make contact with you this way, it doesn’t compare to the real thing.”

Alec felt a cool kiss on the back of his hand.

“How does it feel, to you I mean? Describe it.” Magnus was silent for a few minutes, thinking about his answer.

“It’s not so much like a real touch for me, it’s more like a sensation. A sense of it. It’s strange, really. It’s like I know I’m touching your hand, and I can even see that I am, my mind is registering it but I can’t actually feel it. I only know that I’m doing it. It’s like when your hand or foot goes to sleep on you and it feels numb. You can see that it’s still there, and you can put your hand on it but you can’t really feel it. Am I making sense?”

“Yeah, I get it. Wow, that must be weird to have that all the time. Must have been even weirder the other morning when you had your hand on me.” He grinned, lowering his eyes, even though there was only empty space in front of him.

He felt that cool brush of fingers under his chin.

“You don’t have to be shy with me, my love, we have no secrets from each other now. I’ve known
you in the biblical sense now, Alexander, although what the bible has to do with it I couldn’t tell you. I also don’t think it was meant for our kind of relationship either but who cares? I’ve had you in my hand, in my body, in my mouth. There’s no place for shyness now.”

Alec could feel his cheeks heating anyway. Magnus was so open with this sort of thing. He would of thought coming from an era that treated loving someone of the same sex as a disease, he would have been more discreet with his thinking and the way he phrased things.

He could sense Magnus’ amusement even before he heard the small giggles in his head and felt the soft touches down the side of his face.

“Oh Alexander, you are adorable. Even after sharing each other’s bodies the way we have you’re still shy about such things. I would of thought someone from this modern time would have no problem with it. What is it that bothers you about it? Personally, I always found someone describing the way they felt as I explored their body highly erotic. Hmm, I have an idea for when we get our time together. I’m desperate to be inside you but I’m willing to wait for that. I’m going to touch every inch of that glorious body of yours and I want you to describe how it feels to me.”

Alec shifted in the bed a little. Was he serious? He only had to focus on the way he was feeling for a minute to know he was.

“Come on, babe. You really want to waste time doing that when we could be, you know…”

“Fucking? Yes, I do and I don’t consider it a waste of time and neither will you by the time I’m finished with you.”

“You are so bad. And give me one good reason why I shouldn’t get mad at you for saying that word? You do it to me when I say it.”

Unseen hands ruffled his hair and he smiled.

“Because my heart, I used it in the right connotation. If you’re going to say a word at least know the proper meaning of it.”

Alec really wanted to burst out laughing at the school teacher tone that he had replied with but he could tell he was extremely serious and probably risked a punishment for doing it. And as much as the thought of getting spanked hard on the backside appealed to him on some carnal level, he didn’t want to run the risk of him withholding certain, privileges, from him.

Sex with Magnus was fast becoming his drug of choice and he was quite happy to keep upping his dosage. He couldn’t help the blush that tinged his skin yet again when he realised that Magnus would have been aware of each and everything he had just ran through his head. Why did he have to get a boyfriend that could hear his thoughts? He wondered if it was possible for Magnus to hear them when he wasn’t with him at all.

“I don’t know why you bother not enunciating what runs through that beautiful mind of yours, Alexander? You know it makes no never mind to me. I can hear it anyway. At least when you put voice to them, I get to hear that deep sexy timbre you have to it. You are right, by the way, being impertinent would of incurred a penalty of some description. I must say, I like your way of thinking with the whole spanking thing. Maybe we can try that one night.

Oh, and I love that you are fast becoming addicted to me, my love, I’m glad to have you under my spell, so to speak. And to answer your last question, I’m afraid it’s no, I can’t read your thoughts when I’m not near you is whatever form I take. I can still feel your emotions, however. The last
twenty-four hours nearly did me in all over again. I hated knowing that I caused that in you. But I will make up for it.”

Talking to Magnus sometimes, was like talking to someone who only used English every other word. He was slowly getting used to it but it amused him that he used use old diction sometimes. It made him unique. Like he wasn’t that anyway.

They managed to while away the rest of the time with casual conversation and playful digs at each other. Alec loved this, this is what he wished for more than anything if there was a way for Magnus to become corporeal always.

He looked at his phone and sat up in the bed. It was almost time. He had been waiting for this all day. Well, since the day before, really.

“Almost there, my love. Keep watching.” Magnus’ voice sounded in his mind.
Chapter 37

Alec kept his eyes trained on the empty space beside him on the bed. He looked down at his phone and watched the numbers change to twelve fifteen. This was it.

The air changed, suddenly, it had taken on a charged feel and Alec’s heart began to beat faster in anticipation. Slowly, a shadow began to form on the bed beside him. As he watched, fascinated, the shadow became denser, and more detailed. He could make out Magnus’ distinct outline and could tell how he was lying on the bed. It was like watching a picture come into focus on a screen; small details grew sharper, face, clothing, definition of his limbs, before, at last, he was there, lying beside him as if he had been there all night.

Alec smiled broadly and dived on him, crashing his mouth to his and felt two arms encircle his back. So much for not touching, he thought. They kissed each other hungrily and let their tongues dance together. Alec was tugging at his shirt, pulling at its sides in an effort to get it off without breaking contact but it wasn’t working.

Magnus gave a muffled laugh and pulled back slowly. He smiled up into Alec’s face, the desire and need he was feeling reflected in his big hazel eyes.

“I missed you too, Alexander.” He purred against his lips. “But I haven’t forgotten what I suggested earlier. I want you on your back, right now.”

Alec gave a frustrated whine and went to go for his mouth once more but Magnus held him back.

“No, no, behave. I want you to do this. You’ll enjoy it, I promise.”

He forced Alec back and rising from the bed, gently pushed him back down to the mattress.

He pulled off his shirt and Alec smiled broadly.

“If this is what I get to look at while you torture me, this might not be half bad.” Magnus gave a chuckle.

“Ha, I’m sorry to disappoint you, my love, but you won’t be seeing anything. I need you blindfolded.”

Alec’s face fell and Magnus laughed, affording him a small brush of his lips to his.

“Can I trust you to put your hands up above your head and not to move them, Alexander?” He asked him, one brow raised.

“I’ll try. I’m not promising that I will leave them there.” He smirked.

“You are such a naughty boy sometimes. Where’s that rope we had the other night?”

Alec nodded towards the bedside table and Magnus leaned across him and took it out. Alec took the opportunity to give the side of his chest a playful nip.

“We will definitely be needing this. Honestly, Alexander, can’t you play by the rules for one minute? And we haven’t even started. Put your hands up above your head.”

Magnus gave him a reproachful look but Alec’s cheeky grin had him trying not to smile. He took the rope and tied a comfortable binding around his wrists, attaching the ends of the rope to the bars
at the head of the bed.

“Now I know why you like this bed so much.” Alec said, tilting his head right back to try to see what he was doing.

“Actually, I had never thought about doing this when I had it originally but I must say, it has come in handy. Who knows, maybe on some deep level I must have known I would be tying the love of my life up to the head of it.”

Alec looked back to his face and his face practically glowed with what he had just heard.

“Am I really?” He said softly.

Magnus grinned back at him, his eyes picking up what little light was coming in from the night sky. He bent and kissed him tenderly, Alec arching up wanting to be as close to him as he could get.

“Yes, you are. Now be quiet and let me put my shirt over your eyes.” Magnus said, taking his face in his hands.

He reached down and got the soft white cotton garment and rolled it up and then draping it over his eyes, using the sleeves to tie it behind his head.

“Hmm, it smells like you. I love it.” He crooned and he missed Magnus’ soft look.

Alec felt the bed dip and then come back up. He frowned behind the shirt. Had he just gotten off the bed? Shit, he hoped he wasn’t just going to leave him there like this. He should have known better.

“Fear not, my heart. I haven’t gone too far.”

He heard a soft noise and tried to guess what it was. It was definitely something he had heard before. Then he knew. Magnus must of taken off his boots and breeches. Ooo, this was going to be really interesting.

He felt the bed give again beside him then he felt hands relieving him of his boxes, his jeans in a heap on the floor from earlier. Now he was starting to feel a little more vulnerable.

Magnus’ weight dipped the mattress beside him further down the bed near his legs.

“Now, where shall we begin this? I think I’ll start at the bottom and work my way up, what do you think, my heart?”

Alec started to give his opinion on it but Magnus cut him off.

“I’m afraid that was a rhetorical question, Alexander, you are hardly in a position to say, are you? Oh, this is going to be so good. I feel like a child at Christmas with my shiny new toy.”

Alec could feel his excitement and grinned.

“Well, not really new, not brand ne..” He started.

“Hush, now. You’ll get a chance to speak in a minute. Right let’s begin. Now I want you to tell me what it feels like when I touch you. Exactly what it feels like. I need details, is that clear?” Alec smiled.
Bossy Magnus was back. He loved it.

“Yes, sir.” He said. He felt Magnus’ happiness levels spike.

Good, he liked that. So, did he. This wasn’t going to be so hard after all.

He felt Magnus take his foot in his hands. Wow, when he said he was starting from the bottom, he really meant it, he thought. He smiled as he felt his fingers working across the bridge and under the arch. Magnus could give really good foot massages, he’d have to file that little bit of information away for another time. He heard him clear his throat.

“I’m waiting Alexander.” He said in his best authoritative tone.

Alec tried to focus on the task at hand instead of how damn hot his man was when he was being bossy like this. He heard Magnus give a huff of breath.

“Alexander, will you please concentrate? I don’t care if you think my voice is sexy like this, just stick to the task at hand, please.”

Alec held back any further thoughts and focused on what he was doing to his foot.

“It feels nice, relaxing. You give a good massage, babe.” He told him.

“That was barely passable as a description, Alexander but I’ll let that one pass seeing as you’re new to this. And I’ll thank you to use the appropriate term of respect for this, young man.”

“Huh?” Now he was confused again. He yelped when he felt a sharp pinch on the top of his foot.

“I want you to call me sir, are we clear?”

“Oh, okay, sorry.” Well why didn’t he just say so.

“Oww! Geez, okay, sir, sorry sir.” He corrected himself. Maybe he had jumped the gun a bit on his thinking about this.

“Now relax. Concentrate.”

“Yeah, well that’s gonna be hard if you keep pinching me.”

“Sssh, enough.”

Now he felt Magnus cradle his foot in one hand while his other finger trailed over its surface, tracing the tendons that stuck out. Not bad, not bad. Not as good as the massage but still nice. Then the finger went underneath and ran up and down his sole. He jerked it back, giggling.

“Ha, ha, that tickles.” He laughed.

And as soon as he said it the sensation changed and he felt wet slippery heat cover his big toe. Holy shit, did he have his toe in his mouth? The sudden change in sensation to him a minute to deal with but as he felt his tongue swirl around him, he relaxed into it.

“Damn, that feels good. Wet, hot, sexy.” He said softly, pulling gently at his bindings.

His crotch thought so too and gave a twitch. Magnus pulled of him with wet noise. God damn! That sounded good too.
He shifted his position, moving so he was now sitting between Alec’s knees. He trailed his fingers up his legs, starting from his ankles, with a light touch. Alec jerked a little.

“That feels weird, almost like a tickle but not quite.” He told him.

“You don’t like it?” Magnus asked. Alec thought about it a little.

“Yeah, kind of. I’m not sure.”

He wondered how far up he was going to get. Alec got his answer straight away. He felt the feather soft touch of his fingers on his upper thighs, swirling over the surface of his skin making it tingle. Now this he could get used to. The fingers dipped to his inner thighs and slowed right down before whispering up towards his groin. Now his crotch was really taking notice and started to thicken. He heard Magnus’ deep chuckle and he pulled on his rope. If he had his hands free, he would be grabbing him hard and pushing him down onto the bed and taking his right then and there.

“And that, my darling, is why your hands are tied. We’ll get to that later. I wonder how far I can go up before that weapon of yours is cocked and ready to fire, hmm?”

Oh shit. He was a dead man.

Alec felt his breath hitch and his body tensed as Magnus, using the barest of touches with the tip of his finger painstakingly moved to within an inch of his groin. The skin here felt twice as sensitive as the skin only just an inch or two down and he started to writhe before him.

“Where’s my description?” He said in a sing song voice.

Alec wanted to tell him to shove his description but he also wanted to please him so he fought for concentration.

“Hmm, good, so fucking good. God, I need you to touch me, take me in your hand. It’s so sensitive just there, please babe. I need you to touch me.” He said, his voice right on the edge of sounding whiney.

“All in good time, Alexander. But you know how I feel about that language and you seemed to of forgotten what you are meant to call me. So, I think that should incur a penalty. I was thinking about running a finger up a certain body part that seems to be waking up but, I don’t think I will.”

Argh! Alec growled and pulled at the rope arching up. Now he was glad his hands were tied, or he might have been tempted to strangle him with them. Grrrr! Not literally, but it was a tempting thought. He was such a damn tease. And the thing was, the more he did it the harder he got from it. It was crazy.

Magnus deliberately went nowhere near his ever-hardening length and started his assault just below his belly button. After spiralling a fingertip around his flat stomach ne eventually came to it and pushed his finger inside. Alec was fast getting to the point where he wasn’t even going to be able to describe his own face let alone anything else but he tried his best and luckily Magnus took pity in him. That was, however, until his wicked boyfriend decided to use his tongue instead of his finger.

At first when he stopped touching him altogether, he was both relieved and sorry at the same time. As maddening as it had been, he had still been enjoying it. But then he felt the warm wetness of his tongue plunge into the small puckered dent in this belly and sparks flew before his closed eyes.

“Your making me see fireworks, mag, I mean sir. It feels weird but good at the same time. God,
“I think you’re getting better at this, Alexander, by the time we get to the good bits, you’re going to be a virtual Wordsworth.”

“Was he into kinky shit too?” Alec frowned underneath his blindfold when he heard Magnus give a snort of laughter. Now what was so funny?

“Oh Alexander, you are treasure. I have no idea, my love, but who knows? I think that deserves a reward.” He said.

Alec felt his skin tingle in anticipation.

The next minute, he felt Magnus’ warm lips kissing their way up the centre of his chest and then drifting across to his left. Oh Shit, he was heading for his nipple. He could feel his breathing getting ragged even before he got to it.

The tip of a wet tongue swirled around the deep coloured circle making Alec hiss in a breath and push his chest up, giving himself to him. A broad swipe of tongue across the hard tiny bud had him seeing stars and he jerked against his bindings. He felt is cock swell and he thrusted up needing that delicious resistance but not getting it. Yet.

“What’s the matter, Alexander? Wanting something more, my love? All in good time. I haven’t quite finished with you yet. Where’s my description?”

Alec was fat getting to the point of not being able to describe his own face, let alone anything else and it was making him frustrated beyond belief.

“It feels fucking good, alright? Just keep going.” She growled through gritted teeth.

“Language, Alexander, my, my, we are getting testy, aren’t we? Do you have any idea how hot you are when you get like this?”

Somewhere in the back of his foggy mind, Alec was worried that his little outburst would get him another form of punishment but Magnus must have been feeling generous because the next thing he knew, he was back on his nipple, sucking its hardness into his mouth. He moaned and strained on the rope again, wishing with all his might that he could put his hands around that broad back and pull him tightly against him.

By the time Magnus had favoured the other side with equal attention and then gone up to nibble his way up to his ear, sucking the fleshy lobe between his lips and flicking it with the tip of his tongue, Alec had just about gone out of his mind. He was constantly groaning and writhing, unable to stay still any longer.

It must have started to effect Magnus as well, because there were no more calls for the way things felt to him now. He was fairly sure from the what he was sensing from his boyfriend that he was fast feeling exactly the same as him. Hot and more turned on than he had ever felt before.

He cried out when he felt him straddle his waist, longing for the feeling of that smooth body against him. He took his mouth, filling it with his tongue straight away. There was no pretence of taking his time now. He felt him thrust against his lower belly and felt his hardness digging into him. He gave an answering push back and pulled on the ropes.

“Magnus, let my hands down so I can feel you, I need to feel you in my arms.” He said in a hoarse half whisper.
He felt a moment’s hesitation and he wanted to scream but then slender fingers worked the knot and his gave a sigh of relief as his hands came free. He wrapped his arms around his body pressing him to him as he took his mouth with wide wet kisses. As much as he wanted to feel his weight pinning him down he wanted to take him more.

He rolled with Magnus still trapped in his arms and his mouth working against his. He heard his man moan and his legs widened so that their iron hard lengths crashed together, bringing groans of pleasure out of both of them. There was only one thing that he wanted now, and that was to bury himself deep inside him.

He reached under the pillow near Magnus’ head and found the small tube. With all the strength he had, he broke their contact so he could fill his palm with the cool slippery gel.

“Yes, my heart, God I need to feel you inside me like I’ve never wanted anything else before. Just you nothing else. Please, this once. I’m begging you.”

Magnus’ whole face was a mask of pure need and his voice was deep and pleading. How could he deny him when he looked like that?

Alec reached down between them, applying the gel between his cleft and then coating his throbbing cock with it. This was it, the moment he had been craving forever.

He positioned the crown to his entrance and with a sigh started pushing forward. There was no resistance, Magnus’ body was more than ready for him and he moaned as he slowly glided into him, feeling him gripping around his erection as if his muscles where trying to drag him in further.

Magnus started making soft noises in the back of his throat and he spread his legs wider, bringing up his knees. Alec felt himself go forward yet another inch and bump against something deep with him.

“Fuck Babe, this feels so good, you feel incredible.”

He dove to his neck, taking in great mouthfuls of warm damp skin, loving that slightly salty taste. He started to moved and Magnus tighten his grip on his back, reaching down to sink his fingers into the cheeks of his butt.

Alec started to moan and couldn’t stop as he felt the intense push and pull of his body working around him, like it was trying to milk him of the climax that he could feel coiling inside him like a spring straining for release.

He thrust forward harder, the head of his impossibly hard cock bumping against something that made him catch his breath. Magnus cried out and gave an answering buck forward his fingers digging into him harder. He could feel himself drawing up ready to fire. Magnus’ body gripped him hard and he sucked in a hard breath and squeezed his eyes shut hard as he rammed into him.

He felt the world explode around him and his vision went white as he triggered the orgasm. He cried out over and over as he felt himself pumping hot jets of sticky heat into core as Magnus’ body pulsed around him, draining him of everything he had.

The skin of their joined bellies getting coated in Magnus’ own release so he felt warm inside and out.

“Fucking hell, I love you.” The words were out of him before he could top them and he felt Magnus tense.

“No!” He cried out and clung to Alec as if he expected to be yanked away from him at any minute.
Alec sensed his fear and tried to use his full weight to pin him down. He wasn’t going any fucking where. He wouldn’t allow it.

Second by second the time past and Magnus let himself slowly open his eyes. He ran his hands over Alec’s hot damp body making sure what he was feeling was real. Yes, it was all him, every glorious inch. He felt his muscles clench hard around his softening length that was still buried inside him. Alec gave a jerk and so did his cock. He pushed forward a little into his own warm wetness and sighed.

“Alexander, I’m still here. I thought I was going to lose you, baby. God, it’s a miracle.” He breathed kissing the slope of his shoulder.

“Does that mean I can say it again?” Alec said, drowsily kissing the side of his face.

Magnus smiled and felt tears of joy stinging his eyes.

“Yes, my love, tell me again.”

“I love you, Magnus. So much.”

Magnus didn’t have to say the words back for him to feel the love he felt for him in return radiating from him. It filled his soul and gave him the greatest feeling he had ever experienced in his life. So, this was how it felt. He had been so sure what he had felt for Jace was love but it was nothing like this. It was all consuming, filling every single inch of him. It was divine.

“I’m dying to be able to say those same words to you, my heart, but I fear what would happen if I did. But I know you can feel what I do for you, my love.” Magnus held him hard, rubbing his face against his, loving the scratchiness of his roughened cheek.

“Jesus, babe. We have to find a way to be together for good. I’m not going to be able to live without you anymore.”

“I know, Alexander, I want the same thing. But this is all we have and we need to be grateful that we get this. God, how have I survived this long without you in my existence? I worship the day you walked in that door, my heart. I’d wait a thousand centuries to feel like this for you if I had to.”

Alec leaned up and took his mouth, the kiss had changed it was so soft yet full of their love for each other as they pressed hard together filling themselves to overflowing with their feelings for each other.

They made love again, this time it was slowly and unhurried but no less intense and wonderful. Alec dozed, head over Magnus’ heart hearing it beat just for him and feeling the comforting warmth of his golden skin.

When he opened his eyes again, it was only minutes before the dawn and he was still laying against him. Magnus was awake, gently running his fingers through his hair, pushing it back from his face.

“I love you, babe.” He whispered, turning his head and kissing his chest.

“I feel the same, my Alexander. I can’t wait for our time together today, even if it is for the briefest of times.”

Alec looked at the light growing stronger and cursed it. His night had truly become his day, his time with the man he loved. It wasn’t enough, but he doubted that any amount of time would be.
Suddenly, the air around them felt different and Alec leaned up, knowing what it meant. He was leaving him.

“I don’t want you to go, babe. I love you.” He cried out as she could see Magnus slowly starting to fade out like a fog, destroyed by the sunlight.

“I know, my heart but I’ll be back. Until then, my love.”

Alec gave a cry as he felt his body drop to the still warm spot on the mattress. He gave an anguished cry and gripped the pillow jamming it to his face so he could get the final few last wisps of his earthy scent before it too faded away.

He tried to console himself with the thought of seeing his love again in a few hours but he also knew it wouldn’t be long enough.

He lay there, face rubbing up and down on the sheet feeling the warmth Magnus had left behind, looking out at the growing light filling the room. There had to be some way they could be together. There just had to be.

He was still there ten minutes later when he heard a knock at the door. He groaned, not wanting to leave the only place he felt strong contact with his man but after a second and then a third round of knocks he went to get up and then paused as he sat on the side of his bed. He was back he could feel it.

“Hey, babe. Miss me that much?” He said into the empty room as he pulled on his jeans and dragged a t shirt over his tousled head.

“I did, Alexander, but I think you’re going to need to feel my presence for your visitor.” Alec frowned.

“Why? Who is it? I bet it’s Simon trying to offer me another apology.” He said rolling his eyes and heading out the door.

“No, it’s not, my love. Answer your door. I think you will be surprised.”

Alec shook his head; cryptic as always, he thought and he felt the pressure of a hand to his back and smiled. He didn’t care who it was, as long as he had Magnus’ presence beside him.
He pulled open the door and froze. The smile died on his lips.

“Hey, Alec, ha, surprise.”

Jace stood before him on his front porch. Blond hair swept back from his face, broad shoulders and arms filling out a plain white t-shirt and thick set legs clothed in jeans. His face still had those rugged good looks but looked a little fuller than he remembered.

Alec fought broke out of his shocked silence. Holy shit, of all people. And of all days. He a possessive hand on his lower back; Magnus was staking his claim. It’s alright babe, he thought, you don’t have to worry.

“Jace, Christ, man, what are you doing here? How did you find me?”

He was still standing in the door way, his shock still not allowing his legs to work apparently.

“I came to see you, stupid, what else would I be doing here. I haven’t gone into door to door sales. So, can your old pal come in or are you not talking to me anymore?”

Alec blinked a couple of times and shook his head. What was he thinking? Obviously, he wasn’t.

“Shit, yes, come in. Sorry.”

He stepped aside at let Jace walk in. He supposed he should have been pissed at him for the lack of contact in the past year but somehow, he could make himself feel that way.

“Don’t let him try to give you excuses for his behaviour, Alexander. He doesn’t deserve it.”

Magnus’ voice filled his mind as he shut the door.

I know babe, it’s okay, he thought and his eyes went to the spot beside him that he knew Magnus was.

“Wow, looks like you’ve got your work cut out for you with this old place. But I bet it will look good when it’s finished.” Jace said, looking at the half-finished walls and the still covered furniture.

“Your damn right it will look good. My Alexander will make our home perfect.”

Alec hid a smirk behind his hand as he heard Magnus’ voice. He felt a hand rest on his left butt cheek and give it a squeeze. Yes, Magnus, I’m yours. I’m in love with you, remember? He smirked as he felt an answering pat on his butt.

“I was just getting up; do you want a coffee?” Alec asked.

“Yeah, sure. Alec, can we talk? About, what happened?”

He looked at him with a worried expression, and seemed to be worried about what he’d say. Alec had often hoped that this opportunity would come. They had been friends for far too long to let something like this get in the way.

“Yeah, sure. But I need coffee first. And I need you to tell me what you’ve been doing.”
Jace followed Alec out to the kitchen and took a seat at the table while he made the coffee. Alec could feel Magnus’ constant contact with him as if he needed to remind him of who he belonged to. Like he could forget that. Every chance he got, he felt the cool shivery kisses on his neck or face. He loved it. Magnus’ over the top possessiveness made him feel very loved and protected.

He took the cups over to the table and sat down in the opposite chair.

“You look really good man. I don’t mean anything by that, it’s just an observation.” Jace clarified.

“Good the weasel’s uncomfortable.” Magnus’ voice sounded like a contrite child. Alec tried not to react.

“It’s okay, Jace. I get it. Look, I just want to say I’m sorry for what I did. I was so wrecked after the funeral and I’ve never been a drinker, you know that. It made me act crazy.”

“You shouldn’t have to apologise for that, my heart. It was the weasel’s fault.”

It’s okay, babe. I’ve got this. Stop calling him a weasel, Alec thought.

“But he is. I don’t like him. He hurt the man I love.”

Alec tried hard to cover his smile with his cup.

“Nah, it was me that acted badly. I should have been more understanding. Why didn’t you tell me sooner that you were gay? I wouldn’t have cared, Alec. Hell, Ide of even gone out and been your wing man at a gay bar or something.”

“Huh, like hell you would of.” Magnus huffed.

Babe, enough, Alec told him.

Having a three-way conversation with your ex crush and your current boyfriend who just happened to be a ghost as an interesting challenge, that’s for sure. Especially when said boyfriend was as possessive as hell.

“I’ll give you handful, Alexander.”

The next thing he knew there was a strong sensation of a hand clamped right over his crotch, gently massaging him. The small moan escaped him before he could stop it and he jerked, almost
spilling the remains of his coffee. Jace gave him a funny look.

“Are you okay, Alec? Your face just went real red.”

Great. That’s all he needed. Half hard and blushing about it, in front of his ex-crush. Not weird at all.

“Yeah, sorry, took too big a mouthful of coffee and burnt my tongue. Look, let’s just put what happened behind us. If you’re okay with everything now then that’s fine. I know it’s kinda a big thing to get your head around. Shit, it took me forever, I still have a few hang ups with it. But it’s who I am or what I am.”

“I get it man, truly I do. And I’m sorry for being a jerk about it. It was just sorta a shock. I mean, you don’t take your best friend out for a drink and expect to get kissed, ya know? So, tell me, have you got a boyfriend or what?”

Jace grinned cheekily back at him. He looked like the old Jace he had known when they were teenagers, sitting in class together after one of those parties he used to drag him to, trying to get any information out of mine about possible conquests for the night. The answers had always been the same. Nah, didn’t happen. This time, it was different.

Alec felt what he presumed to be an elbow in his ribs. Yes, Magnus, I’ll tell him.

“Actually, I do have someone.”

“Well, come on, give me the details. I might be straight but I still want to know that my best friend is getting some.”

“Damn straight he is, weasel. Better sex than you’ll ever have. You have no idea what your missing out on. Isn’t that right, my heart?” Magnus voice filled his mind again and he could feel his cheeks heating again.

Absolutely no filter what so ever.

“What filter are you referring too, Alexander?”

Shh, babe, stop.

“His name’s Magnus. I met him when I moved here. It’s kind of complicated but we make it work.”

“Wow, you didn’t waste any time. I hope I’m gonna get to meet him. I want to make sure he’s good enough for my pal.”

Alec tensed waiting for the reprisal that he knew would come. He winced, waiting for something to come flying across the room or another phantom pinch to Jace’s person. But it didn’t happen. Wow, okay. Well done, Magnus.

“Ah, probably not. He, ah, works away from here a lot.” Yeah, that sounded plausible. The old long-distance relationship story.

“Well, that’s a shame. Have you got a picture at least?”

Alec swallowed. He had actually taken one picture of the two of them together. It was the night he had set up the indoor garden. They had been laying on the floor together and Alec had been finding...
a song for them. Magnus was interested in the phone so he showed him how it took photos. He managed to get one before Magnus tried to wrestle him for it.

He took his phone out of his pocket and scrolled through till he found it. He was having second thoughts about it for the simple reason that it showed a fair bit of skin. But Jace grabbed it from him and looked before he had made up his mind. His eyes went wide and he gave him a sly looking grin. Yep, college all over again.

“Hey, he looks pretty hot. Good for you.”

Alec’s head came up and he stared at Jace; did he just say that? Next minute the phone hit the table hard as Jace jerked back, the remaining contents of his coffee spilling across the table and into his lap.

“Urgh! The man ‘s slimier than a bucket full of toads. The very nerve.” Magnus indignant voice filled his head.

What was he thinking? Of course, he was just biding his time.

“Magnus stop, please”

He hadn’t realised he had said the words out loud until Jace paused from dabbing at his stained crotch with a dish towel and looked at him.

“Sorry? Did you just call me Magnus?” He said, half amused. Alec swallowed hard. Think quick, sunshine.

“Ha, sorry. My mind was elsewhere. Do you want to borrow a pair of jeans?” Alec asked him, trying to ignore the unseen arms sliding around his waist.

“Nah, it’s okay. I have my bag in the car. So, you don’t happen to have a spare room in this place, do you? I mean, if it’s too weird I can find somewhere in town.” Jace looked at him enquiringly.

Alec heard a loud huff of breath in his head. This was going to get tricky. On one hand, he wanted Jace to stay to catch up with everything but then how was he going to explain what was going to happen when the eclipse started? He had no idea what accommodation was like in town so it seemed rude to say no you can’t stay. It looked like he had very little choice.

“Yes, you do have a choice, Alexander, you can tell the weasel to get back in his car and go back to that rock he crawled out from under.” Magnus’ voice grumped in his head.

“Sorry babe, I have to let him stay. He came all the way out here to apologise, after all.” He thought, hoping he would get it.

Another huff of breath was followed by a curt “Very well, if he must.”

Alec gave a smile. Good, one less issue to deal with, he thought. He gave a start as he felt a sharp pinch to his butt cheek.

“I’m an issue now, am I?” Oh great, when was he going to remember to watch what he thought?

“That’s not what I meant and you know it.”

Jace’s face came up to give him a strange look. Alec tilled. Oh shit, had he said that out loud?
“Sorry?” Jace said, now looking confused

. Time for some quick thinking once again. He was fast becoming an expert at instant cover ups.

“I meant to say, of course you can stay here, and you know it. I have a spare room but I use it for my writing, well, I will as soon as I finish this painting. But if it’s alright with you, you’re welcome to the couch.” Alec told him.

“Thanks, yeah, that’s fine. I can sleep anywhere, you should know that. I’ll go get my bag.”

He turned and headed for the front door. When he had gone out, Alec stood with his hands on his hips looking at a spot near him. He could feel Magnus’ unrest but he could also tell he was trying his best to keep a lid on it.

“Couldn’t you put the weasel in the attic? What happens tonight when I make you scream? I hope your hospitality involves given him a set of ear muffs.” He said, his voice sounding grumpy.

Alec smirked. He could just picture him standing there, arms folded, one booted foot tapping impatiently.

“I couldn’t do that. It’ll be fine babe, I promise. I think I should tell him the truth though. I mean, what’s going to happen when the eclipse starts?” Alec shot a nervous look towards the door and kept his voice down.

“Do you really think the weasel can take the fact that his friend now has a boyfriend and that the boyfriend is a ghost? I really think you’re giving him credit for more brain than he is capable of processing. I mean, the man looks like she would give himself brain damage when he sneezes.”

Alec tried not to smirk at his man’s works but it even he had to admit it was funny.

It’s okay Magnus. Jace is cool, I think he would be okay about it.

“Alexander, the man practically ran screaming from you when you kissed him, I hardly think that is in any way cool, as you put it. If you’re insisting on telling him, however, do it outside so he doesn’t set fire to the floor boards as she races for the door. They’re original, you know.”

Alec rolled his eyes and was about to try to reassure him again, but Jace came back in. He dumped his bag on the couch and looked at the half-painted walls.

“Hey, I could give you a hand with this if you like? I’m pretty handy with a paint brush.” He told Alec.

See, I told you it would be fine, Alec thought.

“The miracle will be if the weasel can actually put pain on the wall and not the furniture.” Magnus was refusing to give in to this.

“That would be great. I did have someone helping me but we sort of had a disagreement.”

“Yes, he thought he could move in on the man I love, and I disagreed. If that peeping tom comes back here it will be the last thing he ever gets to see.” Magnus’ voice was full of venom.

If he disliked Jace then he absolutely hated Simon.

“Geez, you have been busy. Finding friends, making enemies, finding a boyfriend. No wonder the painting has been finished.”
“Yeah, it’s kind of a long story. Look Jace, I have to tell you something about Magnus. We better sit down for this.” Alec told him.

Jace gave him a wary look and replaced his bag on the couch with his backside. Alec sat beside him.

“Good. At least if he passes out, he won’t do any damage to my floors.”

Magnus, stop, Alec thought. This was going to be hard enough without him saying snotty things in his head. The last time he tried to explain this to someone they thought he was lying.

Alec gave Jace a quick back story about the house and its former owner. He listened intently and didn’t interrupt once. Then he had to tell him about their first meeting in the garden. Still Jace listened in rapt silence occasionally nodding his head. So now the hard bit.

“Jace, Magnus and I have a relationship. He can only come to me as a man just after midnight and he is gone at dawn. But we have a connection. I can feel and hear his thoughts and he can do the same with me. I’m in love with him, Jace. I know this is all crazy and sometimes I can’t believe it myself but it’s all true.”

Alec looked at his friend as she sat across from him, a slight crease on his forehead.

“So, this Magnus guy, the one who owned the house, the ghost, he’s your boyfriend?”

“Quick on the uptake, isn’t he.”

Magnus’ voice was dripping with sarcasm. “Good thing it’s not spring, Alexander, or you would be cleaning brains off the furniture.”

Alec rolled his eyes but didn’t answer.

“Yeah. And the reason I’m telling you this is because there’s going to be an eclipse today in a couple of hours and he gets to come to me for that time. So, I guess the two of you will actually meet. Before tonight that is.”
Chapter 39

Jace was silent for a long while before he said anything. Alec waited trying not to think the worst but the more seconds passed, he was either expecting him to burst out laughing or react similarly to Simon.

‘So, let me get this straight. You bought a haunted house, hooked up with the ghost and he turns real for half the night and that’s when you see him. Except for today, when he can come because of the eclipse. Did I leave anything out?’

Alec took in a deep breath. Well at least he didn’t tear up the floor boards.

‘Don’t look now, Alexander, but I think this genius was Albert Einstein in a former life.’

More sarcasm from the ghost boyfriend. Alec chose to ignore this comment. He was too worried about what Jace was going to say next.

‘Yeah. That’s about it. You don’t believe me, do you?’

‘I believe that you believe it, man. I’ve known you long enough to know you aren’t into making wild shit up but this, this is gonna take some swallowing.’

‘I hope he chokes on it too.’

Magnus’ voice spat in his head.

‘I know how it sounds and if someone had told me the same story I would have thought they were nuts too. But I swear it’s the truth. I can prove it to you today.’

‘Ha, the funny thing is, when you said you had a boyfriend, I thought maybe he was from out of town, not out of this world.’

Jace gave him a lop-sided grin and clapped him on the shoulder.

‘Now you’re making him sound like an alien. Other realm rather than other world.’

‘So, is he here now?’ Jace asked tentatively, glancing nervously around the room.

‘Yeah. He is. He’s sitting on the arm of the couch with his hand on my shoulder.’ Alec told him.

Jace looked in that direction.

‘Now what makes him think he can see me when you can’t. I told you, the man’s an idiot.’ Alec gave a small laugh and Jace looked at him.

‘Did he say something? What did he say?’

‘I don’t think you want to know that. Magnus is, how do I put this, rather possessive. I told him about what happened to us once and now he isn’t very happy with you. But he’ll come around, I’m sure of it.’

‘The hell I will.’ The words echoed around his mind.

Jace then made the mistake of reaching out to touch Alec’s shoulder, the one closest to the couch’s
arm. He frowned as he gave it a small poke.

“Ya know, I think I do feel something weird I……”

He gave a yelp and pulled his hand back, rubbing the back of it.

“Get your hands off my Alexander. You didn’t want to touch him before and you sure as hell aren’t touching him now.”

“Let me guess, it felt like a slap? I told you, possessive boyfriend. Okay, Magnus, he gets the point. Enough.”

“Yeah well, I got something, that’s for sure. Do you think your boyfriend could unhand you long enough let us get some work done?” Jace asked, inspecting his hand which did look a little red.

“Yeah, let’s do it. The eclipse starts at one though so I’ll have to keep an eye in the time.” Alec said getting up.

“Hey, there’s no way I’m getting in-between you and Mad, er what’s his name?” Jace asked. Next minute he was giving another cry and grabbing the back of his head.

Alec Sighed and shook his head. Now what had he done?

“He deserved that for forgetting my name. Honestly, Alexander, couldn’t you have smarter friends than this? I’ve had boots with higher IQs than his.”

“Come on, we’ll get the painting stuff.” He said to Jace and they headed for the laundry.

Simon got to Clary’s house an hour before the eclipse was due to start. She was waiting on her front porch, dressed in a black t shirt and black jeans and black boots. She got in the truck with him and shut the door. He gave her a incredulous look.

“Aren’t you hot in all that black stuff?” He asked her.

“Well we are going to have to blend in somewhere in the dark, aren’t we? I was just making sure I will.” Clary told him. He gave her a grin as they headed down the street.

“Clary we’re gonna just be watching what happens when the eclipse starts, not robbing houses at midnight. It’s only going to be dark for about twenty minutes.”

Clary looked out the windscreen with her nose in the air.

“Hey, this is my first time being a spy, okay? Deal with it. I wanted to look the part.”

Simon held back a laugh. He was surprised she had not brought a mask or some kind as well.

“So, have you thought about where we are going to be watching from?” Clary asked a few minutes later.

“I was thinking we could park down the road a bit and then sneak into the front yard and then up the side and hide behind the garden shed. It will give us a good view of the back garden.”

Clary frowned. “Why are we going to the back garden? I thought he would be inside.”

“I saw Alec buying a whole stack of new roses the other day. I think he’s fixed up the rose garden
and I’m pretty sure that they mean something to Magnus. So, I would bet that’s where they’ll meet. Near the rose garden.”

“Okay, this is your mission, agent Lewis, I just hope they don’t catch us. I like Alec, I really don’t want to be on his bad side. Especially over this.”

Clary looked at him worriedly. She was beginning to think this was a very bad idea but she would have been lying if she said she wasn’t curious as well.

“Nah, I’m sure they won’t and besides, one way or the other we get to find out the truth.”

“You know, sometimes you just have to believe in things. For no other reason than just because. Like Santa Claus.” Simon shot her an incredulous look.

“Clary, please don’t tell me you still believe in Santa Claus?”

“Of course, I do! The rule at my parent’s house every holiday is that if you don’t believe in Santa then you get underwear for Christmas. My brother said he didn’t one year and got fifteen pairs of white boxers. By the next year he practically was Santa Claus.”

Simon just raised his eye brows and kept his eye on the road. Now he had visions of Clary and her family lining up with the rest of the little kids in a department store, waiting to sit on Santa’s knee.

They went passed the house and Simon looked at the strange car in the rive way and gave Clary a sage like smile.

“Well, I hate to say it, but I was right. Look, there’s his car in the drive way. Problem solved. I knew Alec was making thing up. He’s probably married or something. That’s why he wants to hide it. Cute Alec Lightwood, homewrecker, wow, it’s always the quiet ones, isn’t it?” Simon said shaking his head sadly.

Clary still wasn’t ready to give up however.

“Yeah, I have to agree with you about the quiet ones, who would of thought that Simon Lewis mild mannered electrician and genuine nice guy would turn into some mission impossible wannabe. Anyway, that’s the wrong car.” She said to him as they parked down the road a little.

“What are you talking about?”

“You said he’d be driving a convertible, that’s not a convertible. Even I know that.” Clary looked at him smugly. Simon gave her a sour look.

“Okay, so the car is different but it a strange car, isn’t it? It doesn’t matter what type it is. He probably wanted something that wasn’t that flashy anyway. Didn’t want to call attention to himself where ever he came from. My guess would be the Gomorrah.”

Simon looked conspiratorially at her, eyes squinting behind his glasses and he rubbed his chin with a hand.

“Alright, that’s it. You need to stop watching all those conspiritheory clips on YouTube and leave Netflix alone for a while. And where the hell is Gondore?”

Clary glared at him.

“It’s Gomorrah and it’s, you know what? Never mind. Let’s go.” Simon went to get out of the car.
“You mean, we’re still doing this? What’s the point of you think your right anyway?”

“Because I need you to see this pretty boy as well. So, you can tell me what the hell he has that I haven’t.” Simon grumbled.

“Well, I can clear that up right now. A life, Simon. That would be the first thing.” Clary got out and slammed the door. Simon winced and put a finger up to his lips to ssshhh her.
“Come on spy boy, let’s get this over with.” Clary frowned and headed up the road.

It was crazy what you could achieve with two people. By twelve thirty, Jace and Alec had gotten a first coat on the all the walls. The new colour looked good and even a sour Magnus was impressed. He had spent the whole time right behind Alec, one ghostly hand on the back of his jeans.

“Well, he had to be good for something. And anyway, I hear they teach elephants to paint these days.” He was giving Jace absolutely no quarter.

“Thanks for giving me a hand, Jace but I better get cleaned up. It’s only half an hour to the eclipse starts.”

He raced up the stairs and to the bedroom to get some clean clothes. Jace stood at the foot of the stairs and shook his head as he heard his friend in the bathroom.

He’d never seen Alec this excited about anyone before. The whole thing sounded like a fairy tale. Cinderella. No, more like Cinderfella. He went into the kitchen and checked the contents of Alec’s fridge. Damn, no beers. He was gonna need something when this mystery guy didn’t turn up. He wondered if he had something stronger stashed somewhere. Knowing Alec the strongest thing he had was iced tea.

He was about to mount a search when he heard voices outside. He looked out the window that looked onto the back garden and saw a dark-haired guy in a blue t shirt and dark blue shorts and a red haired girl dressed all in black. They paused at the corner of the house before giving furtive glances around the yard and the girl pointed towards the garden. The guy quickly grabbed her hand and pulled it down and then after saying something to her that made her frown, he grabbed her wrist and headed behind the rickety old garden shed.

Alec hadn’t mentioned that he had asked anyone over. He kind of got the idea that it was to be kept on the down low. So, who were these jokers? He frowned and was about to go out the back door when he heard Alec coming down the stairs.

He came into the kitchen. “So, what do you think, do I look alright?” she asked, his hands out to his sides.

He had showered and even shaved, putting on a pale pink button up shirt and a clean pair of good jeans.

Jace gave him a glance, still concerned about what he had seen.

“Yeah, you look fine. Listen, did you tell anyone else about this?” Jace asked him, casting quick looks out the window.

“Are you kidding? No way. After what happen with Simon, seriously? I’m surprised the guy didn’t have some psychiatrist knocking on my door the next day.”

“Okay, they who….” Jace started but Alec cut him off
“Look its nearly time. I’ve got to meet Magnus in the rose garden. I think it might be a good idea if you stay here. I don’t want to waist the few precious minutes we have pulling him off you for saying something snotty. Okay?” Alec said as she went to go past him through the back door.

“Yeah, okay but this Simon guy, what does he…….” But Alec had gone out the door and was heading for the garden.

“Look, we’ll talk later, okay?” And he half ran to where the roses were.

Simon and Clary had edged their way up the side of the house. Simon was hunched over and acting like some James Bond wannabe while Clary just kept giving him looks of despair. They walked past the car, Simon muttering under his breath the whole time about this guy being some pretentious big shot who had more money than sense. While he had been trying to peer through the heavily tinted windows and into the back seat, Clary had tapped him on the shoulder, making him jump in surprise.

“It’s a rental, spy boy. There’s a rental agreement on the front seat. So much for your theory of him being a big shot.” She smirked.

Simon frowned at her and folded his arms over his chest.

“So, he’s a big shot that doesn’t want to drive his own car so he can’t be traced.”

“If he doesn’t want to be traced then why did he hire it with a Mastercard?” Clary was starting to get fed up with all Simon’s cloak and dagger nonsense.

“I never said he was a smart big shot. Come on. It’s nearly time and he have to get up behind the shed before Alec comes out.”

Simon skulked up the driveway where it went beside the house while Clary just walked behind him. He held up a hand as the got to the corner of the house and poked his head around the corner.

“Looks like we’re all good. Looks like I was right about the rose garden. Alec’s put the outdoor table and chairs over near there that I saw inside that night.”

“Oh, are we talking about your midnight voyeur episode? Why don’t you just get the adult channel like everybody else? Think of the money you’d save on gas running out here every few days to catch poor Alec in the act. Why don’t you just walk over there and hide in the garden and disguise yourself as a rose bush?”

Clary raised her hand and pointed towards the yard.

Simon grabbed her wrist and pushed it down. He looked around quickly, frowning.

“Hey, keep your voice down and don’t point. Now that’s just being ridiculous.”

“Says the guy sneaking around his friend’s house cause he wants to catch him in the act with his boyfriend.” Clary said, hands on hips and brow furrowed.

“Let’s just get behind the shed. I’m right, you’ll see.” He said, tugging her towards the small wooden structure that looked like it was about one good storm away from falling over.
Chapter 40

Alec stood near the table and chairs that he had bought the other day. He checked his phone. It was about two minutes till the sun started disappearing. He hoped that it wouldn’t be too dark so he could see him properly. Then again, if it wasn’t completely dark then maybe this wouldn’t work.

The day began to dull and Alec took a breath and tried not to get too fidgety while he waited. He closed his eyes and steadied himself, trying to relax as much as possible so that his mind could be more in tune with their bond. Little by little the sun disappeared and just when the light looked about the same as early twilight, he could feel the air change and knew he was close.

He could feel the energy starting to concentrate right in front of him. Now it was dark enough that if he had a flashlight, he would have turned it on. Slowly, Magnus’ outline started coming into view and Alec grinned shifting impatiently from one foot to the other. It was working! He was going to be with him.

The day turned to night and Magnus stood before him the second it became dark. Alec flung himself at him and they found each other’s lips, kissing hard.

“I had my doubts, Alexander but the old girl came through this time. I’m here. I can’t believe it.”

Magnus smiled and cupped the side of his face with his hand. Alec leaned into it, putting his own hand over it.

“I love you so much, babe. Do you like your roses? I grew them just for you.”

“They’re wonderful, my heart. I can’t wait to see them in bloom. I wish it could be like this, us standing here in the sunshine looking at them together.”

He pulled Alec close again and kissed him hard and long. There was nothing he wanted more than to have this man in his life for as long as he could. But he doubted even if they had eternity, it wouldn’t be enough.

“I wish we could have that too, babe. I’d sacrifice anything to be able to spend the rest of my life with you. I feel like we’ve known each other for years, not just a few days. I know this has happened so fast for us and it makes my head spin if I think about it too much but I can feel it deep down to my soul that we were meant to be together now, in this time. I don’t know how, and I don’t know when, but I will do anything to make that happen for us. When I got here, when I bought this place, our place, I thought I had lost so much but since I’ve met you, I’ve gained so much more and I thank God, every day for giving me brains enough to come here in the first place. I love you Magnus, with my whole being. I don’t what anyone else thinks, babe. As long as I have you, I don’t need anything else.”

Magnus was looking into Alec’s large hazel eyes so deeply he was sure he could see his soul as it glowed, filled with his love. They didn’t need the sun; no sun could fill him with the warmth that this man before him did. He reached up and put his hands to the side of his face and pulled him in, taking his mouth.

Clary and Simon had squatted down behind the side of the shed, waiting for Magnus’ arrival. When it started to get dark, Simon had trained his eyes on the back door of the house, smugly waiting for the arrival of Alec’s mysterious boyfriend. They had watched as Alec had come out of the house and then spoke to someone inside over his shoulder as he headed for the garden.
Clary had frowned when she heard what Alec said about talking later.

“Simon, if the mystery man is inside and Alec told him that they’d talk later, then why is he going out here now? Wouldn’t they just talk inside?”

“They probably have some whole elaborate scheme cooked up between them. You know, coming out here and staging some big touching scene. I mean, Alec has a pretty vivid imagination, I’m surprised there isn’t back ground music.”

“And who exactly did they plan all this for? What, now you’re going to tell me that they did all this because they knew they’d have an audience? Come on, Simon, now I think your stretching things a bit far. You didn’t get a shock from anything, recently did you? Cause I think it might have fried part of your brain. I can’t do this anymore, Simon, it’s wrong, and you’re…, you’re… dear God.”

Simon had still been watching the back door of the house, sure that at any moment, the good-looking stranger would come bursting out and running dramatically over to Alec where he waited eagerly near the roses, he hadn’t been looking at Clary, even when she began her rant. The truth be told, he hadn’t even really been listening. She’d be sorry, any minute now he would have to pleasure in telling her he told her so; but then he realised she had stopped talking and gave an exclamation.

He frowned, and looked back at her. It was almost fully dark now, probably as dark as the eclipse was going make the day become and he was about to ask her what her problem was when he saw her face. Even in the very dull light, it was ghostly white. Clary had pale skin at the best of times, the curse of the red heads, she called it, but this was chalk white. Her large eyes were huge on her small face and her mouth formed a perfect O.

Simon felt prickled of fear crawling up his back bone, something must be really wrong for Clary to look like this. He put a hand on her thin shoulder and felt it shaking. He was about to asked her what was wrong when she lifted a shaking hand and pointed it towards the garden.

Simon was almost afraid to take his eyes off her, fearing that she might pass out or collapse at any minute, but she was so transfixed by something that he slowly turned his head to see.

At first, all he saw was Alec, standing there in the garden, seemingly looking into space but then something was happening to the air about two feet in front of him. As he watched a shimmering sort of mist appeared taking a shape. How they were able to see all this in the near darkness, he didn’t know. As the mist started to grow denser, Simon felt all the fine hairs that cover his arms and legs begin to stand on end, as if he had just received a large dose of static electricity. The air felt charged with it, and within a few minutes what once had been a misty outline was now a solid form of a man. The man. The man he had seen Alec with that night in the living room. The only difference was this time, he had clothes on. Jesus, Christ on a cracker, it was true. Alec had been telling the truth. Simon rubbed his eyes making sure he wasn’t just imagining it all.

Alec’s face lit up as soon as Magnus had become solid and they hugged each other tight, kissing hard.

Simon felt the earth beneath his feet shift and suddenly he was on his backside on the dirt beside the shed. He couldn’t take his eyes off what was before him. It was unbelievable. He was vaguely aware of Clary sitting down beside him with a thump. He tore his eyes from the two men for a minute and saw her sitting beside him. Her knees were bent up right to her chest and she had one hand covering her mouth to either silence a scream or stop her muffled sobs. Tears streaked down her pale cheeks.
Simon wasn’t sure why she was crying as he turned back to Alec and Magnus. They stood out in the low light, both of them wearing light coloured shirts. The whole scene was like it had been plucked from the pages of some mystery novel but the thing that Simon noticed the most was the looks on their faces. He had seen those looks before. He and Andrew had often looked at each other that way, not quite as intense but he recognised someone in love when he saw it.

The reality of everything hit him full force and he felt the air thin around him, making his head start to spin. Clary saw him starting to sway and managed to support him as he began to fall backwards.

She sniffed back her tears as silently as she could as she cradled the unconscious Simon in her lap, leaning up against the side of the shed. Where was the big brave undercover agent now? She waved a hand over his face, still watching and listening to Alec and Magnus. Clary heard Alec’s soft words and saw them begin to kiss once more and she felt fresh tears well up inside her and spill down her cheeks. Damn, this was so beautiful, better than any trashy romance novel or old movie. Ghost or not, they made such an adorable couple, she was tempted to dump Simon on the ground and rush up to the two of them and hug them tight.

She looked down at his pale face and half-closed eyes and gave his cheek a tap with her hand.

“Hey, Brainiac, wake up, you’re missing the best love story ever.” She whispered as loudly as she dared. Simon stirred and started to come back to life. Clary really hoped he felt bad about doing this now and she was really looking forward to telling him what an idiot he’d been.

Jace had stood inside by the window. He watched as his friend had rushed out to the garden as the sun slowly began to disappear. From where he stood, he could also see the two uninvited guests at the side of the shed. They were both hunkered down; the dark-haired guy was watching the back door and the red haired girl was looking at Alec. She said something to the guy, clearly not impressed with his answer and looked like she was about to turn away but then her face grew pale and her eyes wide.

Jace had been more concerned with them than his friend. He had been concerned about Alec when he had found out where he had gone. Young guy, just lost his parents, thought he had lost his best friend, and had good reason to think so, buying a house out in the sticks; sounded like a plot for a B grade horror movie.

When he had told him about having a boyfriend, Jace had been really pleased for him. The guy deserves some happiness after what he had just been through. But then he had come up with this wild story and Jace’s momentary happiness for his friend and turned to real concern. Haunted houses, ghosts, midnight meetings, Alec’s cheese really had slipped off his cracker out here. Must be all the clean country air.

As he watched the girl behind the shed he saw her raise a hand and point. He frowned and looked towards where Alec stood and saw what she had seen. Jace couldn’t believe it. As Alec and Magnus wrapped themselves in each other’s arms, Jace stood wide eyed himself and watched them. Alec’s face was lit up, he had never seen his old friend look so happy in all his life.

Something tugged at his insides and he felt tears sting his eyes. Fuck, now he was turning into a big girl over all this. But damn, they looked so in love. It was truly magical, in every sense of the word.

“I believe you, man. I believe you.” He said to himself as he watched them kiss once more.

Alec never wanted this moment to end. He knew Magnus would be back tonight, as usual but there was something special about right now. His whole body was tingly with it and he didn’t want their kiss to end either. There was something about it that filled him with such a deep seeded feeling of happiness and contentment he had trouble containing it.
If he had been a spiritual person, he would have said that it felt like the planets had aligned and everything had fallen into place in his life. This was where he was supposed to be. It felt right. It was as if he had been stumbling around lost in the dark and finally found his light and his destination. His true home. His and Magnus’.

He didn’t want to stop but he also wanted to see Magnus once more before the eclipse ended.

When he finally pulled back slowly, letting his lips linger on his for as long as possible, he noticed that it was already getting lighter. Soon Magnus would be gone once more, until tonight at least.

He took his face in his hands and leaned his forehead to his.

“I love you babe. So damn much.” He said, half whispering the words.

They were too full of meaning to say too loud even though he wanted to shout it from the roof tops.

“Oh God help me, Alexander, I love you too.”

At first, Alec felt like his heart was about to burst from hearing Magnus’ declaration. Then the brevity of the situation hit him and his eye went wide. Magnus had just opened a Pandora’s box. The spell.

He pulled back from the man he loved and saw the utter devastation on his face. He looked at him, his face a mask of pain and his head shaking. He could hear his breath leave him in a rush as he took a step back from him.

“MAGNUS! NO!” He screamed.

The happiness he had felt evaporated in an instant and he watched as he saw the light growing stronger and his lover growing fainter. He groaned in agony, his insides feeling like they were being shredded.

“ALEXANDER, ALWAYS REMEMBER, I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU WITH MY WHOLE HEART!”

Magnus was yelling and Alec could see tears streaming down his face.

“MAGNUS, DON’T LEAVE ME!”

Alec felt blind panic taking over him and his hands clutched uselessly at his now misty form. Argh! He wanted to die!

“I love you, my heart.” Alec heard the words as if they were far away, an echo of a happier time. A memory.

He watched as the sun came back out and Magnus had gone completely. He gave an unearthly howl of pain and folded to ground. He was gone forever, he had lost him. He sobbed loudly, the pain of his loss racking his body. It was so wrong, so fucking wrong. How could the universe let him have something so precious, so wonderful and good and then snatch it away like a bully grabbing a favourite toy.

Suddenly, there were people all around him. Hands touching his shaking body and arms encircling his sagging shoulders. He registered their presence on some level and in a small way he was glad not to be alone with this but it didn’t stop him feeling numb. After about five minutes, strong arms were hauling him to his feet. He leaned his head on a familiar broad shoulder and let his best friend
lead him towards the house. Magnus’ house. Their home.

They made it inside and Jace led him to the couch and he collapsed onto its soft surface. He fell sideways, his body felt like all the bones had disappeared. That all too familiar ache had returned to his chest where his heart felt like it had been ripped from him. He was vaguely aware of Jace’s hand rubbing his arm in a comforting way but it was doing nothing for the pain he felt.

How the fuck was he supposed to live without him? Could someone explain that to him? His sobs had died down but the tears still flowed freely down his cheeks. This is what it felt like when everything good in your life was taken away. Not good.

Someone’s phone began to ring but Alec just lay there, staring blinding into the room, locked in a world of grief and loss. He could hear familiar voices; Jace, Simon and even Clary. In the dark recesses of his mind, he wondered why Simon and Clary where there but he just didn’t care right at this point. It wasn’t a priority to find out.

“Alec? Sweetie, I don’t know if you want to hear this right now, but Gertie just called. Catarina just passed away.”

Clary’s voice came to him like she was standing miles away. He curled up on the couch, his legs coming up to his chest and his head bent forward; he looked his he was trying to shield himself from any further attacks to his being.

That was it then. All his hopes that maybe Cat would somehow help him get Magnus back were gone. It truly was over.
Chapter 41

Jace sat by his friend, one hand protectively on his arm. He hated seeing him in pain like this again. It was killing him not to know what the hell was really going on here. The other two looked on with worried faces.

“I know this isn’t really the time or place for introductions, but I’m Jace by the way. Alec’s friend.” He said, holding out his hand towards the pale looking dark haired guy who hadn’t taken his eyes of Alec since they brought him inside.

“I’m Simon, town electrician, former friend and now officially the largest eater of humble pie there is.”

He gave Jace a weak smile and shook his hand. Jace tried not to laugh, the poor guy looked like he’d just had the biggest shock of his life.

“I’m Clary, Alec’s friend and server of said humble pie to this dork. And I intend to force feed it to him if I have to.”

She bent down and offered her hand as well. Jace smiled broadly at her and took it.

“So, would you two like to fill me in on what the hell has been going on around here and why Alec is in a foetal position on his couch?”

Jace asked them with raised eye brows.

Clary and Simon looked at each other and Clary began to tell him the whole story from start to finish. Simon just sat there nodding occasionally, he still looked like he might hit the floor at any moment.

“So, how is it that you two came to be out here? I take it you guys didn’t quite believe all this either?” Jace asked when Clary had finished.

She turned towards Simon hand glared at him. Simon looked like he was about to wither up and die.

“No, that would be the genius here. I never doubted it. Some of us have a more open mind than others.”

Here Clary gave Simon a hard dig in the ribs with her elbow. He swayed a little but wasn’t game enough to say anything back, that humble pie was really choking him now.

“I just came to make sure he didn’t end up crash tackling Alec to the ground or anything.” Clary glared at him.

Jace gave a smirk and then his brow creased a little in thought.

“So, am I to believe that all this was because you have a crush on the big guy here?”

Simon looked up from under dark lashes, his cheeks now pink. He still didn’t answer but he nodded rapidly and then ducked his head once more before giving Alec’s prone form a quick worried glance.

Jace stifled a chuckle. He held out his hand. “Crush-er meet crush-ee. Ha, apparently, I was Alec’s
first crush. Now he’s your crush but he’s in love with Magnus, a ghost. This is so twisted it’s
crazy.”

Jace was shaking his head. Clary sat down on the arm of the couch and gently stroked Alec’s dark
messy head.

“Yeah, but now his heart’s been crushed.” She gave a heavy sigh. “I hope to God he can get
through this. I think he’s gonna need us, guys. I’ve never seen two people who looked more in love
than they did out there today. It was so beautiful.”

“Yeah, it was. Makes me feel twice as bad for staying away for so long. I was a total ass about it
but at least I can be there for him now. I think we should try to get him up to bed. The poor guy is
too big for this couch and he needs to be able to rest properly.”

“Alec, sweetie? We’re going to take up stairs, okay?” Clary said, leaning down to him and softly
touching his pale cheek.

Alec was just completely numb. He had locked himself away somewhere, in that empty space that
had formed when he saw Magnus disappear in front of his eyes. He could hear the others talking
and really wanted to add to the conversation but he couldn’t.

He became aware of two sets of strong arms lifting him up and getting him to his feet, small hands
rubbing his back as they stumbled up the narrow stairs. They gently lowered him down to the bed
and a soft blanket was laid over him. His bed. Their bed. He rolled over to where Magnus usually
laid when he came to him in the night. He gave a hitching sob and grabbed for his pillow, jamming
it to his face, taking in as much of the remaining scent of him there was left on it.
Clary gave a soft cry and turned, her face crumpling and tears falling down her cheeks.

“Oh God, this is agony. I can’t stand this, he’s in so much pain. If only Cat was still here, she
might have been able to help him, help get them back together.” She sobbed.

Jace looked worriedly at his friend and then back at Clary.

“Who are we talking about? Who’s Cat?”

Clary explained all about who she was and her involvement in all of it with Simon filling in the
odd bits he knew. Jace looked about ready to explode from everything he had just learned but he
managed to hold it together. He sat on the foot of the bed and looked at his distraught friend.
He wished there was something they could do for him too.

“So Cat was like a witch or something, right? Isn’t there another one in town somewhere?” He
asked Clary.

“Jace, this isn’t ye old Salem, you know. As far as I know Catarina was the last of a dying breed.
Even she didn’t practise after what happened with Magnus.”

Jace’s shoulders slumped. “What about online? Couldn’t we find something there maybe?”

Simon gave a coughed laugh. “Yeah, probably not the best idea for something this serious. Last
time I had an upset stomach I googled it and ended up thinking I had anything from some deadly
disease to being in the early stages of pregnancy.”

He gave a lop-sided grin to Clary but she just frowned at him and it fell from his face. He really
had done his dash with her.
“Pity there isn’t a spell book for dummies out there.” Jace said absently. Clary’s head came up and she looked at him.

“Wait, I helped Cat clear out her attic once, making room to put her Christmas decorations and there were these boxes in the way. I was going to move them and she said no, that they had to stay. They were really heavy and I asked her what was in them and she said they were her grandmother’s. I wonder if they were from her Grandmother on her mother’s side that was supposed to carry the Sight gene.”

“You mean spell books? Maybe there would be something in them that could help.”

Jace could hardly believe he was saying the words but he was willing to try anything to bring Alec out of the dark place he was in right now. If that meant turning into Harry Potter, then so be it.

“We could go over there and bring them back here. I know Cat would want us to help them. I don’t know if she ever told either of them anything about them but it’s worth trying. There’s three of us so we could get through them faster. Simon, could you stay here with Alec while Jace and I go and get them? They’re pretty heavy so I’ll need some muscle to get them down from the attic.”

Simon looked a little indignant and looked like he was about to say something in his defence but a sharp look from the feisty little red head silenced him. Jace hid a smile. He was really beginning to like this girl.

“Yeah, sure.”

Was all he said and Jace stood up and he took his place at the foot of the bed.

Alec wasn’t sure if he was awake or dreaming. His head just kept replaying every single minute of his and Magnus’ time together. It was all so fresh and had no trouble recalling each and every detail. What they had laughed about together, his sexy, old fashioned way of speaking, the way his skin tasted, his earthy sandalwood infused scent, the feel of his lips on his.

He groaned and curled up tighter, not feeling Simon’s gentle pat on his arm. It was all too raw, too new to deal with. He didn’t want to think about it but he couldn’t seem to stop. This had been Magnus’ greatest fear, losing him like this. Maybe there had been a small part of him, no matter how buried that let him think that there was a way of them being together, that confessing his true feelings would bring them together, not rip them apart. God knows that what he had hoped. So much for the power of positive thinking.

He just wanted to retreat back into himself and hide somewhere. He’d never feel the sun again, never feel that loving warmth that Magnus filled him with. His insides felt ice cold now, ice water replacing his blood.

He felt his eyelids closing, his grief making him exhausted and he fell into a trouble sleep.

Clary and Jace arrived back forty minutes later. Jace hefted two old dusty boxes into the bedroom and after they made coffee, the three of them sat around the room and began to go through the old leather journals.

Simon stayed on the foot of the bed, Clary sat against the wall and Jace sat on the chair in the corner. It was heavy going; each one was written by hand and some of the books were so old the writing was almost illegible. But the time it grew dark, they had only managed to get through about half of the first box.

Clary got up from the floor and stretched. She went over to the bed and gently touched Alec’s hair but he never moved. At least when he was sleeping he might be getting some relief from his broken
“How about I order some pizza? We should try to get him to eat something. I’ll call work.”

Jace and Simon agreed and Clary took her phone from her pocket and went out into the hall to make the call.

Jace got up and went over to the bed, sitting on the other side, watching his sleeping friend.

“I hope we can pull him out of this. I’ve never seen him like this, even when his parents died. It’s worrying me.”

Clary came back in and saw the two men standing like guards over a fallen brother. It was such a touching sight and tears threatened to fall once more. But tears wouldn’t help Alec, they all had to be strong for him.

Simon volunteered to go into town and get the pizza so Clary and Jace stayed and combed the pages of the journals some more.

When he returned, Jace gently tried to wake Alec and he stirred, eyes red and face pale. The managed to get one slice of pizza into him before he rolled back over and closed his eyes. At least in sleep he could be with Magnus. Now it was a case of dreading the night that had once loved because it meant a chance to be with his man. But now it would just be a constant, nightly reminder of what he had lost.

While Alec slept fitfully, the other three sat around trying desperately to find the answers in the books but with the end to each one, there came disappointment. By eleven thirty that night, they were a suffering from strained eyes and heavy hearts. Clary had ended up sharing the small chair with Jace, while Simon had gone and gotten cushions from the couch and propped himself up against the wall near the door. One by one, the late hour and tiredness got the better of them and they fell asleep where they lay.

Alec was having a wonderful dream. He could feel a long-muscled body lying against him and the familiar exotic scent that could only be from one person. He smiled in his sleep, moving back and feeling the firm torso and a strong arm holding him tight. God, it was so real. Soft lips were now placing kisses along one shoulder and his heart wanted to break all over again.

Fuck! Why did he have to keep reliving these moments? It was like the universe wanted him to suffer; jamming a knife right into his soul and giving it a twist. He woke bleary eyes and aching and feeling like he hadn’t slept in a week even though he had been since yesterday afternoon.

He bit his lips to stifle a groan of pain. He just wanted to sink back under that water line and down in his dreams, no matter how painful. It was the closest he was every going to get.

“Hey, sleepy head, good morning.”

Alec winced. Now he was even hearing his voice again. Like he could ever forget that deep rich sound.

“It’s a new day, my heart, a new life. A new beginning.”

“Why does my imagination have to be so fucking cruel. Shut up.” Alec croaked, his brow creased and his throat felt raw.

“Language, Alexander!”
Alec’s eyes flew wide. That sounded close. He almost didn’t roll over. He didn’t want to feel that pain of disappointment when he saw the empty space in the bed. But it sounded so real.

He slowly turned, keeping his eyes closed.

The first thing he felt was warmth. At first he thought it was from the morning sun beating into the room from the window but it was penetrating him more than anything had ever had before. Anything except one, that is. He tried to steal his heart or what was left of it, anyway before he opened his eyes.

Two beautiful big brown eyes greeted him in a small featured face with golden skin. Alec’s heart felt like ot was being shattered all over again. Oh, sweet Jesus, now he was seeing him as if he was there before him. And he was smiling the sweetest sexiest smile he could have ever imagined. But it couldn’t be Magnus, the room was almost filled with day light, it wasn’t possible.

“I love you, my heart.”

He heard him whisper and then a hand came up and gently caressed his pale cheek. Tingles ran through him and his breath hitched in his throat.

“Magnus? Is it…. is it really you?” He half whispered the words, not wanting them to shatter this perfect illusion if it wasn’t.

Two perfect soft lips leaned in and took his own while a hand cupped the back of his head, slender fingers threading through his hair. Alec groaned loudly and reached out a hand and found a warm firm torso and he slid his hand around to feel the smooth golden skin of his back. His fingers dug in and felt the muscles moving. Oh God in heaven, how was this possible? He was here! He really was here!

He rolled onto his back and took Magnus with him, not leaving his mouth for one second. His other arm came up to wrap around him, squeezing him tightly to him. Suddenly he was filled to the brim with warmth, it felt like it was pouring out of him as he kissed and whimpered for his man. His love. His soul mate.

Magnus left his lips and kissed down his jaw to his neck where he nuzzled right into him, mouthing the skin and tasting its surface. He found the pulse point and lavished attention on it with his tongue, making Alec moan loudly.

“Sshh, my love. We seem to have some guests.” Magnus said quietly, bringing his head back up and kissing his lips once more.

He rolled off him, but settled against his side and Alec heaved himself up to lean against the brass bed head. Magnus joined him, grimacing a little.

“The first thing we are going to do is buy a new bed, Alexander. Preferably one with a padded head board.” Magnus said, leaning into his chest, his hand sifting through the soft cloud of short hair.

“But if we do that, then how are you going to tie me up to it?” Alec smiled at him.

They both laughed softly. They sat there in the soft morning light, hands going to each other’s faces gently touching.

Alec couldn’t quite believe it, he was really here. He ran his hand over the slope of his shoulder and the top of his arm, feeling the swell of his bicep. His skin was practically glowing in the increasing light and he couldn’t stop smiling.
“How? How the hell can you be here?”

“I have no idea, my love but I’m not going to look a gift horse in the mouth and try to over think it. I’m here, really here. I guess my ex-wife, sorry, widow, needs to be congratulated after all.” His hand was covering the swell of his peck, massaging it gently.

Alec remembered something from the haze that was yesterday. Catarina was gone. He wanted to tell Magnus but he was so happy and too relieved not to have to feel sad anymore right now.

Magnus leaned in and kissed him again before pulling back and looking deep into his eyes. Ah, there is was. His heart had been returned to him but it wasn’t his own, it had belonged to the beautiful man before him. And he had his.

They were still sitting there gazing deep into each other’s eyes, letting their souls say the words that only they could hear, when they heard someone stirring from the corner of the room.

Magnus leaned against his boyfriend’s shoulder and turned his head to see Jace starting to stir with a small curled form whose face was buried under a riot of messy red hair. Alec leaned his cheek against Magnus’ dark head and smiled softly, watching his friends.

“Looks like we aren’t the only ones being given a new beginning this morning.” Magnus said.

Jace stirred and stretched, his arm going around the small sleeping form of Clary. He opened his eyes and looked down at the messy cloud of long red hair and smiled to himself. She was still sleeping, her cheek resting on his chest. Next minute a pillow came flying at his head, hitting him right in the face.

He jumped and gave a yelp. Where on earth……? He looked over at the bed and his eyes went wide.

“Good morning, Jace. I would like to introduce you to my boyfriend. Magnus Bane? Jace Herondale.”

“Pleased to meet you properly, Jace. And let me apologise for the slap to the hand yesterday. I tend to be a little possessive with the love of my life. I’m sure you understand.” Magnus said, not moving from Alec’s shoulder.

As Jace watched, he lifted his head and they kissed softly.

“I can’t believe this! How the hell did you two get back to each other? I thought Magnus was gone for good?” He asked.

“We don’t know, man. And we don’t care. It’s happened that all we care about. There something you want to tell us about what happened in here last night?” Alec gave him a mock frown.

Jace grinned and went red. He and Magnus giggled. Jace gave the still sleeping Clary a small shake.

“Hey, clary. Wake up, look at this.” Jace said softly to her, brushing back the long-tangled strands of hair.

He could get used to waking up like this. He was really digging the way the light was making her hair look like it was on fire. So pretty. And hot.

Clary lifted her head, face half cover in hair and stared heavy eyed up at Jace. She smiled and
pushed her hair from her face and started to reach her face up to go in for a good morning kiss but
Jace cleared his throat and his eyes swept to their left. She frowned and he turned his head. She
turned to look at what could be more important than a first kiss and her eyes went wide and she
gasped.

“Alec! Magnus? Oh my God! You’re here! Oh God! Look at you your so cute! Eeeeeee!”

She scrambled off Jace’s lap coming within inches of kneeling him right in the groin and with a
squeal of delight, rushed around to side of the bed and promptly jammed herself between them, an
arm around them each.

they both laughed and held her back. She pulled back and then kissed them both on the cheek
before getting off the bed and flinging herself back at a surprised and amused Jace. She crashed her
lips to his and his eyes flew wide for a second before he relaxed and held her to him, scooping her
up in his arms.

“Wow, we get to witness the first kiss. This is a special morning.” Alec said, grinning at them.

“You know what they say, Alexander, if you can’t beat them, hell, what am I saying damn straight
we can beat ‘em. Come here.”

He dived at his man and took his mouth again with wide heated kisses that set them both on fire.

Simon stirred from the other side of the room. He groaned as he straightened up against the wall.
He’d slid sideways in his sleep, a journal still in his hand. He heard giggles and frowned. He
looked up in front of him and couldn’t believe the sight that greeted him.

Clary was clinging like a koala to jace’s broad torso her head resting on his upper chest. Alec was
holding the beautiful stranger to him in the bed, barely able to keep his eyes off him.

“Hang on, did I miss something?” He said, frowning. The two couples laughed as they looked at
him.

“So, do you see me now, Mr Lewis? I take it I won’t be having any more issues with you trying to
steal my man, hmm?” Magnus asked him eye brows raised. Simon went bright red and they all
laughed.
After another half an hour of everyone getting to know one another and a few more digs at Simon about his undercover operation yesterday, they all started complaining about being hungry. Clary volunteered to go down stairs and start cooking while Alec and Magnus tried to pry themselves apart long enough to shower and get some clean clothes on.

“I just realised, I only own the clothes I’m wearing. Maybe I should have stashed some way somewhere in case I needed them.” He said, watching as Alec went over to the wardrobe and drawers and started pulling clothes from them.

“Babe, I think they would be a bit out of fashion by now anyway. I think we should have a day in the city and get you some new stuff. Here, have some of my stuff till then.” He tossed Magnus a pair of jeans and a t shirt and a pair of boxers.

Magnus held up the boxers and looked at them dubiously. “Well, I always want to get into your pants, Alexander, I suppose now I get to do it literally.” Alec laughed and came back over to him. He knelt one knee on the bed and leaned in, kissing him.

“Come on, let’s have a shower. I don’t know about you, but all that heart ache o went through yesterday made me hungry.” He pulled back and grabbed Magnus’ hand, pulling him out of bed.

By the time they made it down stairs again, Clary and Simon had cooked pancakes, bacon and toast. Jace was in charge of coffee and they entered the kitchen arm in arm.

“So, are you two going to be joined at the hip forever now?” Jace joked, putting cups on the table.

“You honestly don’t think I’m letting him go anywhere again, do you?” Magnus told him, kissing Alec softly and beaming up at him.

“Well I think it’s really cute. Do you think you can separate long enough to eat? Alec, you hardly ate anything since yesterday and Magnus, well Magnus was… wherever Magnus went.” She said, putting the plate with a stake of pancakes on the table.

Simon came over to the table with plates and cutlery.

“So, where did you go yesterday, Magnus?” Simon asked him.

“Oh, it was paradise, Simon. Like a big tropical island. So beautiful. Everything was so peaceful there. If I didn’t love my Alexander so much, I would have been happy to stay.” Magnus said dramatically. Alec and the others tried not to laugh at Simon who seemed to be hanging on every word he had said.

“Wow, really?” He said, eagerly.

“No, Simon, not really. I have no memory of what happened yesterday. Consider this pay back from spying on us yesterday and the other night. Even though I’m sure the view was magnificent. There’s no finer sight than my gorgeous man’s sweet backside. Can someone pass me a pancake? I haven’t eaten in, well forever.” Magnus replied and the room erupted with laughter and Simon went red once more.

Yeah, okay. He did deserve that.
Breakfast was a very happy occasion. Everyone was laughing and joking around. Even though Jace had gotten other chairs, Magnus refused to sit anywhere but Alec’s knee and Clary ended up on Jace’s when the long looks and cheeky grins got too much.

They were in fits of laughter as Clary told them all about their spy mission the day before especially Simon’s theory about Magnus being a married man.

“Well, I was married but it wasn’t a proper marriage. It was one of convenience. Which makes me think, I really should look in on the old girl and tell her I do forgive her. She managed to get me back to my Alexander after all. I owe her that much.” Magnus said, chewing his fifth piece of bacon.

The room went quiet and he stilled. He turned his head and looked at Alec, who looked back at him with a sad face.

“What?”

“Magnus, Catarina passed away yesterday. I didn’t want to tell you first thing this morning because I didn’t want a happy moment to be spoilt with something sad again. I know Cat wouldn’t of wanted that either.” Alec told him.

Magnus slumped against him and Alec held him. They did owe her so much but now, they’d never get to tell her. The room went silent as everyone got lost in their own thoughts. Jace hadn’t known her but he held Clary as tears ran silently down her face.

“She would be so mad at us right now. She was such a happy person. And she would be so happy for you two as well.” Clary said, sitting up from Jace’s chest, wiping her damp cheeks.

“It’s going to be so sad having to pack up her house in the next few days. Gertie told me she said she asked her to ask me to help her.” Clary said, sadly.

“I think we should all help. It would get it done faster and not prolong the agony of it.” Alec said, looking up at Magnus to see what he thought of the idea. He gave him a gentle smile and kissed him.

“I think you’re right, Alexander. It’s the least I can do now I can’t personally think her for bringing me back to you.”

Clary looked happier about their decision and leaned over to give Magnus a quick hug.

“Well, I think that in honour of Alec getting his prince charming back, we should take that trip to the city and get him some clothes and take ourselves to lunch, what do you think?” She said, rusty eye brows raised and looking at the others.

“Sounds good to me. Lets’ do it.” Alec said, patting his boyfriend’s thigh. Magnus looked a little worried.

“There’s only one problem with your plans, Clary. I don’t have any money. There wasn’t a lot of call for it where I’ve been for the past the decades or so.”

“You don’t have to worry about money, babe. I have plenty. I want to do this for you, anyway.” Magnus started to protest but Alec shut him up with a kiss.

“Enough. I’m doing this and that’s that. So, shall we get organised and get going?” He asked them.

Clary said she wanted to head back to her place to change.
“I’ll go with you.” Jace said quickly.

They all looked at him. He started stumbling for an excuse and Clary was looking at him like he was a cute fluffy puppy. He gave Alec a pleading look. But it was Magnus who came to his rescue.

“I think that’s a capital idea, Jace. A young lady shouldn’t be out and about on her own, goodness knows what trouble might befall her. I think Clary could use the services of a strapping young gentleman such as yourself.” Jace gave him a slightly bewildered look.

“Yeah, what he said. I think.” He said and they all burst into laughter. Simon rose to his feet.

“Well, I think I might leave you guys to it. I mean, you don’t need that annoying single tag along hanging around with you and I could use a shower and another few hours’ sleep. Magnus, I’m really happy for you and Alec and I hope that everything works out for you. See you later guys.”

He started walking for the door and Alec asked Magnus to get up so he could go with him. He gave him a questioning look, silently asking him if he was okay with it and he leaned in and kissed him.

“You need friends, my love. Go make one. Again.” He squeezed his hand and Alec smiled before he followed Simon.

He caught up with him just as he got to the front step.

“Simon, listen, I know this is all really weird but in spite of everything that’s happened, I really would like us to be friends.” He said to him.

Simon looked up at him and sighed. Alec Lightwood was truly one of the good ones. He really felt lousy about the way he had been acting with him lately and if the truth be told, part of him had wanted Magnus to be some big shot married guy from the city because then it would have meant that there would have been a chance that the long distance relationship would of worn thin after a while and then he might have had a chance after all.

But seeing how much pain the poor guy had been in at his loss, really sobered him up. They were in love, deeply in love and it shone from them like a beacon. He really should have been saying those same words to him.

“Alec, I really owe you an apology. I’m the one who’s been acting crazy the last few days and I wouldn’t have blamed you for seeing me there this morning and kicking my bony ass out straight away. But yes, I would like us to be friends, and believe me, after seeing what Magnus was capable of while he was a ghost, I’m not going to be stupid enough to try anything now he’s a real person again.

I am happy for you guys, truly. But right now, I really do need to get home and get a shower. Tell Magnus however built your place, really knew what they were doing with the floors. They sure are hard wood.”

Alec gave a laugh and stuck out his hand. Simon went to take it and then pulled him in for a hug instead. He patted Alec’s broad shoulder before pulled back away.

“We better not do that too many times or your boyfriend will be throwing glasses at me again.”

They gave a chuckle and the Simon headed down the steps and headed for his truck.
A couple of hours later, Alec, Magnus, Clary and Jace were heading for the city. Jace offered to drive, mainly, Alec thought, so he could have Clary next to him in the front seat. He wasn’t complaining, however, because it gave he and Magnus the back seat together.

Alec would have been happy to of smooched his man all the way there but Magnus was too distracted by everything. It was his first ride in a modern car and he was loving it. Alec couldn’t help laughing at him as he fired questions at Jace about the car and drove them all nuts with the electric window switch to the point that Jace ended up putting the lock on it.

The excitement continued when they made it to the city. Magnus was blown away with the tall buildings and the hundreds of cars. He was like a kid in a toy store with it all. They parked in a multi-story car part at one of the large malls and Alec went to slide his hand around his waist as the headed for the entrance. Magnus jumped back and looked around them with a worried expression. Alec frowned, not knowing what had caused his reaction.

“Alexander, we can’t! People will see us.” He said.

It was a hard moment for them when they realised what Magnus was worried about. Clary and Jace holding hands, walked off a little in front t to give them a minute.

Alec took both his hands in his and held them tight.

“Babe, it’s alright. Things have changed since you were around before. There are still some small mind people out there but on the whole I think most people don’t care. This is new for me too, you know. I’ve never had a boyfriend before and I certainly haven’t walked around in public with one. But you know what? I don’t care what other people think. I love you, Magnus and as far as I’m concerned, love it love. It shouldn’t matter what form it comes in. So, let’s be brave together. After what it took to get us here, nothing can be that hard.”

He let his hands go and then held one out towards him.

Magnus still looked uncertain It was a big deal to be so openly affectionate with another man when he had spent a life time hiding that part of him. He took in a deep breath and took Alec’s strong hand and squeezed it hard. He trusted this man, like he had trusted no other. If he said it would be alright, then he believed him.

It was magical watching Magnus experience the twenty first century for the first time. His head looked like it was on a swivel, constantly turning this way and that, trying to take everything in. Everything fascinated him, from the vast array of shops to the variety of different people that were walking up and down the wide walk ways.

Everything was great and Magnus couldn’t keep the grin off his face until they got to the escalators.

Alec went to get on them but he stopped dead in his tracks, looking up at the moving walk way.

“It’s okay, babe. I’m here, okay? You’ll like it, I promise.” He said and with a very hesitant step Magnus put his foot on the belt.

He jerked back a little back Alec put a hand around his back and steadied him. It took a few seconds but the smile returned to his lips and he relaxed.

The sales man in the men’s wear store had a field day with them. Magnus kept going for the loudest shirts but luckily, Alec, Jace and Clary talked him out of most of them. He did insist on keeping one, however. It was a bright blue short sleeved shirt with stars and moons printed on it.
But the time they finally walked out of the place, Magnus had a completely new wardrobe.

Clary had suggested a proper restaurant for lunch but Magnus took one look at the food court and dragged Alec there.

“It’s like traveling the world without going anywhere to do it.” Magnus said, enthusiastically.

They ended up with quite a selection of food from fried chicken to Chinese and Magnus wanted to try it all.

After another look around the stores, they decided to get ice cream and head for the big park.

Wandering the shaded paths hand in hand eating their desserts was heavenly. After the past few days that had been full of tension and sadness, it was great to finally feel happy. They sat on the grass in front of the large pond, watching the birdlife on and around it.

“This has been the best day I’ve ever had.” Magnus said, leaning back against Alec’s chest.

He smiled and wrapped his arms around him, kissing his cheek.

“Yeah, not bad for someone who technically didn’t existed until a few hours ago. So, what do you think of the modern world, babe? Better than when you were alive before?” Alec asked him.

“You know, in any other setting, what you just said would have sounded absolutely mad and forty-eight hours ago, if someone had of asked me if I believed in ghosts I would of asked them when the last time they had a cat scan done. But now, it’s like I’ve been allowed to know something really special that only a few people know and I think it’s cool.” Jace said, pulling Clary to him.

“Well I’ll have you know that I’ve always known about that stuff. But I’m glad you guys are catching up. And I would like to say I think Magnus is the coolest and best-looking ghost there is.” She gave him a quick peck on the cheek.

“Thank you, Clary. But it’s former ghost now. I’ve finally come back to the land of the living and got the man of my dreams in the bargain.” He said, smiling at Alec. Alec leaned in and kissed him hard.

“And here you were a few hours ago worrying about what people would think when they saw you holding hands.” Alec said, resting his forehead on his.

It was the perfect end to a perfect day and they all headed back home. Clary decided that she better head home and Jace made an excuse to go with her, something about making sure she got home safely, and mumbled something about not waiting up for him to Alec as he followed her out the door.

It was the first time since Magnus’ return that they actually had the place to themselves. They made dinner together and then after they ate, curled up on the couch together and watched TV.

“You know, I used to lay here before and dream about moments like this. Wonder what it would be like to just have you curled up with me on this couch, watching a movie or some stupid TV show. I guess dreams do come true.” Alec said, holding him tighter.

Magnus bent his head and kissed his hand.

“Such a simple wish, my love. Mine was a little more complicated but there was only ever one. To be whole again. And when I was feeling greedy, to find the love of my life. I never thought I was a
worthy enough person to have both of these things bestowed on me but somewhere along the line I must of done something right because I got both of my wishes.”

“Well, you do have a few missed birthdays where you didn’t get to make a wish while you blew out the candles. I think you were owed a few.” Alec told him.

“You mean people still do that in this time? My goodness, I would never of thought that.”

“Some things don’t change, babe. And neither does knowing when you’ve found your soul mate.”

Magnus turned his head and Alec kissed him softly. Within seconds, though, their kiss caught fire and took off, sending them into a frenzy of mouths, tongues and wandering needy hands. Shirts got pulled off over heads and buttons undone.
Chapter 43

Alec went to the zip of the jeans Magnus was wearing and paused, Alec resting his head on his brow and smiling.

“What’s the matter, my heart?” Magnus aid, looking up at him.

“This is going to sound stupid but, I kinda miss the laces of your old pants. Zips make things too easy” Alec said, blushing. Magnus chuckled.

“Ha, I can put up a bit of a struggle if you like, darling, just for old time’s sake.”

Alec gave that about two seconds of consideration. “Nah, I’ll learn to live with it.” Magnus laughed and pulled him down to him as he pulled the small metal tag on the zipper.

They were both fast approaching the point of no return and after almost falling off the couch twice, erupting in a fit of giggles both times, they decided to take it upstairs.

Alec stood up and after pulling Magnus to his feet, scooped him up in his arms and carefully took him to their bedroom. He stopped at the door and kissed Magnus heatedly.

“Our first official night together as a proper couple. It’s like a honeymoon.” He said. Magnus gave him a sad smile which surprised him.

“Alexander, things may have changed but I don’t think we could aim that high.” Alec frowned, he didn’t know what he was talking about. Magnus kissed him softly, his arms around his neck.

“A honeymoon. It’s something that we could never have so I’m so pleased to have the next best thing to it with you.”

“Magnus, we could get married tomorrow if we wanted to.” Alec told him. Magnus’ eyes went wide and his mouth fell open.

“Surely, you’re joking, Alexander. Never in a million years would I have thought that would be possible.” He said looking stunned. Alec smiled and entered the bedroom and put him on the bed. Their bed.

“Well never in a hundred years, at least. It’s been a few years now but yeah, we could get married no problem.” He sat down on the bed and looked down at his hands.

“But you, you know, think that maybe, one day, not, not tomorrow or anything, but some time, that you would consider doing that? With me, that is.” He looked shyly over at his boyfriend and saw his face beaming back at him.

“Alexander, this certainly has been a day of miracles and this news is, by far, the biggest. This modern age makes my head swim and I think it will take me quite a while to get used to everything but this is one thing that I would jump at with my whole being. I don’t care if it’s next week, next month, next year or the next decade, my answer would always be the same. Yes. Yes, my heart, I would most definitely spend the rest of this life with you. I love you Alexander, with everything I have.”

Words failed Alec at that point and he didn’t even try to reply to Magnus. He just took possession of his mouth and covered his body with his own. He let his actions speak for him and they did,
After long morning cuddles, Magnus and Alec headed for Catarina’s house. Clary and Jace were already there along with Simon and Gertie.

They went inside and before they started the sad task of packing Cat’s many belongings up, Gertie said she needed to tell them something.

“I knew Cat all my life, and by that, I mean for as long as I can remember. I also knew that my mother and Grandmother knew her before I was born. I also know that Cat lived way longer than any other normal person but I never allowed it to get to me. I just accepted it and was grateful for it. It was a rare gift to have someone so special in your life for that long and I’m sure that if things had been different, she would have out lasted me.

I don’t pretend to know how it was possible for her to of lived for as long as she did and I know very little detail of the link between her and, I’m presuming you’re Magnus?”

She said looking at him as he stood beside Alec, holding his hand tightly. He nodded in reply.

“And frankly, I don’t want to know, but I know that in her last few days, she was at peace with whatever was happening. She asked me to give you something, Magnus so before we start anything, you need to read this apparently, as per her instructions. And as you know, when Cat said do something, you do it, so here.”

She handed a very surprised Magnus an envelope.

He looked at Alec and then the others before swallowing nervously and taking it. Alec let his hand go.

“I’ll give you some space to read it, babe. It must be pretty important if she’s done this.”

He went to walk away with the others, who had already headed for the kitchen. Magnus put his hand on his arm though and stopped him.

“Alexander, whatever this is about, it involves you too. We’re together now and that means what effects one effects the other. I want you to stay.”

He brushed his lips to his and Alec took his hand once more and they walked over to the sofa.

Alec put a supporting hand around Magnus’ back as they sat side by side while Magnus opened the letter. He looked up at his boyfriend before he started reading it.

Dear Magnus,

I’m going to start with the old clique if you’re reading this, then I have moved on from this mortal life of mine. Yeah, I know, I could have been a tad more original, but too bad.

So, if I’m dead, then that means you must have found the love of your life. Your true soulmate. Well done you. I always knew you would, eventually. You’re probably thinking now, the rotten old witch knew what would happen all along, that I knew that you wouldn’t die right alongside me and leave that special someone behind. The truth is, that’s only partly true.

You know I had no idea what the hell I was doing when I cast that spell all those years ago when you died the first time, and that somehow it backfired on me and dragged me along for the ride with you. Before you start saying anything, yes, I did deserve it for betraying you the way I did and I want to say that it’s the only thing in my life that I regret ever doing. So, for the thousandth time, I’m sorry. If I could have that moment again, I wouldn’t have done it. But having said that, if
things were different you wouldn’t have met your significant other so there is that.

But you know all this, so on to things you don’t know.

First one is, yes, I did know that you wouldn’t disappear for good when you met your love. I made the discovery just after I did the spell. I based my spell off one that was in one of Grand mama’s journals and in my haste to try to bring you back, I missed the last couple of lines. I can’t remember what they were now but suffice to say, it said something about being happy in your new life together. When I realised I had forgotten them, I went back to your house and cast the who thing again. That’s when I felt it rebound on me.

I had no idea if what I had tried would work at all anyway, so calling a do over didn’t really fill me with confidence that by saying the right words it would work any better. That’s why I never said anything to you. I didn’t want to tell you things would be okay and then have them not be. The chances of me getting it right were pretty slim odds so it wasn’t worth saying anything.

Having thought about it all these years later though, I realise that I should have told you anyway. You deserved to know. So, to make up for it, I want you to know that I have left you my house and whatever is in it. Oh, and did I mention the five million dollars that I inherited from your estate and your parents when they past? No, probably not.

You were their only son and they felt bad that I had been dragged into a loveless marriage so they made me their heir. There was more money but I bought this house with it and used it to live on so you get what’s left. You should have gotten it in the first place but then you died first so I kept as much of it as I could in the hope that one day I could give you what was rightfully yours.

You’ll be contacted by a lawyer after I’m gone and all you have to do is sign on the dotted line and it’s all yours.

I don’t care what you do with the place but use the money wisely, I hope you and your soulmate will be happy with it. Go out and live a little, you deserve it.

Until next time,
Catarina.

Magnus sat back on the sofa, the pages of the letter falling to the floor. His face was flushed and his eyes wide. He couldn’t believe what he just read. Alec was almost as bad as he was. He was looking at him in disbelief, shaking his head, one hand covering his mouth the other hanging on to his for grim death. They were both shaking.

“She did say five million dollars, didn’t she?” Magnus said, his voice trembling as he looked at his boyfriend.

Alec nodded before he dropped his hand and a smile started stretching across his face.

“I’ll pay you back for my clothes, then.” Magnus said, and Alec burst into laughter and took him in his arms.

The others came rushing in and stood around the sofa as they held each other and laughed hard enough that tears were running down their cheeks. Jace couldn’t stand it after another full five minutes.

“So, are we going to be let in on the joke or what guys?” He asked them.

They slowly calmed down and wiped their eyes.
“Seems I’ve just found myself a millionaire. Catarina has left the house and her estate to Magnus and it’s about five million dollars’ worth.” Alec informed them.

After some astonished gasps, and a rather high-pitched squeal from Clary that had them all wincing, they all congratulated Magnus who was still trying to come to terms with what he had just learnt.

Then the questions started; What are you going to do with the money? Are you going to keep the house? Are you going to travel? Magnus had no idea how to answer any of them. Magnus didn’t feel right touching anything until he knew everything was officially his so they decided just to clean out the kitchen and pack Catarina’s clothes.

Clary and Gertie headed for the bedroom while the boys did the kitchen. Catarina had lived very simply so it didn’t take long to box her clothes and shoes up ready to be donated to charity. Clary was reaching into the back of the big old wardrobe when her hand pushed down on a board in the bottom of it and it moved. She gave a gasp, frightened that she had broken it but then realised that it had been loosened on purpose.

She frowned and removed the board completely and saw that there was something under it. She pulled it out. It was wrapped in a piece of cloth and she carefully opened it. It was another journal, much like the ones that they had taken to Alec’s house to try to help get Magnus back. But why would she hide this one? She leafed through it and found a ribbon marking a certain page. The writing was very scrawly and she had trouble making any of it out but then she knew what she was reading.

She wrapped it back up and took it out to the kitchen and went over to Magnus and stood before him. He looked at her with a questioning gaze.

“Magnus, I found this in the bottom of the wardrobe. You need to see this.” She said and handed the journal to him.

He looked at her and took it, unwrapping it carefully. Everyone watched as his brow creased as he carefully turned the yellowed pages to where it was bookmarked with the ribbon.

“This is it. This is the spell she based the one she used on me. I wondered if she had kept it. Now I know. She must have kept it separate from the others for good reason. Maybe she was scared of using it again or discovering she’d made a mistake again. Either way, it doesn’t matter now. I’ll take it home and put it somewhere safe. Thank you, Clary, thank you for finding it.”

He put his hand on her arm and rubbed it.

Alec came up behind him and put his arms around his shoulders, kissing his cheek.

“This journal is your link to your past, babe. It’s special. It’ll remind us of how we got to be together, finally.” He said, resting his head against Magnus’ face.

Magnus smiled and reached up a hand and took his, squeezing his arm, leaning his head back on his shoulder.

“Yes, Alexander, I know.” He said, before Alec kissed his temple and they went back to work.

Two days later, they had the unhappy task of attending Catarina’s funeral. She had also left instructions with her lawyer about her wishes for this as well. It seems that Cat had used her longevity to be well organised for the day she always knew would come.
Nearly everyone in town was there, crowded into the small church and then at the cemetery. Everyone went back to Gertie’s house afterwards where two tables groaned with every type of cake, slice and sandwich there was. It seemed everyone had a story to tell about Cat. She had touched many lives over a long time. More than a few curious glances went to Magnus as he and Alec stood talking to various town’s people. They had decided that knowing that people would be interested in his presence and his obvious resemblance to the old photos of the town’s most famous resident, they would tell them he was a descendant and hope that people bought it.

Apart from the odd older resident that looked at him like a bug under a microscope, people seemed to accept their story with no issues. Alec tried to hide his amusement when Magnus embarked on a whole elaborate back story that he concocted when he was asked how they had met. Alec stood a little to the side and hid a smirk behind his hand as he regaled a couple of the older ladies with it. They hung on every word as they distractedly bit into pieces of cake and sipped tea.

Maybe Magnus should be the one writing the book, he thought to himself. Then an idea hit him. He hadn’t even touched his computer to start his novel yet, not even an outline had been typed but all of a sudden, he knew without a doubt what it was going to be about, title and all. And once again, he had Magnus to thank for it. He took his hand away from his face and smiled at his boyfriend.

So much had happened in such a short space of time, it made him dizzy thinking about it. But by far the greatest thing, had been meeting Magnus and falling in love with him. It had been what Magnus would have called a whirlwind romance, that was for sure but at the same time, it felt like they had known each other for years. Maybe there was something to the whole soulmates thing. Looking at the handsome man with his golden skin and sparkling eyes before him, watching him as he dramatically told his story, their story, he couldn’t picture his life without him in it. He caught Magnus’ eye and saw him give him a cheeky wink before going back to his narration.

He smiled. Catarina had been right, he really was his salvation.
Six months later………..

Alec sat before the glowing screen of his computer. He pressed the print option on the screen and watched as the printer spat out five months of late nights and time away from the man he loved. The timing of this was perfect. When he had decided to do what he had been working on, he knew the chances of everything working out time wise was probably asking a bit much but then again, he was no stranger to miracles.

While he waited for the printer to finish he stood up and stretched his back before padding softly into the room next door and looking around the door frame. Magnus was curled up under the quilt, only his sleeping face showing. He came around further so he could lean on the door frame and watch him.

As he stood there, he saw Magnus’ brow crease a little in his sleep and his hand poked out from under the edge of the quilt, reaching for the empty space beside him. His space. Alec smiled and felt that familiar warmth spread through him. Just when he thought he couldn’t love the man any more than he already did, he went and did something that made his heart want to burst from his chest.

He grumbled something in his sleep, and shifted restlessly. He never slept soundly when Alec wasn’t beside him and Alec was sure that if there was a time when the situation was reversed, he would be exactly the same. Six months might have passed but there wasn’t a morning that he didn’t wake up beaming at that handsome face, which now sported a very fetching goatee, and thank God that he got to do this every day.

So much had happened. Life never stood still for them. Not long after Catarina’s funeral, everything got settled with her estate and Magnus became the owner of her whimsical house. He couldn’t bring himself to sell it so they had toned down the colour scheme of the bedroom and made a few updates before renting it out.

He offered the majority of her belongings to a few of her closest friends and neighbours, who all found various objects or Knick knacks that held memories for them.

Gertie took the tea pot and matching cups and saucers that she had shared many a cup of tea from with Catarina. Clary took charge of all Cat’s holiday decorations and vowed that she would carry on the tradition of decorating with them each year. Tomorrow was Halloween and they had been at Clary’s all day, helping her set all the decorations up for the big night.

It was also Magnus’ birthday, their first since he had come back to him. At first, he had wanted to ignore it, saying that he hadn’t really missed celebrating them but Alec had managed to talk him into it. They decided to incorporate Clary’s first ‘haunted house’ with a party and even though he grumbled about it, Alec was sure he was actually looking forward to it.

Magnus had kept all Catarina’s collection of her Grandmothers’ journals. They now had pride of place in a new book shelf in the living room. Except for the one that Clary had discovered in the wardrobe. It was now in the box that Alec had found along with the hair, spell and photograph. It seemed a fitting place for it. Like the end of a story that had begun so long ago and finally completed.

That box and its contents, sat on Alec’s father’s desk and had been his muse for the last five
months. It had served its purpose and had seen him through many a late night when his words had
failed him. He had only to look towards it and his inspiration flowed again.

The very next day after the funeral, Magnus had insisted that they go to the city and buy the new
bed. He wanted a fresh start, mark their new beginning and the brass bed was a reminder of his
past that he now wanted to leave behind. Alec had reminded him that it was also a link to their very
beginnings but he wouldn’t be shaken from the idea of getting a new one.

Alec smiled to himself as he remembered that trip. They had gone to one of the big furniture stores
and Magnus had dragged him around the showroom. There had been several that Alec had liked but
Magnus kept dismissing them. The sale’s man had been very patient with him, and Magnus had
insisted on trying out each and every one of his possible choices.

The poor guy looked rather uncomfortable when Magnus insisted that Alec lay beside him and
then bounced up and down on the mattress next to him telling him that he had to make sure it was
capable of taking a fair bit of punishment and that he didn’t want to have the distraction of any
squeaking or creaking. Alec thought the poor guy was going to pass out.

After an hour and a half of torturing the man, he settled on one with a wooden headboard and foot.
It was very simple design then the sale’s man made the fatal mistake of asking him what had made
him choose that particular bed. As Alec stood at the counter and put over his card, and the guy had
been entering the amount plus their delivery details into the computer, Magnus proudly told him it
was because he could still tie his boyfriend’s wrist together and loop the rope through the
horizontal beams of it. Alec had looked at his man wide eyes, utterly shocked that he had said that
in front of a complete stranger. The poor sale’s guy lost his cool spectacularly and actually buckled
slightly at the knees before going a shade of red usually associated with fire engines and ended up
having to re-enter the sale twice before he got it right.

They got back to the car and Alec started to berate him for his behaviour but in the end, all they did
was sit in the car park and kill themselves laughing about the look on the man’s face.

Alec smiled even now, thinking about that day.

Two days after the funeral, Jace had reluctantly headed back to the city. He and Clary had really hit
it off and in between seeing her, he and Alec had reconnected. It was nice to think he had a best
friend again. Jace had confided in him that he wasn’t happy where he was in his job and he was
looking for a way out.

Two months later, a position came up at the small high school in town for a physical education
teacher and Jace applied for it and got it. The school had been thrilled to have someone that had
been associated with some big named athletes and he had been treated like a celebrity when he got
there. Of course, the fact that Clary just happened to have a spare room went a long way in his
decision to accept the post.

Now the two of them had become the lovey dovey couple that made everyone mad with their
gooey looks and way too sweet sentiments. Alec and Magnus loved teasing them about it. It had
only been a month since they were coping the same treatment from them.

Simon was still single and still filling in as the town handy man as well as the electrician. The five
of them had taken to going to each other’s places for dinner each Friday evening and they always
had a good time. Simon’s contribution was always a selection of dishes from Pappa’s Pizza. He
cited that he couldn’t boil water without messing it up so for the sake of everyone’s health, he was
determined to work his way through the menu.
The biggest change had been when Magnus had been offered a position at the town library. With his knowledge of the history of the place and his love of the written word, he was a great choice. Alec remembered the day that he had picked him up and he had gotten into the car with a frown, clearly not happy.

“What’s wrong, babe? Bad day?” He had asked him as they headed home.

“I can’t believe that woman, what was she thinking? Didn’t she know that some of those books were very valuable?” He said, the anger in his voice very clear.

Alec felt a little lost and went to ask him what he had been talking about but Magnus had been too worked up to stop there.

“My ex-wife. The woman must have given all my books to the library when I, when I wasn’t around anymore. Now they’re sitting on the shelves in the library, waiting for strangers to get their grubby little hands on them. The very nerve. She could have kept some of them at least.” He grumbled, folding his arms over his chest.

Alec knew better than to comment about it so he just let it go and by the time they had gotten home, Magnus had calmed down. A few days later, Alec had seen a collection of first additions of one of Magnus’ favourite authors online and although it was a rather ungodly sum of money, he bought them for him and presented them to him a few days later, along with the book case.

“Consider this the start of your new collection. Our collection. And I promise that if you go disappearing on me again, I won’t donate them to the library.” He had told him.

Magnus had been so happy he had jumped up and wrapped himself around Alec’s waist with his legs kissing him so hard that he forced them into a wall where things had gotten totally out of control within minutes.

They ended up on the floor, naked, breathless, sweating and giggling like a couple of newlyweds. “Wow, if this is what I get for buying you a few old books, what would happen if I got you something really valuable?” Alec had panted.

That question had been the start of round two and resulted in dinner at ten thirty that night.

Alec realised that he couldn’t hear the printer working anymore and he went back to the office and got the pages from the tray, taped them on the desk top to neaten them and then got the box he had been saving for them and put the pile of pages inside and closed the lid.

He checked his phone, one thirty in the morning. He rubbed his eyes, needing sleep. He was turning off the light when he felt his phone vibrate in his hand. He looked at the screen and smiled.

It was a text.

“I’m in the city and will drive down tomorrow after noon. I have everything with me that I told you about. See you then. Looking forward to meeting you both.”

The final part of his birthday plans for Magnus was in place. He couldn’t wait till later tonight.

Magnus grumbled as he got out of the car in Clary and Jace’s drive way. He was still complaining about the party they had planned for him. Alec was ignoring him. He was really going to regret all this whinging in a little while.

Being Halloween, they decided that they should make it a costume party. Magnus decided that
after being the resident ghost for so long, he was going to relive a not so fond memory and they had found clothes as close to his old ones as they could and used a very pale make up to make him look more ‘ghostly’.

“I don’t remember looking this white even when I was dead.” Magnus told Alec as he applied the foundation in the bathroom.

Magnus’ eyes had travelled the length of his body and he looked at him dubiously.

“And tell me again, exactly who you are supposed to be?” He said.

Alec had been so pleased when he had found his costume. He thought it was absolutely perfect. Even if his boyfriend didn’t get the reference. He had on a pair of baggy overalls with writing on the front and back. As well as a bulky looking appliance on his back.

“I’m a ghost buster, babe. Remember I told you about that movie? We’ll watch it and you’ll get it, believe me.” Magnus still wasn’t quite convinced but went along with it.

The front yard of the house looked fantastic. They had done a great job with the decorations. Wispy fake spider web hung from the bushes and jack-o-lanterns dotted the yard, their flickering lights adding to the atmosphere. A large witch on a broomstick hung from the front porch and cackled loudly as they mounted the steps, her eyes flashing red.

“Well, I had no idea that Catarina was going to make an appearance tonight. How are you, my dear? Having a nice after life, are we?” Magnus said, voice dripping with sarcasm.

Alec wanted to burst out laughing but managed to contain himself.

“Magnus, behave.” He said, as they knocked on the front door.

A wreath with little sheeted ghosts and vampires all over it blinked tiny orange and purple lights on the door.

“I had no idea that things had gotten so bad that they decided to merge two holidays together. Aren’t door wreaths for Christmas?” Magnus said. Alec sighed and rolled his eyes. Magnus was really on fire tonight.

The door opened and Clary stood before them, a frothy distraction of pink tulle and gauzy wings, she even had a wand in one hand.

“Hey! Hello guys, come in! Happy birthday Magnus” She chirped and hugged him tight, burying him in the copious yards of her costume.

“Thank you, Clary. And may I say I’ve never seen a more beautiful little cupcake. And your red hair makes the perfect looking cherry on top.” Magnus told her, grinning broadly.

Alec smacked a hand to his forehead as he saw her face drop a little.

“But I’m a fairy.” She said to him, then looked up at Alec.

“Yes, and he knows that. We are being a tad difficult this evening. I think a glass of wine might be in order.” Alec said, taking his boyfriend’s hand and giving him a stern look.

Clary had gone crazy with the decorations inside as well and it was hard to know where to look first. Everyone was in the living room and they all greeted them as they entered. Jace came over to
them. He had his blond hair slicked back and was dressed all in black. Symbols decorated his arms and Magnus frowned at them as he took the glass of wine from him.

“Jace, how original. So, where’s your motorcycle?” He said, smiling and taking a sip of his drink.

“Huh?” He said, frowning.

“Well, aren’t you one of those bike gang members? I love those tattoos by the way, very you.”

“Oh, ha, no, I’m a shadow hunter. You know from that really cool show on TV? Clary thinks o look like one of the main characters. Pretty cool huh?”

Alec nodded in agreement, while Magnus gave a sniff and shook his head looking around the room at the other varieties of costumes.

“I really don’t know why people can’t be more traditional. What ever happened to donning a bed sheet and cutting out eye holes or wearing your father’s old dress cloak and being a vampire? They’re proper costumes not someone from some television show and no one’s heard of.”

Jace frowned and opened his mouth to correct him about it but Alec caught his eye and shook his head. Okay, this had gone on long enough.

He took Magnus’ arm and took him into the kitchen.

“Alright. What’s going on, Magnus? This is supposed to be a celebration not a game of how many of our friends you can piss off in the shortest time possible. I thought you were okay with the party.” Alec said, looking at him seriously.

Magnus gave a sigh and leaned his forehead on Alec’s chest. Alec rolled his eyes and took his man in his arms. Something was up. He didn’t need their old bond that had seemed to of disappeared since Magnus had returned to the land of the living, to tell something was bothering him.

“I’m sorry, my love. It’s just well, I feel so old around everyone. I may look in my late twenties but I’m over a hundred and thirty years old. I was born when most of these people’s grandparents were born, even great grandparents. Birthdays are just a reminder that you’re getting old. I already know that. I don’t need to be reminded of that.” He said, softly.

He looked up at Alec his dark brown eyes full of sadness.

“Babe, as far as I and everyone else here is concerned, your twenty-eight years old and not a day over that. Do you know how many people that age would kill for the life experience that you carry with you? Your truly one of a kind, Magnus and you should be proud of that. And if you want to get technical, then you are really only six months old because you actually didn’t exist until then. So that makes me the old man.”

Alec saw the corner of his mouth twitch, hinting at a smile. He bent his head and kissed him hard and long.

“I don’t care if your six months old or six hundred years old, I love you, Magnus Bane, and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Now, are you going to go out there and celebrate your twenty eighth birthday or do I have to take you to the nearest old folk’s home?” Alec said, when he finally broke the kiss.

Magnus finally allowed the smile to play on his lips.

“Yes, Alexander, I’m ready. I spent so many years with nothing to celebrate, especially my
birthday, which was a total waste of time anyway, that it’s strange to be doing it again. I’m sorry, my heart. I’ll be good, I promise. I should be celebrating every day that I get to spend with you and our friends. Let’s go and make up for it.” He kissed him again and they went back out to the living room.

When they got back, Simon had arrived. He had slicked his dark hair right back and whitened his face. He wore a long dark cape and a white shirt and black pants. He even had a pair of fake fangs in his mouth and to complete the look, a small trickle of blood down his chin. Magnus made an excited noise and launched himself at him, hugging him tight. Simon’s eyes went wide with surprise and he looked at Alec who just mouhted the words, “don’t ask” at him behind Magnus’ back.


Simon looked confused.

“I’m nosey who?” he said, frowning. Alec came over and took Magnus in his arms.

“He means a vampire, Simon. Will you stop showing off? Not everyone knows all about that kind of stuff, babe.” Alec said, kissing his cheek.

“But that was a classic reference, surely everyone knows that at least? What is wrong with the world today?” Magnus said shaking his head.

Alec laughed and took his hand and led him over to talk to some other people.

An hour later, Clary came up to Alec and gently tapped him on his shoulder.

“Alec, I think your surprise has arrived.” She told him quietly.

Alec looked at Magnus who was engaged in conversation with a group of people to his left. Good, he was distracted, he wouldn’t see him slip away for a minute.
He followed Clary to the front door and greet a tall slim figured man who was standing on the front porch. He had been watching the passing parade of children and parents who were out trick or treating and turned when he heard the door open.

Alec startled a little when he saw his face. My God, the resemblance was uncanny. Magnus was going to die, only figuratively this time though.

“Roger? Wow, it’s great to finally meet you. I’m Alexan, er Alec.” He held his hand out to him and he took it with a smiled.

“Hi, yeah, the same. After all these months it good to finally see you in person but I feel like ive known you and Magnus for ages now. This place is great. You guys really go all out with this stuff.” He said, looking around.

“Yeah, it’s kind of a big deal around here. Listen, why don’t we go inside?” Alec said, holding the door open for him. He led Roger into one of the front rooms.

The globes in the lights had been replaced with purple bulbs giving the room and eerie glow. It was Clary’s spare room and the single bed was occupied by a couple of skeletons, holding hands and grinning madly.

Roger laughed when he saw them. He held out an envelope that he carried with him.

“I brought as many photos that I could find. I hope he likes them. I had them all copied so if he wants he can keep them.” He explained.

Alec smiled and nodded.

“I’m sure he will. Magnus has no idea about this so it should be a great surprise for him. Clary, can you go and get him for us? I want to do this in here, I think he’ll need a minute when he meets Roger for the first time. It’s gonna be a bit of a shock. I can’t believe how much you look like him.” Alec said as Clary left the doorway.

“Ha, yeah, I know, red hair and all. I can’t wait to meet the original Magnus Bane’s descendant either. We never knew about him until my Grandfather passed away and we found his diary. It was so sad what happened to them. This will sort of be like closure on their story, won’t it?” He said.

“Yeah, I think it will.” Alec agreed. He heard a knock at the closed door. He gave Roger a raised eye brow look and took in a breath.

“Well, here we go.” He said quietly.

He walked over to the door and eased it open and came out into the hallway closing the door behind him. Magnus was looking at him frowning.

“Alexander, what are you up to? You haven’t got another ghost in there with you, have you?” Alec wanted to laugh out loud with the irony of what his man had just said.

Magnus picked up that something was going on and he looked at him warily.

“Alright, what’s going on? We might not have our connection anymore but I can still tell when
“Magnus, I’ve been working on part of your birthday present for a few months now. Remember ages ago and I told you I’d help you find out what happened to Elias? Well, I did. I did some research and found out what became of him after that day. I also found his grandson, Roger. He’s been great with information about Elias and he’s here. So, he can talk to you about him, if you want that is.”

Magnus looked at him in shock. His eyes were shiny in the light of the hallway and he stood stock still; Alec was starting to get worried that he hadn’t taken a breath for a while.

“Babe, are you alr…” He started, putting his hands on his arms. Magnus cut him off by throwing himself into his arms and holding him tight. Alec felt himself relax. Thank God, he was breathing at least.

He pulled back from him and kissed him hard. He could feel him shaking and he gathered him to him once more.

“Hey, are you okay? Are you sure you want to do this?” He asked him.

“Alexander, I wanted to close that chapter on my past so many times but I never thought I’d get the chance. It was the one thing that I felt guilty about. I thought I had caused Elias’ death all those years ago. I lived with that all those decades and now you’re telling me his grandson is here so he must have lived. You have no idea how much this means to me, my heart. Where is he? I want to meet him.” He said, taking his hand.

Alec turned the handle on the door and opened it. Roger stood up from the corner of the bed. Both of them looked shell shocked. Eyes wide and mouths hanging open. It was a full five minutes till one of them had recovered enough to speak.

“My God, you, you are the exact image of him. It’s like being taken back to the last time I saw him. I can’t believe it.” Magnus mumbled.

“Hello, Magnus, and I could say the same. It seems that our ancestors wanted us to meet somehow. I’m Roger. Roger Elias, named after my grandfather.”

He held out a hand to him and Magnus took it but instead of shaking it, he pulled the man close and hugged him fiercely. Roger looked more than a little shocked but he relaxed and took it well.

They sat on the side of the bed and Roger proceeded to tell him all about his Grandfather and what they learned from his journal.

When Elias had been hauled off by Catarina and Magnus’ father, they took him way out of town where Magnus’ father then began to beat him. His rage was shocking, according to Elias’ journal and resulted in two black eyes, a couple of broken ribs and two missing teeth. He had been sure he would have killed him if it hadn’t been for Catarina’s father.

He made Mr Bane leave him alone, telling him that he’d had enough, that he’d learned his lesson. They drove off, leaving him by the side of the road, laying on the ground, bleeding and semi-conscious and in more pain than he had ever felt in his life.

Magnus closed his eyes when he heard this, his face pained. He had always hated his father’s temper and had been on the receiving end of it himself on occasion.

Roger went on to tell him that Elias hadn’t known how long he had laid there for but it was dark
when he heard voices around him. A kindly man and woman had stopped their wagon and gently helped him in to it where they took him to their farm and cleaned and bound his injuries. It was several days before he had been strong enough to get out of bed. The kind couple wanted him to stay but he needed to get back to the city where he could retreat back into the shadows and become invisible again.

They lent him money and arranged for a friend that went to the city on business to take him back. It took him months to get completely better, giving himself over to his friends to help him hide while he healed and his heart ached for Magnus. He tried to find out what had happened to him; he had been terrified that his father had gone back and killed him or tried to.

Magnus told Roger about his own beating, but saying that it was his relative, not him. He told him of getting sick and being on his death bed. He almost told him the truth but after a quick look in Alec’s direction, he settled on telling him that Catarina had taken pity on him and nursed him back to health.

“So, magnus and Catarina must have had at least one child, what was his name?” Roger had asked.

Magnus looked flustered for a minute before he answered.

“Ah, Leonard. They called him Leonard. And when he grew up he married and I was born. But tell me what happened to your grandfather when he recovered?” He urged and Alec knew that he was making sure the focus stayed on Elias, not him.

“Elias had been so scared to try to have a relationship with another man again, he ended up marrying a woman to try to disguise his feelings. They had three children, my father was one of them. He had been the only boy. Martha, Mary and my father, Magnus.” He told him, looking down at the envelope that still lay in his lap.

Magnus gasped. His eyes went wide. Good God, had Elias actually named his only son for his male lover?

“I guess Magnus had really meant something to him. We had no idea about what it all meant or about the original Magnus until he died and we found his journal hidden in his bedroom. It was really hard reading about this whole other life that he’d had and we knew nothing about. It must have been so hard pretending to be one way and wanting to be another all those years.

He had always seemed such a happy old guy. But every now and then, there were times when I’d seen him just staring out at nothing. I remember asking him once when I was a kid what he was thinking about and he told me better days, boy, better days. He sounded really sad but it never lasted long and he would be telling us some stupid joke and making us laugh. I have some photos of him here, if you want to see them?” Roger asked him.

Alec was watching his boyfriend from the other side of the room. He could tell that he was on the verge of tears but he was doing a great job at holding them at bay. Roger reached inside the envelope and pulled them out. Magnus looked over to Alec, pleading with his shiny eyes to come to him. Alec went over and sat beside him on the floor beside the bed.

Magnus sucked in a breath as he saw the first photograph. It was taken on his wedding day. He wore a plain brown suit and had a white flower in the lapel. His bride was looking demurely at the camera and while Elias’ thin lips were curved in a smile, it didn’t reach his eyes. Magnus recognised the same look from the dusty old pictures of his own wedding. Brides, it seemed, were much better at looking the part. He didn’t know about this woman, but he knew Catarina knew their marriage had been nothing more than an elaborate cover story. A live performance like a
reality TV show from this time.

The second was of Elias awkwardly holding a baby. His wife beamed for the camera while he looked all sharp angles and elbows. Again, the forced smile. Another part to play. The next one was similar and Magnus guessed rightly that these were the births of Roger’s aunts. The thirst family photo was a different story.

This one had been taken out side in a back garden it looked like. Two little girls, the eldest that looked no more than five, stood beside her mother while the youngest who looked to be about two years old, sat on her lap. Elias was nursing the new baby. His long thin face looked down at the sleeping child and this time the smile reached his eyes. Was it because he finally had a son, someone to carry on the family name or was it because they had named him Magnus? The second last one had been taken years later at Magnus’ high school graduation. Elias was much older but still very proud, standing tall with his hand on Magnus’ shoulder.

The last one caused the tears that Magnus had been keeping at bay for so long to over flow. Alec got up from the floor and sat on the bed beside him, putting his arm around his shoulders while he looked at the photo.

“We found this one in the journal. It must have been the only photo they had taken together and was very precious to him.” Roger told him.

Magnus nodded as tears dripped from his cheeks. It was the exact same one that now sat in the box on Alec’s desk.

“It was, it was more priceless than gold to him. As it was to me.” He said softly, almost under his breath. He tore his eyes away from the picture to look at Roger. “How did he die?” He asked, his voice shaky with emotion.

Alec took his hand in his and squeezed it tight, wanting Magnus to know that he was there for him.

“Peacefully. In his sleep. He was ninety-two.” Roger told him.

He was looking at Magnus with sympathy but it was mixed a little with intrigue. He probably hadn’t been expecting such an emotional response.

Magnus gave himself a few more moments to mourn his friend before he straightened his back and shoulders and wiped his face.

“Thank you, Roger. You have no idea how much this means to me. It was the best birthday surprise I could have. Please, come and join us and we’ll raise a glass to you Grandfather properly.” He said.

“Thank you, Magnus. I’d like that. But thank your man here, he’s the one that did all the work looking for me.” He said, smiling at Alec.

Magnus put a hand to the side of his face and kissed him softly.

“Thank you, Alexander. From the bottom of my heart. You’ve allowed me to close the door on my past and be able to finally move on with my life with you. I think I need that drink now, let’s go?”

Magnus put the photos back in the envelope and let them on the bed beside the skeletons.

“I can’t think of a more fitting place for these. Not exactly a closest but close enough.” Magnus quipped as they left the bedroom.
They were about to enter the living room when he paused.

“Just out of curiosity, did you ever find out who the couple were that helped Elias when he had been injured?” Magnus asked Roger.

“Oh yeah, it was in the diary. Some local couple, ah, Fairchild, I think their name was.” He told him.

Magnus’ eyes went straight to Alec’s before they looked at the redhaired fairy in the layers of pink tulle. Somehow it made perfect sense.

Half an hour later, Clary brought out a cake, candles ablaze as everyone sang happy birthday. Magnus smiled as he blew them out and everyone cheered.

“I just want to say a couple of things if I could.” Alec said, raising his voice a little over the noise.

“This past six months has been the wildest ride of my life but I thank my lucky stars that fate brought me here. I’ve made great friends and feel like part of a great community. And I never would have met the love of my life either.

I don’t know if many of you know, but when I first came here, I had every intention of writing a book, a lifelong dream that I was determined to for fill, I had hard and fast ideas of the way it was supposed to go but I didn’t count on falling in love and meeting such great people as well. So, I changed my mind. I didn’t write the book I had envisioned. I wrote a better one.” He took a box from the table that held Magnus’ other gifts and handed it to him.

“It’s our story, Magnus. Your story. I just hope I’ve done it justice. Happy birthday, babe. I wanted you to be the first one to read it.”

Magnus took the box from him, eyes shining once more. He lifted the lid and ran his hand over the first page.

His Salvation
A novel
By
Alec Lightwood.

“Oh Alexander, you’re going to make me cry again. Thank you, my love. I can’t wait to read it.”

He handed Clary the box as she stood beside him, lip quivering and cheeks streaked with tears. He wrapped Alec in his arms and everyone cheered as he kissed him hard and long.

“I haven’t finished yet.” Alec said to him. Magnus’ brow creased as he pulled right back and gave him a stern look.

“What are you up to now, Alexander? I don’t think I can take much more tonight.” He said.

Alec grinned. “Ha. I think you can take just one more.”

He untangled himself from Magnus’ arms and took a step backwards before reaching into the pocket of his costume and bringing out a small black box. The room went completely silent as Alec bent one long leg and knelt before him.

Magnus’ heart was beating so hard in his chest he thought it would burst from him at any moment.

He held his breath. Hands covering his mouth.
“Magnus, I know we’ve only been together for a short time but it doesn’t matter. As we know, time is irrelevant with us and no amount of it could ever be enough to spend with you. But all good stories need a beginning and I want ours to start as soon as possible. Magnus, will you marry me?” He flipped the lid on the box revealing a black onyx band.

“Yes, Alexander, nothing would give me greater pleasure.” He said softly, a tremor to his voice.

Alec took the ring from the box and slid it on his finger and then took him in his arms and kissed him long and deep. The room erupted with claps and cheers and when they finally came up for air, everyone came to them and offered them congratulations.

Clary was a total mess and Jace had to pull her off Alec and Magnus so he could hug them.

“Well done, man. I know you’ll be happy. And I know that up there somewhere, your mom and dad would be proud of you as well.” He told Alec.

Alec hugged his best friend tight. “Thanks, Jace. I think they would be too.”

Clary was bouncing up and down like an excited kid. “You so have to let me help plan the wedding. Please, please, please!” She begged them.

“Geez Clary, we haven’t even thought about where or when yet.” Alec said, looking exasperated.

“I know exactly where and when, my love. Next summer, in the rose garden at our house.” Magnus told him matter of factly.

Alec didn’t even have to think about it, it was perfect.

“Perfect, babe. I can’t wait. Wow, engaged for less than five minutes and we already have the time, place and a wedding planner. Now all we need is a couple of best men and we’ll be set.” Alec said, laughing.

“I think we have them already, Alexander. I’m sure Jace will stand up for you and Simon, would you don me the honour of being my best man?” Magnus asked him.

Simon was stunned. “Me? Really? I thought you didn’t like me?” She stammered.

“If I’ve learned anything in my many years, Simon it’s how to forgive and forget. I like you well enough now I know you aren’t trying to steal my fiance. But just know, we have a good supply of cups again if you try anything again.” Magnus assured him.

Simon gave a laugh. “Well, I suppose miracles can happen. But a real miracle is if you could find me a date before then. Then I truly will think your magical.”

“Oh, Simon? Have you met Roger yet?” Alec asked, introducing the two men.

Simon gave the tall red-haired man one of his signature goofy grins and Alec smiled as Roger’s face went a similar shade as his hair as the shook hands, not taking their eyes off each other once. Magnus looked at Alec in surprise.

“Don’t tell me, Roger is…” He said, as Alec finished his sentence for him.

“Gay. Yep, he told me on the phone. Seems it skips a generation in his family but it looks like Elias wanted to make sure his namesake got a better chance at finding the love of his life than he did.”
Magnus pulled him close. “It looks like we are reaching the end of the story, Alexander, and it’s better than any fairy tale that’s ever been written.” He said, kissing his fiancé again.

“Oh I don’t think it’s over. It’s just the start of the next chapter, babe. I love you, Magnus Bane.” He said, picking up their glasses and handing one to Magnus.

“I love you too, Alexander. And here’s hoping for a sequel.” Magnus said, beaming up at him and they toasted to their shared happiness.

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