Alexander? Yeah, he is different!

by caffeineaddicted_malec

Summary

Magnus is betrothed to his father's best friend's son Alec Lightwood. He hates the guy for no other reason but the fact that he is his fiance in a marriage he never wanted in the first place. When a job offer in NYC lands in Magnus' email, Alec decides to take him to the city so that he can pursue his dreams. They are forced to share an apartment in Manhattan where Magnus and Alec realize that they could be friends, and make this relationship tolerable.

Alec inspires Magnus and instills confidence in him, and Magnus makes Alec believe that there's still good and love left in the world and not everything is cold and heartbreaking. The story follows their journey as strangers who are engaged to each other to being best friends who tend to their careers all day long and come back at night only to have dinner together and probably a couple of movies and games.

[Set in the A/B/O Universe but without the traditional stereotypes associated with it]
The Hotel Management is pleased to inform you that you have been selected for a permanent position in the Housekeeping Department of the Plaza based on the interview you gave, last month. Should you decide to accept this offer, please contact the Management Department stating the same and fly down to Manhattan as soon as you can to discuss the details of this job.

The offer stands until 15th of this month, after which, your recruitment offer will be withdrawn. We hope you do take up this offer because we see a potential in you.

For any further queries, you can call me/write to me. My details are, as usual, mentioned in the signature.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Luke Garroway

Human Resources and Recruitments Officer

the Plaza, New York

Magnus finished reading the email and immediately called out to his younger sister. There was no response and that is when he realized that nobody was at home at this hour. His sister was supposed to be in College while his parents were supposed to be at their factory, which they ran together. He sighed and pulled out his phone to dial his sister, Clary. The ecstasy had to be shared and Magnus knew not how to do it better than by calling his sister. As soon as he raised his thumb to press the call button, something shined in the corner of his eyes. Magnus shifted his gaze a little to his left and saw it – a beautiful diamond studded platinum band shining in his ring finger.

Right.

The engagement.
can we be friends?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Sometimes, I can’t tell if our community lives in the modern world. The mankind has stepped foot on Mars and here we are in Idris, still mating an Alpha and Omega just to maintain our kind from not slipping into the oblivion. I mean what if every Omega doesn’t mate with an Alpha. It’s not like our kind will be erased from existence because of one rebel trying to make a mark in the world. It’s ridiculous. Omegas are not baby-making machines”, Magnus sighed as pulled out the drawer from the billing machine.

“That will be $22.50, Sir”, the man flashed a smile turning to the customer and handing over the change, placing the bill on the tray. He went over to the expresso vending machine to make their order.

“That’s just how our world works, Magnus. It is regressive, but that is just…”, a girl, with fiery red hair mumbled from across the counter.

“Well, it doesn’t make it alright”, Magnus lifted his shoulders and rolled his eyes, filling the cup with coffee.

Clary shrugged sipping her own coffee, “It is what it is.”. She sat there, watching her brother, Magnus work as a barista at the Java Jones café in the heart of the city of Idris and complete his shift. Clary Morgenstern was Magnus’ adopted sister. His parents, Kaya and Asmodeus had taken her in after her mother and father died in a car crash, in the forests surrounding the city. Clary was only two when she became an orphan.

She was two years younger to Magnus and they were practically inseparable throughout their school and college life. Magnus was a hotel management graduate while Clary was studying culinary sciences.

Idris was the known home to the remaining werewolf community in North America. Centuries ago, the humans had hunted them out of their towns and the few that had survived, scattered across the continents, taking shelter in remote locations. The humans believed that they had eliminated them from existence in the entirety but today, the wolves lived right under their noses, mingling with the common crowd and hiding their true-selves from the ones they called mundanes.

The founding fathers of the town of Idris were the ancestors of the five major packs that had fled and found shelter in the City of Glass – the Lightwoods, the Banes, the Herondales, the Morgensterns and the Fairchilds. The head of all the five families had formed a Council that they called the Clave. The Clave set down rules about how the packs lived and functioned, out and about in the city. There was a system in their community – a clear division of power and domination. Every young wolf was presented with a second gender when they came of age…when they turned eighteen. The genders were the warrior Alphas, the Betas, the submissive Omegas and the rare Deltas. The Betas and Deltas could mate amongst themselves, but the Alphas could only mate with an Omega.

With this gender differentiation, came bias and discrimination. The Omegas, the only werewolf gender capable of procreating were looked down upon and used as wolf-making machines, so to speak. The Alphas, being warrior and arrogant by nature, dominated the way the packs lived, and their decision was usually irrevocable. The Betas and Deltas chose to not voice their opinions in the wake of increasing tension between the packs.
Magnus Bane, the eldest child of Asmodeus Bane was presented as an Omega when he turned 18. He was one of the brightest students of his class, but his presentation pushed him way behind everyone else. His heat cycles prevented him from attending classes, his pheromones made it impossible for him to go out alone, without the protection of an Alpha, which used to be his mother until Clary presented herself as one. After that, the redhead accompanied her brother everywhere whenever he was close to his heat cycle.

Magnus hated it. He didn’t mind being an Omega. He embraced his true self. But he hated how people treated him because he was one. All he ever wanted was equality. He wanted people to judge him for his character and personality, not his wolf gender. He hated the way the Alphas looked at him, like he was a piece of meat they could hog. He knew this one truth about his life once he was presented as an Omega – that the only worth his life held was the fact that he was supposed to be betrothed to one of the Alphas and beget their children to forward the clan.

But that’s not what Magnus wanted for himself. He wanted to go to New York and work at the Plaza Hotel. It had been his dream for ever. Kaya and Asmodeus tried to explain him that after he had been engaged to be mated to his Alpha, the only person who could make that decision for him was the said Alpha and his new family.

His Alpha.

Magnus was finishing his shift when his mind drifted to the thought of the man he was betrothed to.

Alexander Gideon Lightwood.

The oldest son of the current Consul of the Clave, Robert Lightwood.

Magnus and Alec had been engaged for three months now. Their families had fixed the bond because of how close Robert and Asmodeus had been. Asmodeus was very fond of his son and scared that no Alpha was good enough for his Magnus until his best friend Robert’s son presented himself as one. It felt like a glimmer of hope because Asmodeus could count on Robert’s son to be someone who valued people and not their gender. Asmodeus could see a future where Magnus was in a loved home and cared for by his Alpha and his family. Alec looked like the one Alpha that deserved the compassion and love that Magnus carried with himself.

As for Alec, he had been openly gay since he turned 16. His parents didn’t give a damn about it because that was never a concern for them. They were proud of all their kids – Alec, Max and Izzy. Izzy was presented as a Beta when she turned eighteen, but Max was still too young for it.

Alec and Magnus met for the first time on the night their betrothal was finalized. Magnus told him about how he felt about everything, how he did not want any of it…any of them, and how he had no choice because he was just an Omega. He told Alec that he was doing all this for his parents because they were worried for him, for the home he might end up in. Alec tried to become friends with Magnus, on many occasions after they exchanged rings, but Magnus clearly wasn’t ready to accept him.

Alec had made it abundantly clear to both his family and Magnus’ that he wouldn’t mate with Magnus and marry him until Magnus was ready for it and had been satisfied with his career. It felt strange to Magnus because he could have never expected an Alpha to be this considerate for his Omega or any Omega for that matter. One of the reasons he accepted Alec as his mate, other than being forced to by the Clave, was the fact that Alec didn’t push his boundaries. Hell, he didn’t even make conversation with Magnus if the latter didn’t want.

“Magnus?”; two fingers snapped in front of Magnus bringing him back from his chain of thoughts.
Magnus flickered his eyes and looked at the man in front of him. There he stood, in all his wolf glory, Alexander Lightwood, his Alpha – the most handsome snow furred wolf in Idris. Also, the man who belonged to Magnus, quite literally.

“Alexander…what a surprise! Can’t stay that I am pleased to see you…but then…I don’t have the liberty to say that for my Alpha…my liege”, Magnus rolled his eyes. Alec frowned and sat on the stool on the counter.

“What can I do you for?”, Magnus crossed his hands on his chest, hanging the wash cloth on his shoulder.

“It’s Thursday”, Alec arched a brow.

“I am well-aware, Alexander. Thank you for telling me what my calendar and my personal clock told me this morning”

“It’s Alec. How many times have I told you that…anyway”, the Alpha gritted his teeth. “I am sure you’re forgetting that your parents and yourself…are invited over to the other side of the river. Dinner with us, remember?”, Alec licked his lips. Magnus heaved a huge sigh, rolling his eyes. Of course. The Lightwoods and Banes were meeting to finalize the dates of Alec and Magnus’ mating ceremony…alongside other things, like their official wedding with vows and an officiator for the mundanes to witness. He was going to have to play the dutiful son-in-law all over again tonight. What fun!

“I know you’ve got a lot on your plate…I know, but…”, Alec’s voice seemed to fade into nothingness as Magnus’ eyes fell on Alec’s beautiful face.

His eyes were fixated on his Alpha’s naturally-pink lips that he violently licked whenever he was nervous or anxious. For reasons unbeknownst to the Omega, Alec was very nervous around him. And that wasn’t supposed to happen because he was the Alpha. The dominant in their relationship. Magnus was the one who was supposed to panic…not Alec.

“Magnus”, Alec banged the counter bringing Magnus back to the reality, again. “Where are you zoning out to…are you ok?”, his voice grew concerned.

“I am fine. Thank you, Alexander”, Magnus shot a glare. “You’re here to pick me up, right?”

“Something like that”, the Alpha mumbled. “Your mother asked me if I could take you to the house myself…but then I saw Clary here…”, Alec looked around, but his sister-in-law-to-be was nowhere to be seen.

“Right…fine. Clary was waiting for her friend. She left a few minutes ago. Shame. You missed her. Although, I don’t recall her being particularly excited to meet you. Anyway, I’ll be out in a minute, Alpha”, Magnus shrugged and pulled out his apron, walking inside the staff room.

“I have a name, Magnus.”, Alec called, frustratingly.

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“You know…you can call off this relationship if you hate me so much”, Alec clenched his jaw and gripped the steering wheel as they took to the highway. Magnus was leaned back on the seat next to him. His elbow rested on the window pane while his gaze looked at the scenery outside. He could see his thick engagement ring shining in his ring finger, from the corner of his eyes.

“I don’t hate you”, Magnus mumbled. “I don’t even know you, for that matter. I hate the idea of all
“This...”, he pointed his index finger between the two men. “Come on, Alexander. You’re a modern man, wolf I mean... how could you even agree to be betrothed to someone you don’t know. You and I didn’t know we existed three months ago”, Magnus cringed.

“It was either you... or some female Omega whose family wanted my father to mate me with her because of my Lightwood blood. And as modern as I am, I can’t ruin a girl’s life because... just because I can never like them... or be in love with them”, Alec whispered.

“You’re gay?”, Magnus widened his eyes.

“I thought that was abundantly clear... when I agreed to meet with you!”, Alec frowned and stared blankly at Magnus.

“Right... of course. I am sorry. I should have been more observant.”, Magnus shook his head at his own stupidity and looked back outside.

“I don’t want to... I can step back if you want. I don’t want to force you to do anything you don’t want to”, Alec blurted out.

“What?”, Magnus coughed.

“Yeah... I can see that you’re not ready for us... so, let me just tell Uncle Asmodeus and they... I’ll tell them that it’s not you... it’s me. I am not ready to be in a relationship just yet... “, he shrugged.

“No... you would do no such thing, Alexander. They’ve been worried sick about me ever since I presented myself as an Omega and I can’t put them in this shock. Do you know what happens to Omegas and their families specifically, who are rejected by their Alphas... I can’t do this to my parents... I can’t let you do this to them either”, Magnus growled.

“What...? Are you listening to yourself, Magnus? You don’t want to get mated to me... and when I am giving you a way out... you’re... “, Alec was appalled.

“I am... Alec... look we don’t know each other... so... don’t presume things about me... or my parents. I don’t like the idea of this relationship but we’re going ahead with this, whether or not I like it, or want it. I have no issues being your pet wolf... and begetting your kids if that keeps my parents happy and healthy”

“My pet... what! Don’t you dare insult me like that, Magnus Bane. I’ve been nothing but kind to you... but don’t judge me when you don’t know me”, Alec growled, and his eyes momentarily turned red... the Alpha red. He blinked and softened his eyes. “I am sorry”, he blurted out.

“I am going to say this once... and I hope you listen to it. It’s true that I am the Alpha of our relationship, but I don’t, for a second, think you’re any less just because you’re an Omega. If we’re going to get mated and become a pair, you are going to be my partner... my equal. You’ll have as much say in our relationship as I do. That’s not up for debate and I am sure that this is how I want things between us. I hate what this society has made us. Omegas and Alphas... one has to be the submissive one... because it sure doesn’t have to be like that. Omegas are the only gender in our world that can beget kids... do you know how special that is? What’s the use of the Alpha rage, strength and courage when we can’t spread love and/or have the endurance of begetting more of us... your kind is the strongest part of our world, Magnus. I don’t care what others think. I know how strong my mother is and I know how strong you are... and every other Omega for that matter”

“You really believe that?”, Magnus gasped when Alec finished.

“I do. And it’s ok if you don’t believe me. But, my views are not going to change... and they’re not so
because you’re my mate. Or because my mother is an Omega”, Alec released his clenched jaw. The car pulled in the Lightwood Mansion. Magnus and Alec stepped out of their cars and proceeded to the door.

Magnus felt angrier and frustrated than usual. His hormones were all over the place. It was probably because his heat would be setting in, any day from now. Or the full moon. Alec felt the heat of the moonlight on his face when the clouds cleared, and the full moon glittered on his face. Alec looked at the man, with a blue hue that spread over his Alpha as the moon shone on them. Alec was beautiful. Tall and pale, with the most gorgeous hazel eyes in the whole of Idris. Alec extended his hand, and offered Magnus to lead him inside. Magnus took a deep breath and obliged.

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“The next full moon falls on the most auspicious day in our Calendar, Asmodeus”, Robert offered a wine glass to his best friend. “It will be best if Magnus and Alec mated on that day, along with the other wolves that are fated for their mating.”

“We can’t”, Magnus spoke up. He was going to New York over the weekend the next full moon fell on. The hotel he had applied in had accepted his CV and wanted a formal introduction before he began working there, in full capacity.

Alec was sipping his wine when he looked at his mate-to-be. They were seated on the same couch, facing their fathers.

“I’ve to go to New York…that week. I told you, dad”, Magnus glared and hissed at Asmodeus. Asmodeus felt uneasy as he went near Magnus’ ear.

“Magnus…it’s not up to us…it’s up to Alec and his family. I thought your mother made it clear to you, boy. They’re the ones who need to decide.”, he whispered.

“No…it is up to Magnus, Uncle Asmodeus”, Alec interrupted. “Right, Dad?”

“The mating of the season is scheduled for next full moon, Alec. If we delay it…we have to wait a full year for such an auspicious day as that one…also, the Clave wouldn’t approve of it…there are so many wolves ready to pair”, Robert sighed. “I myself have no issues waiting another cycle…if that interview is important to Magnus and you both are young and active…you can wait another year…if it were up to me”

“Today’s a full moon…mate us today. Magnus will be free to leave for New York then!”, Alec shrugged. Magnus choked on his drink and shot a death stare at his fiancé.

“Really, Alec?”, he growled at his mate. “Can we…can we talk for a second?”, Magnus composed himself when he realized that he wasn’t supposed to speak to his Alpha in that tone. Alec nodded and followed Magnus out. Magnus was furious. He knew that every Alpha wanted to get close to their Omegas as soon as their mating was announced but somewhere down in his heart he did think Alec was different but then…he was still an Alpha. Magnus could have been wrong. What if he was?

“So, the whole I respect Omegas thing…was a ruse, right? The second you had a chance to get in my pants…you”

“I…what Magnus?”, Alec crossed his hands on his chest, waiting for Magnus to accuse him of something new. The full moon shone from the clouds and Alec’s hazels turned into golden brown, his wolf eyes.
YOU DAMN WELL KNOW WHAT. ONCE I MATE WITH YOU…I CAN’T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT MY ALPHA...that’s what you bloody want...don’t you? You want to be close to me...so that”, Magnus spat. He was thrown off his game by the change in color of Alec’s eye. He knew his own were shining emerald green.

“Oh my God…why the hell are you so stupid?”, Alec’s face crinkled into a chuckle, after hearing the latest accusation on him by his fiancé.

“You’re laughing...how dare you call me stupid…?”, Magnus stepped forward, wanting to grab Alec by his collar. But, he stepped onto lose soil and lost his balance only to trip in the mud. He was about to slip in the wet mud and fall on his back when Alec pulled him by his waist and caught him midair. His other hand grabbed Magnus’ wrist to hold him. Magnus grabbed the lapels of Alec’s shirt within his fists to regain his balance. Alec inhaled Magnus’ scent…it was heavenly. A mix of sandalwood and rose. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

“Stop being naïve, Magnus”, Alec whispered. Magnus gulped. Alec’s smell was divine. The right mix of honey, and lemon. “The Clave wouldn’t let you go…otherwise…and won’t delay the rituals either. But if you and I...were to mate today…”

“I wouldn’t be able to go without you...distance from my Alpha would drive me insane, quite literally…”, Magnus hissed back, still in Alec’s arms.

“I’ll come with you…I’ll come with you to New York?”, Alec shrugged.

“Why would you…?”, Magnus chuckled. “You’ve no business in New York...other than being my...my plus one. Alexander…”, Magnus sighed.

“Because it’s important to you...and you’re my friend, Magnus. Regardless of the fact that you hate me now, I do care about you and I do consider you a friend”, Alec replied, as a matter-of-factly.

“I am your...your friend?”, Magnus’ eyes widened and a confused looked wiped on his face.

“Yeah…”, Alec pursed his lips. “Mate sounds...well it sounds stone-agey”, Alec shrugged. A smile curved Magnus’ lips and he chortled softly. Alec straightened him on the ground. Magnus rubbed his shirt to dissolve the creases.

“So...what do you say?”, he asked.

“Are you sure about this? About coming to New York with me? You’re not saying this to appease me?”, Magnus asked again.

“Pretty darn sure... Magnus Bane. But...there’s just one thing...I’d like us to officially be friends...if we’re going to New York...it’s better we don’t want to hate each other...or try to kill each other if we’re doing this”

“Alexander...I don’t hate you”, Magnus rolled his eyes.

“I know...you hate this situation...it’s fine. It is what it is. Also, it’s Alec...for heaven’s sake.”, Alec sighed.

“Yeah...that’s what biscuit said in the morning...and compared to those sick Alphas that I could have got...I am glad I am betrothed to the least annoying one”, Magnus rolled his eyes.

“Gee...thanks?”, Alec frowned. Magnus chuckled, more loudly and openly than the last time. Alec bit his lip because that sound ran a shiver down his spine. Magnus was so beautiful. The way his lips
fought to resent the smile that was creeping on them. “Makes me feel a whole lot better about myself, Magnus”

“I am sorry...Alexander. It’s just, no one...other than my family has ever shown me this kindness...since...well, since I presented myself. And no Alpha has ever seen me as a friend. More like a sex toy...”

“Don’t fret about it...I don’t care who you are...like I said, you’re my friend...and I’ll do anything for my friends...even if they’re a bundle of meanness”, Alec winked.

He heard Magnus chuckle under his lips and his own lips curved into a soft smile.

“Friends?”, Magnus blurted when they were about to enter the Alec’s house.

“Friends!”, Alec smiled and opened the door for his Omega.

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“Magnus…you sure about this?”, Kaya ruffled her son’s hair. Magnus took a deep breath and nodded, stealing a glance at Alec who was talking to his own father with a glass of whiskey in his hand. His free hand was moving animatedly, possibly explaining the deal he made with Magnus.

“That’s actually a pretty good idea…that way, the Clave won’t be after our sons. They’ll be content with the fact that the major pair of next full moon’s ceremony has already mated, after all”, Robert turned around and told Asmodeus. Asmodeus gestured Magnus to join them and the boy obeyed.

“Magnus…?” Asmodeus asked for his son’s assent, one last time.

“I am ok with it…if Alexander…”, Magnus looked at Alec, asking for his approval and assurance that he wouldn’t ditch him.

“I am. I am ok with this. If this allows Magnus to freely go and chase his dreams, I have no issues doing this for him.”, Alec repeated what he had assured Magnus, a few minutes ago.

Robert came closer and patted his son’s head. “I am proud of you, Alec. You’re everything your mother and I raised you up to be…and better. We couldn’t have asked for a better person to be our son”, he smiled.

Alec side-hugged his father and smiled in return.

The head-priest was summoned as Alec and Magnus gathered below the moon along with their families. The Banes on the right and the Lightwoods on the left. The priest took the high-ground between the couple, and a small stream flowed right behind them.

“Magnus Bane and Alexander Lightwood, you may now emerge as your wolf-counterparts”, the priest announced. Alec and Magnus stepped back and bent their torso's forward. Their eyes flared up as they took deep breaths. Their body heat evaporated the moisture around them and the steam rose up. A low growl sounded in the air and out emerged two large wolves. Everyone gasped taking a step back. They were magnificent, in their wolf forms.

“Alec was a beautiful wolf with snow-white fur. There was a streak of grey hair running from his forehead all the way to his tail. His paws were huge and furry, and his claws were sharp and shiny, capable of ripping flesh apart. His eyes, the same that Magnus had just seen under the moon. They were large and golden brown, and Magnus could see his soul…Alec’s soul through it.
Alec saw a brown wolf emerge in front of him. It was as large as himself, but the eyes were a striking shade of emerald green. The brown fur was glistening against the moonshine. Magnus’ wolf-ears twitched as the wind blew softly around them. He blinked and looked straight into Alec’s eyes.

“Magnus Bane, submit to your Alpha”, the priest instructed the Omega. Magnus took a deep breath, considering his animal form and stepped one foot forward to proceed to bend in submission in front of his Alpha.

Magnus, stop right there. Alec yelled. In this form, only Magnus could understand what he was saying. To the others, Alec merely growled softly. Magnus jerked and halted. His eyes met Alec’s and they flickered.

Alexander...what the hell...? Magnus narrowed his eyes together, confused.

First of all, it’s Alec. How many times have I corrected you...tonight itself? Second, you’re not submitting to me...I meant every word of what I said. You, are my equal. You are not going to submit to me...nope, nada! Alec came forward, merely inches away from Magnus’ head.

Are you kidding me...this is a traditional ceremony...there’s a certain way these things are done...I know it’s regressive...also, are we really fighting...in our canine forms? Magnus rolled his head in frustration. Alec Lightwood was driving him insane.

I know what I am doing...trust me. Fuck those traditions that push you back a couple of centuries. Alec came closer and Magnus instinctively raised his head up baring his neck for Alec. Alec pressed his nose to Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ blood ran cold as he felt Alec’s cold and wet nose on his fur. Alec rubbed his cheek against Magnus’ fur and inhaled deeply. Magnus’ 

“‘He wouldn’t let Magnus submit to him’, Robert smiled, proudly, holding Maryse’s hand. Asmodeus overheard the conversation and tightly held Kaya’s hands rubbing her arm up and down.

“Our son is going to be ok”, he whispered in his wife’s ear.

“Priest Malachi”, Robert called. “…continue the ceremony. Our sons are doing this a different way. Magnus shall not submit to Alec.”, he added.

“On this sixth night of the full moon, we, the Children of the Moon, bow down in your honor. Tonight will witness yet another union of the one you blessed to be an Alpha and the one who was bestowed with the responsibility of taking our kind forward. Alexander Gideon Lightwood, son of Robert and Maryse Lightwood, go ahead and mark your mate, Magnus Bane, son of Asmodeus and Kaya Bane”

Magnus closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Alec reached for his carotid artery and licked it to mark the place which he analyzed was perfect.

I’ll make this quick, Magnus. Anywhere you think you can’t do this...stop me. Alec growled softly in Magnus’ ears. Magnus gently upped his head, accepting his future. Alec bared his canines, a soft growl escaping his throat, his teeth glistened in the starry night. He huffed near Magnus’ wet fur and skin sending a shiver down the Omega’s spine.

Magnus felt his hair erect as Alec’s sharp teeth touched his skin. Initially, Alec just hovered his canines around comforting Magnus and then with agility and speed, he dug those sharp teeth right in
Magnus’ carotid.

Magnus’ whines echoed in the forest. It threw Alec off his game as he froze in his position, unsure of what to do next and how to ease out his bite.

*I am fine...* he heard Magnus’ shriveled voice. *You didn’t do anything wrong. Just...keep going.* He assured his Alpha. Alec’s breath relaxed, and the lower pair of his canines dug into Magnus’ skin on the lower side. Magnus ceased his breath as he waited for Alec to finish his marking. Alec’s Alpha venom entered his blood stream and his eyes rolled in front of him. The ecstasy, the hormone rush, and the passion. He could feel every ounce of it.

And then it happened.

Magnus’ worst nightmare.

He felt his pheromones kick in, his body heat boiled his blood up and it oozed out from below Alec’s bite. Life had given him way too many surprises...including his presentation as an Omega...but going into heat during mating, that was just another level of insanity.

*Oh my God...Magnus* Alec moaned. He could not take the bite back. It was almost done. That mark was almost fixated. He stood still as Magnus bled out from his carotid and Alec felt the unusual warmth of blood wetting his teeth. A sudden adrenaline rush announced that the mating was over, and Alec pulled his teeth out. The mark shone in the light of the Moon.

His wolf form disappeared as he saw Magnus collapse in his human form.

“Magnus”, he yelled grabbing the bleeding man by his waist. Blood was dripping from his mate’s carotid and Alec felt a sharp pain erupt in his veins. Like he could feel the pain Magnus was in, through the bond they now shared. He and Magnus had bonded, Alec could feel it. He lifted Magnus in his arms and carried him inside, in his room.

Magnus was shivering. Alec transitioned partially. His canines came out and his eyes glowed golden. He stuck out his tongue and licked Magnus’ mating mark, dropping his venom on it. The strong venom dripping from his canines clotted Magnus’ blood and the bleeding stopped after a few minutes.

Alec pulled a duvet over Magnus, judging by how cold his skin had become. Soft whimpers were coming out of his mouth. Alec stroked his Omega’s forehead, wiping the sweat off it. Magnus was reeking of pheromones. Alec could feel himself harden in his pants. *Fuck.* He thought. Magnus was driving him insane. His aroma had changed. It was deeper, more intoxicating and stronger than it had been before mating. Alec took a deep breath to calm himself down, his hand not leaving Magnus’ forehead.

Kaya rushed in a minute later and dropped next to Magnus. She felt his forehead for fever. Alec gritted his teeth together and ran out of his room, unable to control his urges. Kaya pulled Magnus in her lap and stroked his forehead easing his pain out. His mark had been cauterized by venom, she saw the scar. Other than that, there was no evidence of Alec’s scent over Magnus.

Alec hadn’t touched her son.

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Alec’s fur swayed in the wind. He sat on his hindlimbs, gazing at the full moon above him. He could see the mansion behind him, and Magnus’ scent was still tickling his nostrils. It was much better outside where the scent of other animals and the plants masked the scent of his mate, but it was still
there...like a pin stinging him. He couldn’t be farther than this because Magnus could have needed him. But he couldn’t be closer than he already was because Magnus was intoxicating.

Alec dropped his forelimbs forward and placed his head on one of them. His tail curled in between his legs and he took shelter under a tree. Closing his eyes, he drifted off to sleep.

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Alec woke up to his fur being stroked by soft hands. He opened his eyes and saw Maryse sitting next to him. He yawned and placed his rather large head on her lap. Maryse smiled and ruffled his ears tickling the wolf. Alec shivered his ears feeling the tickle.

“Morning”, she whispered placing a kiss on his forehead. Alec looked at her with his big eyes and then gently stuck out his tongue to lick her neck, a habit that usually irritated Maryse...but today, she smiled wide and rubbed his forehead.

“I am so proud of you. You are a good man, Alec. Magnus is lucky that he has you for his mate.”, she whispered and rubbed his head. Alec growled softly and placed his head back on her lap. He gently rolled over, asking her to rub his chest, a habit that he couldn’t get over even when he had become an Alpha. Maryse chuckled and obliged her son.

“Alexander”

A voice sounded from the mansion. Alec’s ears twitched, and he looked towards the direction from where the sound had originated. Magnus wasn’t visible anywhere. He was probably still in bed but he was calling out to his Alpha for help.

“Come inside. The Omega thought.

I can’t...I can’t...

You’re cold...I can sense it...come... Magnus gasped as the heat cycle momentarily threw him off his senses. Inside...pleaseee.. he moaned. Maryse looked between her son and the window which he so curiously stared at and then stood up, giving Alec space to transform back.

Alec slipped into jeans and t-shirt and jumped right into his balcony, landing below the porch. Magnus was wearing lose pants and a sweater and there were stains of sweat on his forehead. He was covered in the duvet of Alec’s bed, his eyes closed as the lids flickered.

Are you ok? Alec thought.

“You can communicate now”, Magnus chuckled weakly, clutching the duvet.

“Right...yeah”, Alec rubbed the back of his head. He closed his nostrils as he stepped foot inside. His room reeked of an Omega on heat.

“I shouldn’t...”

“It’s not going to get easier for the both of us, if we don’t get used to this...”, Magnus pointed between the two wolves. “Also...no other wolf can stand close enough to me right now, let alone help me through this. But you, you can. And as much as I hate doing this... I need your help now. We’re mates...remember. Things have changed. I need you.”, Magnus sighed in frustration.

“Why...?”, Alec narrowed his brows, quizzically.
“It’s rare that an Omega’s heat kicks in the moment he is mated, but when that happens, the severity
of the first mated Heat surpasses anything that Omega has ever witnessed. I have never felt this weak
in my adult life...and I am...I just...the only person who can do anything...is you”, Alec sighed as he
felt the distress in Magnus’ tone. He came closer to his mate, and sat down on the bed.

“Ok. We can try and see if this works. I am going to touch you now”, Alec whispered. He saw
Magnus’ Adams apple go up and down as the man gulped down his saliva. He nodded, giving Alec
his approval to touch. Alec gently placed his hand over Magnus’ and squeezed it. Magnus
whimpered and moved in his sleep, causing Alec to pull away.

*I am fine.* Magnus thought.

*Oh really...* Alec chuckled in his thoughts. *Open your eyes, let me see you.* Alec asked. The Omega
moaned and fluttered his lids to open his eyes.

“You can...still see...me”, Magnus complained.

“You talk so much...oh my God”, Alec rolled his eyes. There was sponge and water lying on his bed
side. Alec dipped the sponge in and then squeezed out extra water. He placed the ice-cold sponge on
Magnus’ forehead and wiped his sweat off. He watched as Alec wiped his face and dried it with a
towel. He then pulled the duvet off of Magnus exposing his drenched shirt. The smell of Magnus’
heat pierced through Alec’s nose and Magnus felt his Alpha’s blood rise.

“I am sorry. Are you ok?”, Magnus asked. He was feeling guilty for putting Alec in so much pain.

“You’re the one on heat, Magnus”, Alec chuckled and then stopped when he inhaled too much of
Magnus’ scent. It wasn’t a good idea to chuckle and breathe in so much of his scent when his Omega
was on heat. Magnus frowned and looked away as Alec unbuttoned Magnus’ shirt and pulled its
flaps apart. He dried his body with the sponge to bring down Magnus’ temperature.

“You should shower...”, Alec suggested. “It’ll make you feel better...I’ve seen some of my Omega
friends...do the same. And they told me...that it helps”

“You have Omega friends?”

“I do...problem?”, Alec arched a brow.

“I would have...but I can hardly get up from the bed...so, unless you want to give me a baby shower,
Alexander, I am going to have to wait until the worst part is over”

“If you want to take a shower, I don’t mind giving you one”, Alec shook his head. Magnus widened
his eyes and looked at him.

“You’re shameless for someone who claims to respect the Omegas”

“Magnus...two things. First, I am your Alpha...you’ve bared your body to me and I am entitled to
look at it and touch it...I don’t do it because that’s not what you want. So yeah... I very well could
give you a shower right now...”

“And second...?”

“I can help you shower without looking at you...”, Alec shrugged.

“I’ll prefer a bubble bath”, Magnus bit his lip.
“Now, we’re talking”, Alec scoffed. “I’ll go and get it ready”

“Thanks...”, Magnus added.

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Magnus tightened his grip around Alec’s neck as the duo walked in Alec’s bathroom. Magnus could feel Alec’s throat drying up because of the scent Magnus was emanating and the Omega could not be more impressed by how much restraint Alec was showing. The Alpha gently placed Magnus on the ground and looked away. Magnus removed his shirt and vest. He slipped his pajamas down and then his boxers which made Alec take a step back, momentarily. The situation made Magnus embarrassed about himself.

“I am sorry”, he mumbled, feeling a little offended.

“It is not your fault. It is who you are. Be proud of it”, Alec replied, with his jaws clenched.

Magnus looked at him in awe and then grabbed his bicep to stabilize himself as he lifted his leg up to sit in the tub. Alec understood the gesture and held on to his bicep as tightly as he could as Magnus sat down. His eyes never went near Magnus’ body and stayed fixed on the wall in front of him.

“Thank you”

“No problem. I’ll be outside...when you...when you need me”

“Right...ok”, Magnus murmured. “Alexander?”, Magnus called.

“Yeah...?”

“Thank you...”

Chapter End Notes

Hello. I wrote this particular story because there has been a lot of angst in my earlier works and this one is not going to have much of that per se. It's just me exploring the bond of developing friendship which might culminate into romance...

I wanted to write something on the AU-werewolf because imagining Alec and Magnus as glorious wolves is just a desire of mine. All the other details of mating...and everything comes from the minimal research I did on the internet and the modifications/variations are fictional.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the story. It won't be a very long one (less than 20-25 chapters). Hope to see you around.

Oh...Happy New Year 2018, I hope you all have a great year ahead!

- Alia
“We can wait for the wedding, until after Magnus is done with his work in New York”, Robert suggested one afternoon after Magnus’ heat had subsided. He was sitting on the couch with Maryse on one side and Asmodeus and Magnus on the other. Magnus had just returned from his shift at Java Jones and was wanting to go back home as soon this final meeting with his in-laws was over. But right now, he just wanted to get away from this adult discussion and be around energies that were similar to him.

And then, as if the Gods were listening, Clary walked in with her mother Kaya. Maryse greeted the two ladies and then asked Magnus and Clary to join Alec and Izzy in the creeks and trees surrounding them behind their mansion.

Magnus heaved a sigh of relief as he grabbed Clary’s hand and walked into the Lightwood backyard. There was a trail that led downhill the creeks where Maryse informed Alec and Izzy were. Magnus could hear Alec’s heartbeat because of their mating bond but the Lightwood siblings weren’t visible. They walked down the path and saw a bushy tail behind one tree. Magnus felt attracted to that tree and he understood that it was his Alpha behind it.

What brings you by? Alec’s voice sounded in his head, taking him by surprise. The adults are discussing our wedding plans... Magnus thought and stepped forward, his feet crushing dry leaves beneath his feet.

Do they have any other job... oh my God it's crazy?... Alec yelled. Magnus’ lips curved into a grin as he came around the tree and saw Alec, curled up in himself between two big roots that emerged from the base of the tree. He hadn’t seen Alec in the daylight before and his fur was gorgeous to look at. It looked like it had snowed all over his Alpha.

What conclusion did they come to? He inquired. As soon as Alec felt Magnus around him, he lifted his head up in the direction of his Omega’s scent and blinked when he made the eye-contact.

I didn’t wait to hear... Magnus shrugged. Alec uncurled himself a bit, offering Magnus to sit next to him. Magnus gently rubbed his fur and sat between his hindleg and foreleg. He leaned back, and his head sunk into Alec’s thick fur. Wow that was comfortable and weird. He was surprised at himself that he did something like that...because he barely knew Alec to begin with.

Smart move... how is... uhh your packing going on?... Anything Iz and I can help you with? We know a thing or two about moving away... and settling back in... Magnus could feel Alec’s awkwardness at conversation. He smiled and looked at his lap.

“It is... going ok? Thank you for asking...”, Magnus said it out loud. “What are you doing here though... with Isabelle... like this”, Magnus pointed at his animal body.

We transform and sit by the creeks sometimes... gives us a lot of time to think about everything. The weather is really nice as well. I can feel the storm coming in. That is a plus. Can you feel it? Also, Iz and I love... watching the birds and the trees... Magnus looked up at the sky. He could feel it too. The sudden warmth and humidity, oblivious to the human senses.

Do you want to... maybe chase the storms? Alec asked a minute later and growled looking at the sky.
You sure you can keep up...Lightwood? Because I know these forests better than you do. I grew up here. Magnus straightened up and arched a brow to his mate.

Try me, Bane Alec twitched and shook his fur. Magnus pursed his lips and got up.

“Bear...I’m off for a run. Don’t worry about me. I’ll be back before you know it.”, he called out to Clary who was sitting quietly next to a black and gorgeous she-wolf.

“I wouldn’t worry at all. You’re with your Alpha. And, I know where to look if I don’t find you.”, she waved and winked at her brother.

“Don’t worry, Ms Bane...my brother will take care of yours”. Clary looked back and saw a gorgeous figure emerge from behind the tree as the black wolf disappeared. The girl wore tight black corset top and black leather leggings. Her long black hair settled roughly on her breasts and eyes were the most beautiful shade of brown.

“I am sure he would. Uh...and I am not Ms Bane...Ms Morgenstern, actually.”, she smiled and raised her hand towards the Lightwood girl.

“Isabelle Lightwood. We haven’t been introduced properly at our family get-togethers”

“Clarissa Morgenstern...you can call me Clary...Magnus is my adoptive brother...his parents took me in when my parents passed away...”

“You’re the last Alpha of the Morgenstern pack? Daughter of Valentine and Jocelyn Morgenstern...right?”

“In the flesh. I am also the last wolf of the Fairchild pack. My mother used to be Jocelyn Fairchild, before her wedding to my father”, the redhead smiled and sat down.

“I am sorry about your parents...my mother and Jocelyn used to be really close friends. She tells me stories about the time they were our age...training to become better wolves.”

“Don’t be...it was a long time ago. I don’t even remember them. Mum and Dad tell me that they were nice. So yeah.”, Clary smiled and placed a hand on Isabelle’s shoulder. Isabelle momentarily looked between the hand and Clary’s eyes. They were big and gorgeous, and she could see how honest the Morgenstern-Fairchild wolf was.

“How come Magnus and I never ran into you and Alec before...before their engagement?”, Clary pointed at the wolves who they just saw take off into the woods.

“Ohh...right, that’s coz Alec and I lived abroad...in Dublin actually...my mom’s parents lived there and Alec and I... we studied and grew up there, away from all this. We came back when Alec and I turned 19 and 17...but then we stayed in New York for a while because Alec had a job there...”

“There are packs in Dublin? Actual packs?”, Clary popped her eyes open.

“Ohh...not many, just my mom’s parents retired there along with some of their friends...they wanted to live the mundane life, far away from Clave rules and the conditions which, honestly, are suffocating.”, Isabelle explained with finger quotes.

“That’s... remarkable. Leaving behind... your true nature...”

“Yeah...but then our true nature comes with a lot of other downsides...the gender bias...the ruthlessness of our ways...”, Isabelle shook her head.
“Yeah, when you put it like that, Isabelle”, Clary nodded in agreement.

“You can call me Izzy...everyone who knows me...calls me that”, Izzy chimed curling her knees close to her chest.

“Ok...Izzy”, Clary smiled.

“And... don’t worry about your brother, though. Alec...he may look like he is an angry young wolf...but he’s goody two shoes... he won’t hurt your brother”

“I hope he doesn’t...or I’ll have to rip him to shreds...”

“Snarky...Ms Morgenstern”

“Of course...Magnus is my only brother and I love him more than anything...of course I’d do anything. Wouldn’t you do the same for Alec...or Max”, Clary shook her head.

“I would...”, Izzy chuckled and sat down, leaning on the tree trunk as they saw Magnus transform into the grey wolf and follow Alec behind.

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I didn’t know there was a field in this part of the forest. It’s so beautiful... Magnus’ emerald green eyes gazed at the grassy plain in front of him. Alec lifted his head up and strong winds gently swayed his fur back. He was an unusually furry wolf, with really long-hair especially around his spine. His bushy tail was dancing with the wind.

Izzy and I discovered it...when we returned to Idris. And here I thought you said you know these forests better than me...wow, Magnus... Alec thought and took a glance at Magnus who was staring at the storm gathering on one end of the vast grassland.

Well, spare me because I haven’t been exploring the woods alone after I became an Omega. Can’t do that with Alphas pining for you...24x7. Also...wait returned...from where?

From Dublin...that’s where Izzy and I grew up...away from Idris...in the heart of the mundane world. Alec added.

I can now understand why these rules bother you...

It’s not just that...I hope you know. I know what’s discrimination, Magnus...and what is not. At least my Nana taught me well. Alec shrugged, a hint of feeling insulted in his voice.

I didn’t mean it like that, Alexander. I apologize.

No, it’s ok. We’re still getting used to each other. How is your mating mark? I hope it doesn’t hurt...because it isn’t supposed to.

It’s fine...stopped stinging. But you being in my head...still wrapping my head around that.

That makes two of us. Oh, look...the storms almost here. Wanna race?

Are you insane? Magnus’ wolf growled at his Alpha.

It’ll be fun...come on, Magnus. This is what we came for...I am not leaving before chasing this cyclone. You with me or not... Alec’s white-wolf came forward and took a whiff of the grass. We’ll go...touch it and come back.
Absolutely not... Magnus dropped on his hindlegs, refusing to leave.

Oh Magnus...don’t be a coward...come on. Up. He insisted, and Magnus shook his head. Alec was absolutely insane. That was a storm right in front of them...it could very well suck them in. We won’t go to the eye...I am not stupid...but let’s just...

Fine, Alexander. But, this is on you.

Gladly. Alec nodded and looked back at the storm. He stood up on his fours and waited as Magnus came next to him. They momentarily looked at each other and then the snowfurred wolf leapt and launched itself. Magnus’ wolf closely followed as Alec took giant leaps towards the storm.

The wind cut through Magnus’ eyes and he felt it difficult to keep them open. He had been out in the field before...but mostly before he had presented himself. After that, Asmodeus and Kaya never allowed Magnus to run so freely in the wild and as the scent of the storm clad moist air saturated his lungs, he realized that he had missed this. Alec was an agile wolf. And very graceful with his movement. They slashed their way through the long grass towards the storm.

Magnus felt the height of the grass shorten as they came into a more open field. The storm was brewing up right in front of them.

Alexander...we should turn back Magnus huffed as Alec sprinted ahead of him.

Just...a little closer Magnus.

It’s too dangerous...come back Magnus panicked. Please...Alexander. It’s not safe anymore. We’re too close He added with a moan and Alec just froze in his spot. His legs skid on the grass as he came to a halt and looked back at his mate. The way Magnus had called out to him, made him feel a little different...something he had never felt in his life. There was someone who was bothered about him. It felt nice to have that energy around him. And he felt the need to not disappoint his mate which made Alec obey him.

We should...go Magnus turned around.

Right behind you...lead me Magnus... he heard Alec’s thought as they made their journey back. They crossed the field and entered the thick forests, but neither of the wolves slowed down.

You’re good...Magnus...make sure the storm doesn’t catch up to you Alec complemented as he leapt from one root to the other heading towards the mansion. They saw it on the hilltop and heard the water running below.

Let’s see who jumps farther across the creek. Magnus challenged.

Game on, Bane Alec huffed and jumped on a rock. He used the momentum in his movement to push back the giant thing and leapt right across the creek landing yards ahead into the forest. He turned around and saw Magnus’ wolf in the air as it landed some feet ahead of him.

Damn Alec gritted as Magnus jumped ahead, making his way towards the mansion. Alec chuckled in his thoughts and continued his journey. They had left the storm behind, but it would hit their mansion in a few hours...that was a fact.

The wolves landed in the balcony of Alec’s room and transformed into their human forms. Pulling on their clothes, they dropped on the couch catching their breath.

“That...was amazing”, Magnus exclaimed coughing loudly. “Did I mention that you’re also
“absolutely insane”

“You did...multiple times”, Alec scoffed.

“I am sorry for all those times I was snobbish with you... You’re actually not that bad for a change!”, Magnus rolled his eyes.

“You realized that after the storm chase? Wow, Magnus. Touché”, Alec arched a brow as he extended his hand on the back rest of the couch.

“No... I’ve been thinking...”, Magnus panted for his breath.

“Ok?”, Alec turned to face his Omega. He placed his head on his wrist and dropped it on the backrest.

“Never judge a book by its cover...which, by the way, is exactly what I did...so I am sorry. Maybe you’re a different Alpha after all.”

“Yeah...forget about it... it’s in the past. Also, need I remind you...I prefer being your friend more than being your Alpha...per se”, Alec waved his hand in the air, shrugging it all off. “I have a few more interesting things we can do...but I am sure we’ll have time for it in New York”, Alec huffed, still heavily breathing.

“I am going there to work, Alexander. Not chase storms.”, Magnus smirked. “And I am sorry again...you’re my friend”

“Doesn’t mean you will have Sundays...not off”, Alec added. “And...stop apologizing...that part of the conversation ends here”

“Fine...whatever”, Magnus shrugged. The door clicked, and the boys saw Maryse walk in with two glasses in a tray in her hand. The other things on the plate weren’t visible.

“Heard you two land in the balcony. Here you go...I know you must be starving. Alec always is, when he comes back after a run in the woods.”, she smiled and put down the tray. There were sandwiches and two glasses of juice in the tray.

“You’re the best, mum”, Alec hummed as he pounced on the sandwiches.

“Thanks, Mrs Lightwood”, Magnus added, with a smile.

“Maryse...you can call me Maryse...and if you ever feel like, even Mom...like Alec does”, Maryse ruffled the Omega’s hair. “Oh and Clary took off with your parents...when you and Alec were out in the woods. They thought you’ll come home by yourself...but now the weather is not...so nice...so just, stay the night...go back in the morning?”

“Is that... is that ok with you?”, Magnus widened his eyes.

“Of course, Magnus. You’re family”, she smiled.

“Yeah...stay the night...Magnus”, Alec shrugged stuffing his face with the sandwich.

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“So, you studied in Dublin...all your life?”, Magnus asked. They had changed into comfortable clothes, Magnus borrowing a pair from Alec. It was loose on him but that made it all the more comfortable to sleep in. Plus, his overly activated wolf senses seemed to calm down with Alec’s
scent gripping him.

“That’s right. My father...he didn’t want me anywhere around Idris...”

“It’s kinda ironic though, your family is one of the founding families of the city’s Clave and yet, the Lightwood kids didn’t grow up here...to learn about their family history”, Magnus leaned his head on the couch and turned his torso in Alec’s direction. Alec had a beer bottle in his hand and his legs were extended on the coffee table in front of him.

“It’s not that simple, Magnus. My dad...he felt that we’ll grow up to be better minded people if we’re in a more mundane situation...I don’t know if he was right or wrong...but, it really felt independent to be away from all this. He didn’t want my mind corrupted because of our quirky ancestors and their stories”, Alec waved his hand across the room.

“You did become someone who is unlike any other person of our generation is...but you should have been here. Being a wolf, it has a lot of downsides...but then it is our history. It is our reality. And then, even if you did grow up outside, you ended up being an Alpha to an Omega...that didn’t change. So...what was the point of all that education.”

“I wanted to...I mean not the dominating part...but I was ready for it. Nobody forced me into it. Someday, I will tell you...but I don’t want to burden you with my stories, just yet.”, Alec looked over his shoulder and saw Magnus gaze at him.

“When...you were in Dublin...did you...date, I mean go out with somebody...and get into a relationship?””, Magnus shrugged.

“Yes...I did...they didn’t end up being what I anticipated but I enjoyed my time...and I think those men helped me become the man I am, today. So, I don’t regret anything.”

“You’re barely 22”

“...and wiser for my age, Magnus”, Alec winked. “How about you...did you...go out with someone here in Idris?”

“Yeah...yeah, I had a few on/off relationships...nothing serious, except one. She was an Alpha from the French community of wolves...Camille Belcourt”

“Yeah...? Where did you meet her? I have heard of the Belcourts...they command a lot of respect in Paris.”

“Here...at one of the Founders’ Day parties...her parents were special guests...and I almost thought she would be the Alpha I mate to...but”, Magnus sighed, his smile disappearing from his lips.

“I am sorry...”

“Don’t be...it was not real...and a long time ago. And I am happy it ended, the way it did”, Magnus sighed.

“Mm... now that we’re done with the exes talk...do you want to put up some movie?”, Alec folded his legs back and placed the empty beer bottle on the table.

“I am going to pass. It’s really cozy in here and I think I’ll just cuddle on the couch”

“My bed is really huge...”, Alec widened his eyes and rolled them.
“I know...”

“I can take the couch if you like”

“Nope. I am ok here...couches are more my thing”, Magnus winked and spread his legs out.

“You’ll have to bear with me then...because I am in the mood for some football”, Alec lifted his shoulders up.

“Go ahead. I am fine. I am habituated to sleeping with noises around me”, he yawned and pulled the blanket that Maryse had brought for him. Alec got up and brought a pillow from his bed. He handed it over to Magnus who snuggled it below his head and closed his eyes as his arm hugged the soft pillow.

Alec dropped on the far end of the couch and put on the match.

When the commentary ceased momentarily, Alec heard soft snores from his side. He turned and saw that Magnus had drifted to a deep sleep and his chest was rising up and down with his breathing. Alec felt a smile creep up his lips. Magnus’ lips were parted. His cheek was tightly pressed against the pillow and his hair messily falling over his eyes.

Alec pushed the blanket to cover more of his arm as the temperature outside dropped further. He went to the fireplace and added more wood to it. Dropping back on the couch, he focused back on his match even though he’d started feeling drowsy. He relaxed further and spread his legs on the table again. Leaning back on the backrest, he rested his head on the soft cushions of the couch.

A while later, the remote dropped from his hand and the young Alpha didn’t realize when he drifted off to sleep on the couch.

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Magnus stretched his arm out and opened his eyes. There was a scent of wet mud in the air. It was still raining outside. He opened his eyes and saw that it was already morning. As he stretched his legs out, they hit another body. Magnus jerked and looked up. Alec was asleep on the other end of the couch, leaning on the arm rest. Magnus groaned as he sat up. Alec had fallen asleep in a really uncomfortable position.

“Alexander”, Magnus shook his Alpha’s shoulder. Alec shifted a little in his sleep. Magnus bit his lip. Alec was one of the few people who had the cutest morning sleeping face.

“Alexander...you should sleep in a better position”, Magnus mumbled and decided to slip his hands below his underarms and stretch him on the bed. Falling through on his aim, he bent down and pulled Alec to stretch on the couch. Alec groaned drowsily and then settled on the couch as directed by Magnus. Magnus pulled the blanket over him and tiptoed outside the room.

It was a very gloomy morning because of the storm from last night. Maryse and Robert were seated on the table while Izzy was in their gym. Magnus could see her doing yoga. Magnus walked down the stairs and headed straight to the door when Maryse called him back.

“Stay for breakfast, Magnus”, she asked.

Magnus stopped and turned to her, “It's ok, Mrs Lightwood...I mean, Maryse...I'll be late for my shift at the café. It is my last day and I shouldn’t be late. Or they wouldn’t clear my finances”

“Clary sent in your uniform. She figured you’d get late. So, have breakfast and get ready in Alec’s
room. It’s alright with us!”

“Uhh...ohh”, Magnus fell short for words. “If you insist”, he smiled and took a step back to join the Lightwood parents at the breakfast table.

“So, what is this job in New York?”, Maryse asked as she offered a glass of orange juice to her son’s mate.

“I am a graduate in Hotel Management and the Plaza Hotel accepted my resume for a job. It’s not a very high post but it’s a good start for my career.”

“The Plaza Hotel is a great start, my dear. I am sure you’ll get amazing opportunities after this”

“I hope so too...Mrs...I am sorry, it’s just... I’ve never called you...Maryse. It kind of feels odd.”

“It’s fine, Magnus. You can call me Maryse...or wait, if it’s too soon. You know what, you can call me whatever you like”

“Can I call you Mrs Lightwood...please? For now?”, Magnus smiled sheepishly. Maryse let out a chuckle and nodded.

At the same time, Isabelle joined them for breakfast. She was wearing a hoodie over her yoga dress.

“Iz, go wake your brother up. You need to reach your dance practice and Magnus needs to go to his café. Ask him to get ready and be down in 15”, she ordered.

“Right away, Mom”, Izzy smiled and scurried up. “Anything to wake that animal up and destroy his beauty sleep”

“It’s ok. I’ll take a cab”, Magnus panicked. This was all too much. He barely knew anyone, and they were being too nice for him to digest.

“It’s still windy outside...and your mate has a car... I suggest you start ordering him to be your personal chauffeur. As such, he does nothing. Sits around...clicks photos...and eats...at least, with you, he’ll have a purpose. Maybe, you’ll get him to do something...for a real job.”, Maryse rolled her eyes. Magnus chuckled. Alec did sound like an extremely different guy. Magnus proceeded to Alec’s room to shower and change. He came down half an hour later wearing his barista uniform and saw Alec sleeping on the dining table. Izzy was texting someone on the phone. She stood up as soon as she saw Magnus. Walking straight to his brother, she pushed him off the table. Magnus was taken aback as Alec jerked and woke up.

“Iz...what the hell”, he murmured.

“We need a chauffeur...come on”, she nudged.

“We?”, Alec frowned.

“She means...her and me...”, Magnus buttoned his cuffs as he joined the two siblings.

“Oh...you’re still here? I thought...you”

“I am...and before I get late to work, I suggest we leave. Java Jones is quite a few miles from here”, Magnus replied, grabbing his things.

“Of course...let me grab my keys”, Alec rubbed the back of his head.
They sat in the car, Magnus next to Alec and Izzy in the backseat and they drove out of the Lightwood compound. It was a quiet ride and Alec’s Omega and sister enjoyed the weather outside as his black shiny Volvo drove through the mountains of Idris. They reached Java Jones first and Magnus bid them goodbye thanking Alec for letting him stay the night.

“Magnus?”, Alec called opening the window of his car.

“Remember to send me the itinerary...for tomorrow”, Alec waved his hand and pressed the accelerator when he saw Magnus nodding.

“Is that it?”, Izzy peered between the driver’s seat and the newly vacated seat next to Alec.

“Is that what?”

“You and him...?”

“Me and him what?”, Alec rolled his eyes.

“He is your mate, Alec...and he’s cute”, she winked.

“Yeah...he is”, Alec’s face curved into a lopsided grin. “...kinda cute. And, has a nice ass too. But I still don’t see a point of this conversation?”, he stared at her through the rearview mirror. Izzy’s eyes rolled and she wiggled her fingers.

“... why are you two...just friends...”

“I can’t even call us that...He’s...weird. In a good way. But, for over 3 months...that’s basically as long as we’ve known each other, he thought that I wanted to get in his pants. So, I think being friends is a good way to start...”

“Ew...you and...no. What?”, she gasped.

“Iz...come to the front seat... I feel like a driver...which I am...but come on over.”, Alec protested. Izzy stood up in the moving car and leaped forward almost hitting Alec with her knees.

“Ow...watch your knee”, he complained.

“You asked for this...”, he rolled his eyes.

“Right...so...yeah, I don’t know about Magnus. He is a nice person... I know that. But, I don’t think he...we will ever be anything more than an arranged pair of wolves”

“And...you’re okay with it?”

“I am okay, for now. Considering the fact that I somehow understand where he’s coming from. You know Idris...you know the how the packs live here. They torment the Omegas. Quite literally. So, it’s only fair that Magnus hates me. For now, I am ok with being just his Alpha...and a good acquaintance. Rest, we’ll see how it goes.”

“You’re weird, you know.”, Isabelle looked astounded with everything.

“I am happy he’s not him...he’s not Sebastian”, Alec recalled his ex-boyfriend...a mundane...who cheated on him with his best friend...ex-bestfriend, Jace.

“Yeah...he does seem like a good guy. And no, Alec. Nobody can be like Sebastian or that moron Jace. Can’t believe he did what he did.”, Izzy nodded.
Alec dropped her off at her dance academy and came back home. He hadn’t showered after waking up so that’s where he headed. What he didn’t anticipate was walking into a shower that smelled of his Omega. Magnus had been here. Alec took a deep breath and the scent of vanilla and chocolate filled his lungs. He rubbed his crotch as he felt blood rush through it...hardening it and turned on the faucet.

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Clary, Kaya and Asmodeus accompanied Magnus to Alec’s residence the day they were leaving for New York. Alec was packed and ready to go. He was in the garage, stuffing his stuff in his Volvo. That car was his little baby. He never left her to be cared for by the servants. This morning, as well, he was the one cleaning her when Magnus walked in with his luggage.

“Morning”, he whispered, putting his things down on the ground. He saw Alec’s mighty legs extend out from below the car.

“Morning”, Alec slid out and waved. “Ready to go?”

“I am... can’t say the same for you”, Magnus arched a brow.

“Right...yeah, I am done checking her. Let me go take a shower. Here are the keys, put your luggage at the back”, Alec instructed, handing over the keys to his mate.

Alec returned an hour later wearing beige pants and a navy-blue button-down shirt. The sleeves were folded up to his elbows and he had a pair of googles handing on his chest. Magnus gasped as his gaze fell on Alec.

Alec smiled...because he actually heard that...both literally and in his mind, because of their mating bond.

The family gathered around Alec’s car as he drove it to the porch. Maryse kissed her son’s forehead wishing him good luck while she hugged her Magnus hoping he had a pleasant trip and work experience in New York.

“Mags...you call me if Lightwood does anything to you. I’ll make a run to NYC if that is what it takes...ok big brother?”, Clary raised her index finger as she held her brother’s shoulder.

“I will, Biscuit”, Magnus smiled and pulled the redhead to his chest.

“I heard that, Clary”, Alec raised his arm from his seat.

“That...dearest brother-in-law-to-be was my intention”, she rolled her eyes. Isabelle glanced at Clary and a smile curved on her lips. She was fiery...and Isabelle loved that. Magnus bid goodbye to the rest of his family and Alec’s and then walked around to sit on the front seat next to Alec. Alec removed the roof of the car so that the families got a better view.

“Ready?”, he asked his mate.

“As ready as I will ever be, Alexander”, Magnus sighed and rubbed his thigh in determination.

“Ok...New York, here we come”, Alec tapped the wheel and pressed the ignition.

“Alec...take care of yourself brother”, Izzy yelled as they drove out of the Lightwood estate. Clary approached the brunette wolf and nuded her.
“They’ll be ok, right?”

“Yeah...don’t worry about it”, Izzy smiled as she the car disappear in the woods.

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“How long, till we reach New York?”, Magnus asked as Alec rolled on the highway. He had a map in his hand but those were silly little things that Magnus always ended up having trouble with.

“It’s a 5-hour drive...so we should reach NYC by evening...”

“And...you said that you have planned the accommodation. May I know...where and how?”, Magnus leaned back on the seat.

“I did...my Aunt...I mean my mother’s sister has a flat in the Upper East Side. She moved out after she got married...so it’s dusty and locked up, and yet, open for our disposal. We’ll have to clean up. But, it’s close to your Hotel. So, I thought it’ll be nice.”

“Oh...thank you?”, Magnus could not believe it. “Can I ask you something?”

“Uhm?”, Alec replied.

“Why?”

“Why, what?”

“Why...are you doing this...for me? We don’t even know each other...and now we’re going to be flatmates...and...it just doesn’t add up”, Magnus shook his head.

“To begin with, Magnus. People sometimes do good things...because they are good. You see the logic?”, Alec rolled his eyes and Magnus frowned letting out an irritated sigh. Why couldn’t Alec reply normally...why did he always have to choose sarcasm to taint his answers.

“And...like I said. I made a commitment to you...and I intend to fulfill it”, he added.

“Why...me. You’re Alexander Lightwood. You could’ve had any Omega at your feet”

“I didn’t want them on my feet. I knew, for a fact, that I was fated to be betrothed to an Omega...and you just happened to be, my type”, Alec winked.

“Your type”, Magnus crossed his hands on his chest.

Alec took a deep breath. “When Dad told me about you...I realized that you weren’t like those Omegas who would do anything to appease their Alphas. You have a career...an aim in life...those things are hard to come by, Magnus...especially in our community...I admired that. Which is why...when your dad asked me, I agreed to meet with you. Only meet with you. I was never going to decide something before I know what was in your mind.”

“My dad...asked you...not your father”

“Your father wanted to see if I was good enough for his son...and apparently I was”, Alec gave him a smile. “Why did you agree for the engagement”, Alec asked back.

“Do you...remember the day we met?”
Magnus, dressed up the best way he could and wanted to, walked out into his living room to face the family of the man he was supposed to be mated to. A boy...in fact. Alec Lightwood, the eldest son of Consul Robert Lightwood. The boy, as he was informed by Clary, was 22, two years younger than Magnus.

As he stepped foot in the living room, his eyes darted straight to the Alpha who was fidgeting with his phone in his hand. The boy’s eyes shot up as his nostrils registered the scent of an Omega. Magnus took a deep breath and stepped forward. Asmodeus pulled Magnus to introduce him to Alec who held out his hand nervously.

“Alec”

“Alec”

“Magnus”, Magnus shrugged.

The families excused themselves leaving Alec and Magnus alone to talk.

“I believe...you are to be my Alpha”, Magnus glanced at Alec.

“I’d prefer if we don’t use our genders to call each other”, Alec shrugged. “And, I have a name. Alec...Alec Lightwood”, the boy replied, with confidence in his voice.

“,..short for Alexander?”

“Yeah...but no one calls me that”, Alec leaned back on the couch.

“Ok...pity. It’s a much better name than Alec”, Magnus made a face...making Alec give him a death stare.

“My father thinks you’re a decent boy”, Magnus mumbled.

“I’d rather you tell me what you think of me, Magnus?”

“I barely even know your name, Alexander?”, Magnus arched a brow. “How am I supposed to judge you based on the 2 second conversation we just had?”

“...and yet you’re giving me that attitude? Are 2 seconds enough to assume that I am worthy of being talked to...like that?”, Alec rolled his eyes.

“Hurts your Alpha ego...does it, Alexander?”, Magnus taunted.

“What...no. That’s not even...you know what, you’re weird”, Alec waved his hand and got up. “We’re done here. I’ll go tell Dad that you’re not interested...and I am ok with it...and if you’re into someone else, I can let them know that I don’t like you. It was nice meeting you, Magnus. All the best. See you around.”

“You’d do that...if...if I was with someone I mean? You’d let this go...”, Magnus popped his eyes open, unable to believe his ears.

“Are you?”, Alec arched a brow. “with...someone, I mean?”

“No”, Magnus licked his lips. He looked between the Alpha and himself for a second and then took a deep breath. “Ok”

“What ok?”, Alec raised his hands in the air.

“Ok, I’ll be your Omega. I’ll mate with you.”
“What...?”, Alec frowned, devastatingly confused. “You...what changed?”, Alec crossed his hands on his chest.

“Nothing actually. But, I’ll get engaged to you because I don’t have another choice...and then, there are a lot of more awful Alphas in Idris...and you don’t actually seem that bad.”, Magnus shrugged and walked out.

Alec stood there, stumped. This was going to be a hell of a ride for the young Alpha.

“You didn’t answer my question”, Alec snapped in front of his Omega.

“My parents...wanted me to be mated to someone who wouldn’t use me like the other Omegas are...here in Idris...and as much as I can’t foresee the future, I can expect you to not do that...you don’t seem like that kind of a person.”, Magnus shrugged and looked at Alec. “Satisfied, Alexander?”

“Alec...and yeah”, Alec nodded.

Chapter End Notes

I am glad I had written this chapter in advance because I spent the day out!
Alec unlocked the door of their new apartment and held it open as Magnus pulled both their bags inside. It was prettier than they had anticipated. There was a large living room in front of them, with a balcony on one side and an open kitchen on the other. It narrowed into a smaller room which was two-steps higher than the rest of the apartment. The only thing separating the room from the rest of the apartment were those two steps. There was a large bed in the smaller portion of the room and other furnishings too which were covered in white sheets. There was a big window behind the bed through which sunshine was peering in.

“It’s a studio apartment! We have a studio apartment for us at Upper East Side? Alexander...your aunt...I don’t know how to thank you...”, Magnus gasped as they stepped foot inside. He was in awe of the locality and the apartment.

“Don’t thank me. I am living here with you. We’re friends. Friends don’t thank each other for every little thing”, Alec smiled and turned on the lights one by one to check which ones were working and which ones would have needed a replacement since the place had been locked up for quite some time.

“Although...there’s...just one...bed...”, Magnus walked further inside and noticed a single king size bed in the bed room area. The fact that they were friends also meant that they couldn’t share the same bed without making it awkward for either of them. And then, there was this elephant in the room, in form of Magnus’ periodic heat cycles. That was a time where Alec had to stay away from Magnus at all costs and sharing the same bed wouldn’t help.

“I'll sleep in the living room, that’s no big deal. You can take the bed.”, Alec curved his lips upward, explaining that it didn’t matter to him.

“And, why would you do that??”, Magnus crossed his hands on his chest. “I can sleep outside as well. Couches are more my thing... I believe I already told you that once.”, Magnus added, arching his eyebrows.

“I know you could. But, this is not a competition. I am offering you the bed because I want to Magnus.”, Alec smirked.

“It’s not a competition...I agree, but I wouldn’t let you be the bigger person every damn time. It’s annoying...do you know that? For once, I’d like it if you fight with me or argue on how you deserve to sleep on the bed... and we can fight it out on who gets to use the bed”, Magnus spat at Alec, who gawked at Magnus after hearing everything he just did.

“Fight you...over a room? Over a stupid bed”, Alec was aghast. “Is that what you think of me...that I try to be the bigger person on purpose. Because here I thought, kindness was lacking in the world. Jesus Magnus what is wrong with you?”, he widened his eyes, something pinching him in his heart. “Guess some people can’t stand kindness after all...”

“I didn’t mean it like that...Alexander”, Magnus panicked.

“Fine, we’ll both sleep in the room. The bed looks large enough and contrary to what you might think, I am not a very motile sleeper. So, we can put pillows between us and sleep on the same bed without making it awkward for either of us.”, Alec informed. His lips curved into a lopsided grin when he felt Magnus flushing red and purple in his cheeks.
Magnus moved his gaze around the room. It was indeed a beautiful place to stay. He saw through his peripheral vision, that Alec had pulled the covers off the couch. He toed his shoes out and jumped on the couch to test how bouncy it was. “Oh, this is good”, he muttered, standing up again. Magnus chuckled watching Alec playfully inspect the couch.

“My aunt said that there’s a cleaning lady scheduled for two times a week. She’ll clean and dust everything but won’t do the dishes because that’s all she is paid for. And umm, so that’s about all the help we’ll get from outside. We have to divide the rest of the chores among us.”, Alec informed pulling covers from the furniture one by one. “There must be a vacuum cleaner somewhere here.”, he said, and Magnus instinctively looked around. He found it, tugged in the lowermost shelf of a kitchen drawer.

“I can cook...so I’ll take that responsibility”, Alec raised his hand.

“Dishwashing and laundry, that’s on me. And weekends, I’ll cook...sometimes...if I feel like it.”, Magnus volunteered.

“I suppose I can do dusting then, on the days the cleaner doesn’t turn up”, Alec lifted his lips up and shook his head.

“Sounds good to me. I’ll help you with it...on the weekends.”, Magnus shrugged as they pulled out a dust-cloth and adjusted the vacuum cleaner settings. They put on light music and got to work. Cleaning the apartment together was fun, contrary to what they thought. They arranged the furniture a little differently, because Magnus was very particular about these things. It was late-night by the time they finished setting the apartment up. Magnus made a list of essentials they wanted for the house, after deciding that it was best to leave shopping to Magnus, consider how clumsy and forgetful Alec was. The division of work sounded fair to Magnus, also because he would have never associated an Alpha volunteering for work before meeting Alec.

That night, they ordered Chinese take-out and ate, sitting on the floor because there were surprisingly no chairs in the apartment and Magnus did not want to dirty the couch on their first day. Alec made a mental note to not dirty the place because Magnus seemed like the kind of person who would mind that.

“So, if you become a permanent employee at the Plaza Hotel, they’ll give you a penthouse to live-in... like Chuck Bass got one in Gossip Girl when he bought that hotel, I mean?”’, Alec mumbled with his mouth full of fried rice.

“No... that’s only for the topmost positions in the Management staff. Like the Manager, for instance. I will have to arrange my own accommodation until I am promoted to those posts. And wait, are you telling me that you followed Gossip Girl. That’s literally the most cliché American teenage drama ever, Alexander”, Magnus chuckled.

“Isn’t it ironic though? Providing accommodation to the senior staff members who can afford it...as opposed to the people who are barely starting their career and most of the times, have no place to stay. And, in my defense, it was Izzy who watched Gossip Girl...and I just had to because we shared the same room in our grandparent’s house in Dublin. Did not have the liberty to have separate rooms!”’, Alec muttered.

“Such is life, Alexander. So... what do you have planned for your vacation in NYC? Ok, fine...but I am not letting this go. Alexander Lightwood...xoxo Gossip Girl. I bet you enjoyed the show more than you admit it. Or more than your sister did!”’, Magnus arched a brow, imitating the voiceover artist from the show.
“Contrary to what you might think Magnus, I actually do have a career and a job that I get paid for. And I like to believe, I am good at. I am meeting with a few directors and fashion houses here. It’s been a while since I went behind my camera and shot something that paid me heftily. Ok…and also Gossip Girl was a long time ago Magnus. It is that part of my teenage life which I would really like to forget….”, Alec informed taking a sip of beer.

“You’re a professional photographer? Like you…have a major in Photography??”, Magnus gasped. Of course, Maryse had told him that Alec enjoyed photography, but Magnus didn’t realize that Alec enjoyed it enough to make a career out of it. Sometimes Magnus felt like he was oblivious to so much happening around him.

“Yeah. I graduated from University of Dublin. And, I work for individual jobs with magazines, newspapers and fashion tabloids. I have also worked with certain designers during the New York Fashion Week last year, capturing their Spring/Summer collections of 2017. So, contrary to what my mother thinks, I am not that jobless a person”, Alec chuckled.

“Shouldn’t you be…in say…Los Angeles? That place is good for someone with your choice of career. There are hardly any opportunities here in NYC. In LA, you could get a permanent position with some production house. That will give a boost to your career, Alexander?”, Magnus exclaimed, still wrapping his head around Alec’s profession.

“Yeah, but I don’t like to work non-stop. And, I also take frequent breaks in between, which is why, I like working here in New York City. I get to do individual assignments, then get paid for it and move on to the next good thing. Sometimes I go back to the same companies for a second assignment…but mostly, I just take a break and start over…and travel around in between two consecutive assignments. Nature photography reboots me for another assignment.”, Alec shrugged. “I know I’ll need to become more serious…but I am still just 22…I can enjoy my life for some more time before I settle for a permanent job.”

“I am impressed…so…where are these meetings exactly…and when?”, Magnus gulped his beer and asked.

“They’re over the weekends at a few hotels. In fact, one of them happens to be at the Plaza itself. So, I’ll accompany you to work that day, Magnus. If I like the nature of the job, I will have enough work to last me six months and I think that is about how much time you’ll need here to settle down, right? Before the Clave decides to pull us back to wed us in holy matrimony”, Alec arched a brow, breaking into a chuckle.

“Yeah…so you planned that assignment around my work?”, Magnus popped his eyes open, scoffing hearing Alec’s mocking tone.

“Noh…no… I am not that nice a person…”, Alec chortled, making Magnus shake his head disapprovingly. “But, when you told me that you wanted to come to New York…and that you had been offered a job at the Plaza Hotel, I accepted this production house’s offer to come for the meeting. Otherwise, I would have let it go because I wasn’t really looking for work right now. It was holiday time for me…but life has a way of giving you surprises when you least expect them.”, Alec informed, with a slight roll of his eyes.

“It’s convenient for you…you’re an Alpha. You can come and go anywhere, as you please”, Magnus scoffed, changing the tone of the discussion. “Unlike me…earlier, I needed my sister to chauffeur me everywhere I went…and now, I need you…my life hasn’t exactly been as easy as yours or any other Alpha’s, Alexander. You got everything you wanted…and more”, he raised a brow. Alec paused for a second to stare at Magnus and then violently rolled his eyes.
“I didn’t choose to be an Alpha...like you didn’t choose to be an Omega. It is just what was supposed to happen. But what you can choose to do...is STOP BROODING.”, Alec raised his volume. “Seize the opportunity, Magnus because...how often do you get an unpaid chauffeur, which by the way is me in our case if you were wondering, to drive you anywhere you want to go. Believe me Magnus, this side of the coast isn’t rainbows and butterflies either. Be glad that you don’t have people pulling you off their beds in the morning...when you are peacefully sleeping, to drive them to dance classes...or accompany them to shopping...do you have any idea how long Izzy takes to buy a pair of black skinny jeans...they are black...and skinny...and it takes her 2 hours to find the right shade...of black”, Alec cringed, making the edges of Magnus’ lips curved into a smile.

“Hell, I would have jumped at the opportunity of getting a personal assistant slash bodyguard if I were in your position. Right...coz that’s what we Alphas are...if you see, Magnus dear, Alphas are actually natural bodyguards of the Omegas...because their job...is to protect them...do you see the point I am trying to make? You have to coz those moronic dumb head Alphas don’t see it...they think that it’s actually cool to be an Alpha...when it’s not really...you’re nothing but a fucking bodyguard with a lot of anger issues. WHO, to add to that...can’t also control their raging hormones...Trust me, Magnus... I can go on about how pitiful we Alphas are...if you want me to... if that makes you happy...”, Alec made weird hand gestures that made Magnus burst into an incessant laughter.

“You’re strange, Alexander”, he threw his head back, holding his chest. “Really...really strange. I never even realized what I was getting myself into when I agreed to get engaged to you...really so strange...”, Magnus took deep breaths to calm his laughter down.

“Well, there’s no beauty without some strangeness...”, Alec quoted, seeming rather proud of himself. “Edgar Allan Poe...in case you were wondering?”, he added with a wink.

“I wasn’t really, but thanks.”, Magnus chuckled, biting his lip. He was engaged to the weirdest Alpha in his whole kind.

“And... of course you would have realized it sooner, had you talked to me...like really really talked to me. Because I am a quite charismatic or so I’ve been told...and also nice to talk to...but you judged me to be somebody who is exactly the opposite of everything I am. Anyway, the joke’s on me...I couldn’t charm you...earlier with my charismatic charms...”, Alec shrugged and got up to throw his empty food packet. “Now, you’re stuck with me...flatmate”, he added. Magnus shook his head and followed Alec to the kitchen to throw his own packet.

“Also”, Alec turned around rapidly, making Magnus stiffen as Alec came really close to his body. Magnus arched his body slightly backwards and gulped. “It’s...Alec”, Alec wiggled his brows and stepped away when Magnus’ Omega scent became too much for him to handle. Magnus released his breath and shook his head again. Such a weirdo. “Why do you call me...Alexander. Really, why?”, he added with a lopsided grin and turned off the lights coming back from the kitchen area.

“Alexander”, Magnus imitated, “is a rather nice name...Alexander”, he repeated, making Alec roll his eyes. “I prefer calling you that to your short, sweet and crispy name...because of all those things you just mentioned. It’s a really good name to begin with...and, you don’t have to shorten it to make it sweet and crispy...”, Magnus gave him a lopsided grin and turned off the lights coming back from the kitchen area.

“Whatever...so, do you start work tomorrow or?”, Alec picked up the cushions lying on the couch as they proceeded to their room. Magnus removed the white sheet off of their bed and used it to dust the mattress. He spread a new bedsheet from the closet and took out the blankets that were stored in the
box of the bed, as instructed by Alec’s aunt in the manual they got, stuck to one of the kitchen cabinets.

“I have to start work from the day after. Tomorrow, I just need to go in to fill some employee detail forms which shouldn’t take more than a few hours. But then, I have to shop for groceries...so I’ll be back by afternoon. Or later, if I go to check out some furniture as well...”, Magnus replied, placing the cushions in a neat line in the middle of the bed. Alec nodded and opened his bag to take out a pair of pajamas and a lose t-shirt.

“I could drive you...to work I mean?”, Alec offered, zipping his bag back up.

“Again with the favors...Alexander”, Magnus sighed, pulling out a pair of matching t-shirt and pajamas from his suitcase.

“Hey, listen...I am trying to be economical here...you’ll probably take a cab to work...and then to the grocery store and then back...and cabs have hefty fares. If I drop you, I can take you to the store...and then back home...not to forget, our car will be better to put the grocery bags, instead of roaming around on the streets looking for a cab”, Alec retorted. “Also, I’d like to explore New York...because I’ve got nothing to do until this weekend...”, he added, softly.

“Fine...then wake up early because I hate being late and it is also my first day.”, Magnus squinted his eyes at Alec.

“Yeah, I can manage that”, Alec, muttered, walking into the washroom to change his clothes. He came out and stepped away to make way for Magnus. By the time Magnus returned, Alec had settled on the bed and was scrolling through his phone. Alec raised his head to glance at Magnus and his gaze froze. Magnus had removed all product from his hair and they were not falling all over his forehead. His eyes were bare of any makeup and so were his cheeks. There were no necklaces around his neck or bracelets around his wrist. He looked different.

“Alexander. Snap”, Magnus literally snapped his fingers in front of Alec. Alec flickered his eyes and looked at Magnus.

“You thought I would sleep wearing those bracelets and necklaces...and the makeup?”, Magnus rolled his eyes.

“Of course, not”, Alec stammered. “But that doesn’t mean you don’t look different...because you do... and I’ve also never seen you without makeup before...so stop judging me for barely looking...harmless looking, Magnus Bane”, Alec pulled himself together, licking his lips profusely. Magnus dumped his clothes in a different pile that he had decided as the laundry pile, until he bought the laundry basket. He hopped on the bed next to Alec after turning off the lights in the living room.

“Hey Magnus, what is your Instagram handle?”, Alec asked after some seconds of silence.

“You want to be Instagram buddies now too?”, Magnus chuckled, rolling his eyes. “Too much friendship for one month, Alexander”, he added.

“Can you answer me politely...for once?”, Alec glared at his Omega. “What privacy will I violate...if you give me your Instagram handle?”, Alec sounded appalled.

“Fine...it’s magnus.bane”, Magnus rolled his eyes. “It really wasn’t that difficult though, Alexander”, he chuckled.
“You’re weird”, Alec spat and pressed something on his screen. “Anyway, I just sent you a follow request. Should His Highness feel like granting me the permission, please do accept.”, Alec said in a playful tone, putting his phone aside. Magnus smiled, once more and opened his Instagram to accept Alec’s follow request. His Instagram handle/s – theworldthroughmylens and agiddylightwood. Magnus made a mental note to check Alec’s photography page since it was a public one and left the private page for some other time.

From the corner of his eyes, he saw Alec put his pillow to the other side of the bed and sleep anti-parallelly to him.

“I just prefer sleeping this way around”, he explained, seeing Magnus observe his activities. Magnus turned off the lights and pulled over his blanket. Mouthing a quick goodnight to Alec, he turned towards the edge of the bed and closed his eyes.

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Alec woke up next morning to the sound of water running in the shower. He groaned and complained in his sleep, unwilling to give in to the noise. Pulling a cushion from their partition wall, Alec pressed it on his ear and tried to shut the noise out...but it was a stupid idea to begin with, since it focused his mind on the noise even further. He turned his head around a couple of times to zone out and fall back asleep, but finally gave up and then sat up on the bed, with his eyes still closed and forehead curved into a frown.

“This is unacceptable”, he said in a raspy voice. “I demand to be paid to be woken up by all this unwanted noise in the middle of the night.”, he complained rubbing his eyes when Magnus walked out of the shower with nothing, but a towel wrapped around his waist. Alec gasped and yawned simultaneously, the noise amusing Magnus as the Omega picked out his clothes to wear. Magnus had really nice abs, or so Alec noticed, before glancing away awkwardly.

“It’s 6:45 in the morning, Alexander. Not really the middle of the night, as per your accusations. Anyway, I was about to wake you up myself. You volunteered to drive me to the Plaza, remember? Now go get ready...”, Magnus chuckled buttoning his shirt. Alec slapped himself to wake up, amusing Magnus further. “Or was that all a part of your game to get me to accept your follow request on Instagram.”, Magnus arched a brow as he took out a brush and dipped it in some powder to contour his cheeks.

“Wow...congratulations, Magnus...you’ve reached a different level of being self-obsessed. I made a promise and I intend to keep it...however painful that might be for me. Also, thanks...for accepting my request...and if you like my photography page, do give a follow back...I could use the popularity. I’ve been out of my mojo for far too long”, Alec yawned again, proceeding to the washroom with a towel in his hand.

Magnus eyed Alec until the door of the washroom closed on him. “So weird”, he mumbled, before pouting to perfect his cheeks.

Magnus was packing his things in his backpack when Alec came out of the shower with his hair dripping water on his chest. It looked like a cliché Hollywood movie, but Magnus couldn’t help but gaze at Alec. A naked Alec emanated stronger scent than he did when he was clothed, and Magnus found himself losing his breath with every step Alec took around the room. He shut his eyes and constricted his nostrils, hoping that Alec would find something ok to wear as soon as possible so that his miseries would end.

Alec chose a grey khadi button-up shirt over black jeans and brown combat boots to start his day in New York. He quickly brushed his hair roughly and stuffed his phone in his pocket to join Magnus
who was waiting for him at the door. Before Magnus was about to lock the apartment, Alec went back inside and grabbed his camera. They didn’t have anything to eat and decided to get breakfast on their way.

“While I sign the documents and contract papers inside, what exactly would you do at the Plaza? It’s not a sight-seeing spot, per se”, Magnus asked as Alec turned to the main road outside their apartment building.

“I’ll wander...observe...capture an image if something grabs my attention. Don’t worry about me. I know how to keep myself busy”, Alec replied. Magnus nodded and pulled out the map of the area to locate a breakfast diner nearby and found one that had a drive-thru facility. Magnus ordered an Egg Sandwich while Alec settled for Bagel and Coffee. Alec placed the Bagel in his lap and coffee in the coffee stand in the car and entered the Plaza address in the GPS of his car.

The drive was quiet. Magnus slowly munched on his sandwich, careful to not ruin his makeup while Alec hummed some random tunes and sipped his coffee. They found a nice spot to park their SUV outside the Hotel radius and Alec followed Magnus inside the recruitments office.

“I am Magnus Bane. Luke Garroway, your recruitments officer, asked me to sign my documents and contract papers today. I have to start working here from tomorrow”, Magnus informed the receptionist, who carefully noted down the details. Alec looked around and observed the interior designing of the recruitments office while Magnus spoke with the receptionist. The latter asked Magnus to take a seat while they summoned Luke.

“Find something interesting?”, Magnus made Alec jump in his spot as he whispered very close to his shoulder.

“No... what about you. What did the receptionist say?”, Alec looked between the reception and Magnus.

“They asked me to wait for Mr Garroway in the lobby. So, I guess I have to kill time with you.”, Magnus shrugged.

“Too bad... because we do that a lot already at home.”, Alec rolled his eyes, making Magnus chuckle. The way Alec said home, made Magnus’ heart beat faster, for a few moments. It felt genuine. They settled on the couches a few minutes later. Both of them took a newspaper each and started reading when a tall man with a muscular body called Magnus’ name. Magnus stood up, straightening his tie and offered his hand. Something stung in the back of his nose as Luke came forward and Alec defensively stood up, taking a close spot next to Magnus but not enough to make the Omega feel awkward in any way.

“You must be Magnus Bane?”, the man asked, in a hoarse voice. Magnus shut his eyes when the man’s scent saturated his lungs. An Alpha. Wow, this was going to be splendid. Magnus thought in the back of his head as he plastered a smile on his face. Never in his wildest dreams, he would have thought that he would encounter a wolf in a city like New York, let alone his recruitments officer being a wolf himself.

“That’s right...and you must be Mr Luke Garroway, right?”, Magnus asked, trying to hide the shiver in his voice.

“Just Luke. Welcome to the Plaza”, Luke smiled, trying to ease out Magnus’ tension but it didn’t help. Magnus’ breaths rose up and were about to get noisier when Alec wrapped his arm around Magnus’ shoulder. Magnus jumped and looked over his shoulder. Alec was dangerously close to him, but his stance projected protection and safety above everything else. Magnus blinked and let out
a deep breath, as a strange sensation spread through him. His body relaxed when Alec rubbed his arm gently, making soft strokes.

“I will be right here, waiting for you to finish signing your papers, Magnus”, Alec said, looking right in Luke’s eyes. He suddenly turned to Magnus and flashed a smile. “Ok?” he asked.

Magnus nodded, unable to comprehend why Alec did what he did and why or how did it make him feel better? He felt safe hearing that Alec would be there when he returned.

“I am Alec Lightwood, by the way. Magnus’ friend”, Alec offered his hand to Luke. Luke didn’t blink as he shook Alec’s hand and then directed Magnus towards his office. Alec shook his shoulders to release his tension and dropped back on the couch after Magnus disappeared in the lobby.

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“Is everything alright with you, Alexander?”, Magnus asked as they sat in the car after Magnus returned from Luke’s office. Alec clenched his jaw and looked at Magnus. “You seem like you’ll rip someone’s head off right now”, Magnus whispered.

“He was an Alpha...wasn’t he? I could sense it...his scent was reeking off of him. I could feel his blood boiling in his veins of his palm when I shook his hand...I didn’t know there were wolves here in New York City. I mean it’s obvious if you think about it. The survivor packs must have taken refuge in one of the Boroughs but still, what a sheer coincidence!”, Alec growled under his breath. Magnus noticed the veins popping out of Alec’s hands. He gulped and looked back towards Alec whose jaws were clenched together.

“I know...I mean I realized that he is an Alpha when he came...closer and shook my hand. His scent was too strong to miss even though Alpha scents have stopped bothering me a lot after...after we mated last month...”, Magnus whispered, narrowing his brows. It was vital for him to understand what exactly was Alec feeling because it looked to him like he was really angry and furious. This wasn’t good for the both of them.

“Did he do something? Touch you...advance you...in any way...”, Alec asked, turning his head to look at Magnus. Magnus blinked and shook his head in refusal.

“Not at all. He was all work and no personal talk. Trust me. He was far away from me, at all times. And, if he would have done anything, I am sure our bond would have told you about it...”, Magnus replied, feeling a strong urge to calm Alec down. He had to distract him, somehow. “Now that...this is settled, I’d better get to stalking your photography page on Instagram and see if you’re good enough to be followed back by me”, Magnus changed the topic. Alec popped his eyes open and then Magnus saw the edge of his lips curve into a smile. A scoff escaped the Alpha’s lips and he turned his gaze back on the road.

Magnus heaved a sigh of relief.

Alec pulled in the parking of the department store and Magnus took out the list he had made. They proceeded to the store with Alec pushing the trolley cart behind Magnus. They started with the food section and picked up fruits, vegetables, cereals, cooking oil, spices and other food items. Next, they picked out crockery, cutlery, cooking pans, spatulas and other essentials. The list was a huge one as they went to the other aisle to pick out dishwasher, laundry basket, detergent and toiletries.

“Listen, this trolley is too heavy to push, so I’ll bill this one out and put the bags in the car and be right back. You continue shopping for all the other things in the list, is that ok?”, Alec asked.
Magnus nodded and proceeded to pick out the items checking them off his list while Alec got the trolley items billed and the bags put in storage.

He returned with an empty trolley cart and they bought some pillows, more bedsheets, blankets and other home essentials. This time, Magnus paid the bills. After they were done shopping, they stopped by a café in their neighborhood and bought their favorite coffee orders before retiring from their day into the comfort of their studio apartment.

First things first, Alec helped Magnus arrange the things in the kitchen and then in their room and the bathroom. While Alec dusted the living room, he observed Magnus unpack the cushion covers and meticulously arrange the covered cushions on the couch and the other minimal furniture that they had bought. They had ordered some recliners and sofa stools online, but they weren’t supposed to be delivered until Wednesday next week. Alec quietly took a picture of the newly arranged living room and posted it on his photography page with the caption – *settling in*.

“So, tomorrow’s your proper first day at work...right? Nervous? Exhilarated? Tensed?”, Alec bent on the kitchen counter when Magnus sat on a high stool on the opposite side.

“Oh, this stool is so comfortable”, Magnus sighed. He had seen it at the furniture store they were passing by and Magnus couldn’t help but buy a pair of those high stools for sitting and contemplating on the kitchen counters. They were perfect for the theme of their apartment. Alec rolled his eyes when Magnus completely ignored his question. “And no...I am not nervous or tensed...or whatever adjective you just used. Actually, pretty stoked”, he added with a shine in his eyes.

“That is great, actually. I am very glad to hear that.”, Alec shrugged. “There...so, what do you want for dinner tonight?”, he asked scrolling through some recipes.

“I am not that hungry, to begin with. So, anything light and healthy would do?”, Magnus suggested. Alec gazed at the roof for a split second and then nodded, as if he just had an idea. Magnus retreated to the living room to turn the TV on and connect his Netflix account to choose a dinner time entertainment. He scrolled through the list of movies that he could watch.

*“To Kill a Mockingbird* or... *El Dorado*?”, Magnus asked pressing the remote to his chin. He turned to Alec who was staring at him.

“How can you...between those two...movies which, albeit classics...are miles apart in genres. How did you even bring your choices down to these two?”, he gasped.

“Your point being...?”, Magnus deadpanned.

“Nothing.”, Alec surrendered. “Anything you want, dear fiancé. Anything”, he curved his lips upwards and shrugged. Magnus lifted his shoulders and turned around.

“To kill a Mockingbird, it is”, he announced. Alec was slicing tomatoes for salad when he heard this, and his lips curved into a smile.

It was a good thing that Magnus was as weird as he himself was.

They settled on the couch for dinner. Alec had made a simple chicken salad with Italian dressing and opened two beer cans to accompany them as they snuggled in their newly bought couch-blanket, or so Magnus had christened it.

Magnus dug his fork in the salad and took a full bite with some lettuce and piece of cubed chicken. As his teeth bit into the salad, his throat emitted a loud and involuntary moan. Alec was startled by the noise and he turned his head around to find Magnus relishing the salad with his eyes shut.
“This is so good”, he exclaimed.

“Thanks”, Alec arched a brow and turned his gaze back to the television. They finished their dinner quietly after which, Magnus took both their plates to the sink. The television was visible from all corners of the kitchen, so Magnus could see the movie while he did the dishes. After putting the dishes away for drying, he wiped his hands and rejoined Alec on the couch.

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Magnus woke up to his alarm ringing and found Alec’s side of the bed empty. He opened one eye and looked around their apartment, Alec wasn’t there. And he couldn’t feel him anywhere close to him. He yawned and got up trying to get the thoughts of Alec not being around out of his head. Alec was an adult, and he could take care of himself. Magnus shrugged and stood up from the bed, stretching his arms. He pulled his hoodie on and turned to the washroom where he noticed a note sticking to the door.

“Out for a run. Be back soon – Alec”

Magnus read, with his still blurry vision and nodded, to begin his own day. He had a nice and warm shower. Excitement and exhilaration were finally gripping him. He had dreamt of this exact day for the past so many months, especially after graduating in Hospitality Management. Working at a prestigious hotel in the best city of the world. In the initial days of his engagement to Alec, he had never expected that he would end up here. But, Alec had completely taken him by surprise and Magnus was happy to have found a friend in all this mating mess.

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Alec’s hands were curled in a fist as he ran along the jogging tracks in the Central Park. His hair was sticking to his forehead because of sweat and his biceps were tensed, muscles protruding out because of the fisting of his hands. He wore a lose tank top and jogging pants and his jacket was tied around his waist.

Alec stopped running when he felt his phone vibrating on his arm. He plucked it out from his arm band and picked the call up, reading his sister’s name on the caller ID.

“Iz...hey, what’s up. Everything alright there? Mom, dad...Max... are they ok? Are you ok? Magnus’ parents...? Clary...?”, he huffed, catching his breath. It was unusually early for Izzy to call him and he feared that something was wrong back in Idris. He looked around and spotted a bench to sit and talk. His free hand held his waist as his chest rose up and down.

“I am fine...brother. Calm down, will you? Everyone is ok...including your new in-laws!”, his sister’s voice jingled in Alec’s ear calming Alec’s nerves down. “I just wanted to check in with you and Magnus? How is everything...are you two settling in fine? And how is Magnus’ work? I hope he is enjoying his time...? You did not call any of us when you reached so we were all a little worried. Magnus has never been to New York...”, she asked.

“Yeah...yeah? Everything is alright. It’s Magnus’ first day at work today and he must be getting ready as we speak...I think. I am not sure.”, he added.

“Why...are you not with him? Where are you...? It’s 7:30 in the morning and you’re not home?”, she sounded curious.

“I am at the park...running. Needed to get some heat out of my system. Why are you so surprised? Do I not go out for morning runs on a usual basis?”, Alec frowned, gulping his saliva as his throat
dried up.

“You do... I know you do... I just panicked because you and Magnus are still new to living together so I assumed... anyway, my big brother has grown up, I guess. So... I’ll tell mom that she shouldn’t worry about you and you’ll be ok there...?”, she sighed. Alec scoffed because he could picture her rolling her eyes.

“...you assumed that we had an argument. Unfortunately for you, Isabelle Lightwood... Magnus and I haven’t fought once... and it’s actually pretty nice living with him. He’s a chilled-out guy and very easy to live with. And yes, you can tell Mom... or I’ll call her myself. She needn’t worry about me. I am absolutely ok.”, Alec shrugged.

“Ok... now tell me about you? You’re sure that you’re going to be ok? It hasn’t been a full year since everything happened... “, her voice lowered down to a sigh. The brightness on Alec’s face vanished and he licked his lips, nervously. “I know you’re doing this for Magnus... and I am happy because you’re trying to forget everything and move on... but I am here. I am here if you want to talk, alright? If you ever find yourself alone... you can... you can talk to me. You can be strong for Magnus, but you can be whatever you want to be... with me...”

“I haven’t thought about that, Iz. For once, in so many months... it didn’t cross my mind that they live here too and that I could very well bump into them some day.”, Alec sighed, closing his eyes as some memories flashed past his mind.

“It’s a good thing... big brother... it means that you’re getting better at handling this. But, the offer still stands and will always stand. I am here. Anytime you need to talk. Just a phone call away... “, Izzy emphasized.

“I know... there’s no one else I would rather talk to about all this. So, I promise that if I need to talk to someone... I’ll call you... alright? Now, how’s your dance practice going on?”, Alec changed the topic of discussion.

“It’s ok. We have much more candidates this term and I think it will end up great”, she added.

“Keep me posted. I’ll see you later. There’s a nice coffee shop here. I think a good cup of coffee would really boost Magnus’ morale before work”, Alec contemplated, looking at the menu card.

“That’s actually a good idea. Talk to you later, Alec. Take care of yourself. Before you hang up... wait, call Mom once every few days. She worries”, Izzy said, cutting the call. Alec walked to the coffee shop and bought two coffees. He had become familiar with Magnus’ choice of the drink and he got one order made perfectly to his needs.

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“So, they’re doing fine?”, Clary sighed, sounding relieved as Izzy joined her back at the table in the diner. Izzy nodded and smiled, keeping her phone aside. She had decided to meet up with Clary after receiving a rather tensed call from the Alpha late last night. Magnus hadn’t spoken to her properly since he left, and she was worried if her elder brother was doing ok in the alien city.

“Yes, they are absolutely fine. It’s Magnus’ first day at work today and he is probably busy. I am sure he would call you as soon as he is free and gets time. Alec told me that they’re both settling in just fine and there has been no problem adjusting too”, she added. Clary’s lips curved into an uncertain smile but at least her brother was doing fine. “Clary... come on, cheer up. I know you’re tensed. These boys can’t change... they’ll never understand the importance of a single phone call. But you don’t worry, I can pester Alec once every morning for updates, if you want”, she arched a brow.
“No...no... I guess I am not used to Magnus not being around. He has been with me since I can remember things about my life and suddenly, I haven’t seen him in 48 hours or spoken to him and it just feels really empty. But I think I’ll get used to it. He had to leave one day anyway”, Clary shrugged. “Thank you for calling your brother for me. Speaking of...if you don’t mind me asking, is everything ok with Alec? You seemed a little worried for him too...?”, Clary leaned forward placing her elbows on the table.

“Yeah...yeah, it’s...not my place to say Clary. Let me put it this way, there are certain situations that I did not want Alec to face and I am just worried that he wouldn’t open up to me and discuss his thoughts with me if he faces them again...so... time will tell if my big brother is ok or not. Regardless, I’ll be there for him...”, she sighed.

“I understand. You don’t have to explain. And, I don’t know Alec, but I understand that he is a good person. So, for what it’s worth, I am pretty sure he is strong enough to handle it. And, Magnus is there with him and if not for anything else, I’ve known Magnus for the kind of person he is. My elder brother will not leave Alec alone”, she added.

“I am sure. Let’s just cross our fingers and hope for the best. That is all that can be done, right...and now, what would you like to eat? This place serves mean pancakes...!”, Izzy clapped. Clary grinned and chuckled.

“Then, let’s try pancakes...and toast to the well-being of our brothers”, she added, lifting up her coffee mug in the air.

“I can drink to that”, Izzy chimed, clanking her own mug with Clary’s. There was a certain fire in the redhead that attracted Izzy. Her Alpha rage was channeled in its entirety for the protection of her elder brother and that was something that she had never seen before. Such restraint by any Alpha...of course there was her brother, Alec. But even he had had moments and ways to control his urge to rip things apart. But Clary. Izzy had been hanging out with the Morgenstern Alpha for the better part of the last month, especially after their brothers official bonded and mated, and Clary had nothing but impressed Isabelle Lightwood with the way she dealt with her second gender.

“By the way...what are you doing tonight? We could go see the meteor shower”, she suggested, reading the reminder off her phone. Clary blinked and stammered, and Izzy just popped her eyes open waiting for a response.

“Of course. Why not”, she blurted out, shaking her head.
first day at work!

Magnus was adjusting his tie around his collar when Alec walked back into their apartment holding a tray with two cups of coffee. Magnus tilted his head slightly and saw Alec wearing a black hoodie, holding a bottle of water in his other hand. He looked back at himself in the mirror to adjust his own uniform. He wore a crisp white shirt under an ash grey blazer and similar colored pants. The blazer had the logo of the Plaza hotel embroidered on it. He coupled it with a dark maroon tie and black leather office boots.

“Good morning”, he greeted, when Alec came close to him and put his cup of coffee down on the dresser table in front of him. Alec hummed in reply and unzipped his hoodie, throwing it in the laundry basket.

“Morning, Magnus. That coffee, by the way, is really good. Got it from a local café at the Central Park. Apparently, his coffee is famous all over Manhattan. And, I’ll make us some eggs sunny side-up for breakfast. Will that be alright with you?”, he said, pulling out his tank top off and throwing it in the basket. He grabbed his towel and walking into the washroom after hearing Magnus’ yes for the breakfast idea.

Magnus was sipping coffee reading the newspaper on his phone when Alec returned from the shower smelling like the best thing in the world. His fruity Alpha smell coupled with the scent of the bath salts and soap drove Magnus insane giving him goosebumps on his arms. His breath hitched when Alec walked into the kitchen just wearing black jeans and no shirt. Magnus momentarily looked up and blinked rapidly. Alec was, breathtakingly beautiful. The way those black jeans hung softly on his hips and his abs carved out on his abdomen.

The Alpha, on the other hand, skillfully cracked two eggs in the pan and simmered to fry them sunny-side up. He toasted two slices of brown bread simultaneously and plated the two, handing it over to Magnus. He went over to the refrigerator and pulled out a tetra pack of orange juice and poured it in two glasses, handing one to his mate.

“Call your sister, when you get time. Izzy called me this morning. Apparently, our families are freaking out because of the radio silence from our end. They think we either starved to death or ripped each other apart...”, Alec said, breaking the silence between the two wolves. He tasted the orange juice and nodded, approving it for himself.

“Oh my God...shit! Clary must be so pissed at me. How did I completely forget about talking to them...? Of course, their concern is well-placed considering how much we love each other...”, Magnus facepalmed, dropping his head on the kitchen.

“It’s alright. I told Izzy that you’re doing ok and settling in fine. And that you’ll call once you’re done with your first day of work. I told them that you’re busy arranging things to prepare for your job...which is true... I mean, it’s not like we’re lying or hiding something. It’s a genuine mistake that we did...”, Alec shrugged, sitting on a high-chair and taking a sip of the orange juice from the glass he held between his fingers.

“Thank you”, Magnus heaved a sigh in relief. “I’ll call her as soon as I am done with today’s work. By the way, how was your run today? And when did you leave?”

“I left very early. You were fast asleep. I do it sometimes. Whenever I am not in cities where I can transform away from mundane eyes, I need to run to blow off my steam and let off my rage. Don’t worry, I’ll never be gone for more than a few hours...after which you can start to panic that your
fiancé and friend has been abducted by some supernatural forces that love my charm.”, Alec explained, taking a deep breath, without changing the expression on his face.

“Your rage...as you say, seems like it is always on the verge of being out of control. I have lived with Clary all my life and I never noticed her getting out of hand? Unable to control her anger I mean...is that a male Alpha thing or something like that? And cheers to your charm!”, Magnus sighed, shaking his head.

“That’s because she must have found a way to control it when you were not looking. Plus, controlling your anger and rage in a city like Idris where every house is surrounded by trees and groves is not that difficult. In fact, my Nana’s house which is in Dublin... was near the edge of the forest and Grandpa used to take us to chase storms every weekend, when we were learning to control our wolf instincts and handle our anger and rage... it has got nothing to do with our masculinity... or because Clary isn’t a male Alpha”, Alec informed.

“Hmm, I guess that explains the number of times Clary insisted that she wanted to sleep earlier than usual and all those times she went out for a run without me...which frankly, annoyed the hell out of me at times because I couldn’t take a step out of the door without her. But, if what you say is true, then I feel bad that all this time, she had been doing this on her own...if only she would have said something, I would have helped her through...like she does...with me”, Magnus’ voice was tainted with guilt.

“Hey...come on Magnus. Don’t beat yourself up! You yourself have a lot of baggage to carry with you. And I am not saying this just because you’re an Omega and that I feel sorry for you... Our community doesn’t exactly make it easy on any of its members to live their lives the way they want to. While we Alphas have to manage our raging temper and overly hormonal nature, you have to manage your heat cycles...”, Alec shrugged, grabbing Magnus’ attention who felt embarrassed thinking about the time his heat had set in right after his mating to Alec.

“And... worry about Alphas hogging you, every time you’re outside the protection of your home and your family...”, Magnus added, making Alec purse his lips.

“...listen, I understand where you come from and I too feel furious for the way we treat our Omegas. You don’t deserve this constant attention on you...and I am sorry that our society treats you the way it does...”, Alec shook his head, assuming that he had made Magnus believe that he didn’t understand the difficulties an Omega was put through.

“I know you are...Alexander...if for nothing else, I know this that you have been nothing but kind to me, ever since we’ve met...even though I put you through a lot of shit and accused you of things that I cannot imagine you doing, now that I know you a little better than I used to. For what it’s worth...I am...”, Magnus opened his mouth to continue talking but Alec interrupted him...

“Sorry...? I’ve heard that one before and I believe that you meant it...so...you do not need to repeat it for me. I just wanted to add one more thing”, Alec continued after a few seconds of silence. “I know that you hate being dependent on anyone else but yourself, especially on an Alpha, but I am your fiancé and your mate, technically speaking. I am here if you need me. You can just order away, alright? And not out of the helplessness of your state but out of the fact that you can, and you have an Alpha at your disposal that you can order around...

“I don’t need you at my command, Alexander. A friend, like you previously mentioned, would be great. I’ve never had those before. I mean I did...once, when people thought that I would present myself as an Alpha when I turned eighteen, but then the opposite happened and...”

“Then...whoever they were, they weren’t your friends because they shouldn’t have abandoned you.
I, for one, will never abandon you. We’re in this for the whole of our lives...so, deal?”, he raised his fist in the air. Magnus smiled and bumped his fist with Alec’s.

“Friends...first. Always. Whatever happens...or doesn’t happen...”, he assured, receiving an endearing smile from the Alpha wolf. That particular smile could make Magnus feel better for so many more days to come. “Now...before I am late for my first day, I would like to get going. Do we need any supplies for the apartment? I could pick them up on my way back?”, he offered grabbing his backpack. Alec shook his head in refusal and then walked to the rack where the car keys were hanging on the stand. He grabbed the keys and offered them to Magnus.

“Here... take the car. So, you wouldn’t be late for work”, he said, dropping the keys on Magnus’ palm. Magnus took the keys with a look of surprise on his face and opened his lips...to say something.

“I know there’s no point arguing with you...but what if I were to say that I could take a cab to my workplace, what would you say, hypothetically speaking, Alexander”, Magnus wiggled his brows, jingling the keys in his hand.

“I would say that it is totally up to you...but you might have to take cabs after I begin working on my assignments, so these few days, you can take advantage of having a flat-mate with a car...and a Volvo at that. My lady is sexy...”, Alec winked, making Magnus chuckle. The Omega shook his head admitting that there was no way he could win against Alec, especially in the war of words.

“Fine. That sounds like a logical argument. One more question before I leave. How are you supposed to commute around with the car gone? I don’t think you would want to stay back at home all day long... would you?”, Magnus said, picking up his coffee cup.

“I can manage. I’ll mostly be home today...so it should not bother me as such. If it does, I’ll haul a cab or...just walk around...? Don’t worry about me...I’ll be fine”, Alec shrugged.

“Ok, then. See you in the evening. If you need me to pick up something, text me? I’ll pick them on my way back!”, Magnus waved opening the main door of their apartment.

“Hey Magnus?”, Alec called him back, making Magnus turn around narrowing his brows. “Good luck. Make sure you make your first impression so solid that they can’t wait to offer you your own penthouse and a promotion”, Alec wished. Magnus’ heart leaped in his chest and he grinned ear-to-ear.

“Thank you, Alexander. You too have a great day...”, Magnus whispered, grinning huge and wide, and left the apartment closing the door behind him.

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Magnus sat in Luke’s office, fidgeting with the rings on his fingers. Luke had asked him to wait in before he summoned his second in command – a man named Raphael Santiago. Raphael was supposed to be Magnus’ go-to-officer and he had to work under him for a few days to learn the basics of working at the Plaza. Luke’s assistant informed them that Raphael was going to join them in another 20 minutes because he was busy attending to a guest and so, there they were, sitting in Luke’s office with nothing to talk about and thus, an awkward silence gripping them. All Magnus could hear was his heart pounding in his chest and the watch on Luke’s wrist, ticking monotonously. The sound was so piercing that Magnus even contemplated throwing the watch away.

“Uhm...Magnus?”, Luke cleared his throat, making Magnus look up from his lap, straight into the tall and burly man’s dead-shot eyes. “I am pretty sure that this is a conversation for some other day...and
some other time, but since we’re idly passing our time anyway...do you mind if I ask you a few
questions...? You can stop me if you feel uncomfortable at any given point of time”, he completed,
with genuineness laden in his voice.

“Yeah...sure, I guess so? Fire away, Mr Garroway...Luke, I mean”, Magnus fisted his hands together

“The boy who accompanied you, yesterday, he was...in fact not just him, even you... I don’t know
how to say this...? I don’t want to startle you...or anything”, Luke rubbed his thumbs together.
Magnus gulped the lump in his throat. This was the conversation.

“We are members of the werewolf community that resides outside New York City. And yes, that
means we are werewolves...both of us.”, Magnus sighed, exposing the existence of his kind outside
New York. He was careful to not say the name of the city, in case it wasn’t approved by the
members of the Clave. It was best to leave that detail out until it had been cleared to be discussed
because it could threaten their existence in Idris.

“Alec... I think that is what his name was, right? The boy who claimed to be your friend... Alec
Lightwood... he is an Alpha right? I could sense it...”, Luke asked, looking for a clarification.
Magnus licked his lips and nodded.

“Yeah...he is. He is my Alpha for that matter...”, Magnus widened his eyes at his own declaration.
Before this, he hadn’t said it out loud to anyone or had accepted the fact that he was now mated to
another werewolf for the entirety of his life.

“You two are...mated? Traditionally mated to each other...? Under the full moon with all the
ceremonies...?”, Luke lifted his shoulders momentarily.

“Yeah...last month, before I was allowed to come here. In fact, both of us realized that you were also
an Alpha the moment we saw you yesterday and Alexander was surprised that there are werewolves
in a city like New York. It is just strange thing to process since the stories we’ve heard...”, Magnus
replied, tightening his fists.

“There are just two or three packs in all the five boroughs of New York. I lead one of them. We are
based in Chinatown, Brooklyn. You and Alec are most welcome to visit us, if you like. We’ll be
glad to have more company and we can talk about all the places our kind has taken refuge.
Although, I could feel that Alec wasn’t particularly happy to see me...he saw me as some kind of
threat to his Alphahood... would you let him know that I am not looking for any kind of conflict. I
just want us to know each other better... it’s not everyday that I encounter someone from my blood.”,
Luke dropped his voice recalling how tensed Alec had become.

“Alexander is...just very protective. Especially when it comes to his family and yesterday, he was
looking out for me. Protecting me. Plus, you are both Alphas and I am pretty sure that your Alpha
blood wouldn’t let you be cordial with each other. It is not your first instinct, Luke”, Magnus
shrugged, surprised at himself by the way he had just defended a guy he spent the last 3 months of
his life, judging and loathing.

“We’ll come around. I am sure. I am sorry if my stance indicated anything wrong. I didn’t mean to
threaten you...or him, or any of your territories. Can you tell this to Alec for me? That boy is young
and really good hearted from what I could judge, and it bothers me that we might have started on the
wrong foot....”, Luke raised his hand explaining Magnus.

“No...no, we understand. I am pretty sure things will be better the next time you see Alexander. He is
a great guy, you can have my word on that...”, Magnus rolled his eyes. He was about to add
something to it when the door flung open and a guy walked in. He was tall and pale, with dark black hair and black eyes. Magnus stood up to greet the man, when the latter asked him to take a seat.

“It’s ok. Raphael Santiago”, he offered his hand introducing himself.

“Magnus Bane”, the Omega nodded, flashing a soft smile.

“I am so sorry, Luke. I was just stuck with one of the guests”, Raphael sighed, rolling his eyes. “Sometimes they forget that they are human beings too and can just be nice...for a change”, he added. Magnus gulped as he followed Raphael to the gallery.

“So, Magnus...you don’t need to call me Sir or anything...Raphael will do just fine...and umm... for the first month of your job, we’re giving you floors two and three, the left wings each. The details of the work for every day have been emailed to you...but for your convenience, we’ve also put up a copy on your desk. Speaking of, come on, I’ll show you your office”, Raphael tilted his head, asking Magnus to follow him. Magnus nodded and hugged himself following Raphael into a large bullpen office. They quickly passed by all the desks, right towards a small room that had glass walls. Magnus read his name etched on the door along with his designation. He smiled and stepped inside when Raphael opened the door for him.

“Welcome to your office, Magnus”, he smiled. Magnus nodded and kept his bag on the chair on the opposite side of the desk.

“Your shift starts at 9:30 in the morning and will continue till 7:30 in the evening. That’s a basic 10-hour shift that you’re supposed to work. You’ll be in-charge of roughly 120 rooms and 25 members of the staff under your direct command.

“Copy that”, Magnus said, noting down a few details on his notepad.

“Every 15 days, your team will be put through a drill to see how efficiently you are working in case an emergency happens and the review report from the drill will decide if you’re ready to take up more responsibility or not. One basic criteria for your assessment is the guest feedback that has been linked to your profile that has been created with our database. Every guest is supposed to give you a full feedback on the last day of their stay or...once they are checked out”

“Ok. And that form is to be collected by me...and I should give them to you by the end of the month?”, Magnus arched a brow.

“No...no, actually. The feedback will be automatically logged on our system and you’ll be assessed by the end of the working month”, Raphael shrugged, moving his fingers in the air explaining the minor details to Magnus.

“Ok. Feedback, drill, 120 rooms, 25 staff members to begin with”, Magnus revised, gesturing if that is all he needed to remember.

“Yes. And because you’re a rookie employee, you are supposed to throw us a dinner party at a venue of your choosing at the end of your first month. We call it the rookie dinner. It’s just a Plaza tradition. We have loads of those here...you’ll get used to them soon enough...”, Raphael winked, making Magnus pop your eyes open.

“A rookie dinner...?”, Magnus cross-questioned Raphael making the man scoff.

“Yes...a rookie dinner. For all the senior staff members of the Plaza. It’s a tradition that has been followed forever. I threw one here in the hotel itself. It was the most fun night we had...”, Raphael rolled his eyes.
“Ohk. Anything else that need I know about?”, Magnus arched a brow.

“For now, you’re good to go. The right wings of floors one and two will being handled by another new recruit, Catarina Loss. She’ll be joining tomorrow. You both can consider yourself partners. Also, when I give her the orientation, I’d like you there with me... so that I know that you remember what I told you…”, he winked.

“A test?”, Magnus asked as they walked back to Magnus’ office.

“Something like that”, Raphael smirked. “Anyway, I need to rush. There’s a very big wedding reception in the Hotel in the evening. I haven’t been able to talk with our chefs, so I need to go. If you think you need some help, I am a text away”, he added, leaving Magnus alone to start his day.

“A test?”, Magnus asked as they walked back to Magnus’ office.

“Something like that”, Raphael smirked. “Anyway, I need to rush. There’s a very big wedding reception in the Hotel in the evening. I haven’t been able to talk with our chefs, so I need to go. If you think you need some help, I am a text away”, he added, leaving Magnus alone to start his day. “Good luck, Magnus. I hope you turn out to be a great asset to our management”

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A persistent knock at the door made Kaya lift her head up in the direction of the sound. One of the servants opened the door and in came the Lightwood second-born, Isabelle Lightwood, clicking her heels on the wooden floorboards. For a second, the color on Kaya’s face vanished. Why was Isabelle here? Were Magnus and Alec ok in New York? Her brain imagined multiple scenarios where her son had been harmed.

“Isabelle...what brings you by? Are Magnus and Alec ok? Magnus hasn’t spoken to us in two days. I am worried if my boy is doing ok there? New York is a really big city and we never let him leave Idris before this…”, she asked, putting a couple of sliced bacons on the toasted bread and grating cheese on it.

“Alec and Magnus are doing great! I spoke to Alec this morning and told him to tell Magnus…”, she took a breath, grinning wide. “to call you and check in with you people. He’ll probably give you a call sometime in the evening after he is back from his first day at work. Don’t worry, Ms Bane. Alec and Magnus have each other, they’ll be ok.”, she finished. Kaya’s face lit up and she gestured Izzy to join them from breakfast.

“Oh no... I actually came to pick Clary up for breakfast at Java Jones. She promised me that she’ll try the bagels they serve because they’re absolutely the best. Although, it’s so strange that she never tried those...Magnus worked there for over 2 years…”, she chirped. Kaya scoffed and asked Izzy to go upstairs to Clary’s room.

Clary’s room had a wide door that opened directly into the forest. The interior of her room was very simple. A white wood bed on one side, a big shelf of books on one side and a clean desk next to it. She had a walk-in closet in the room and a silver rug complementing the theme of the room. She looked around and the red-head Alpha was nowhere to be seen. Her scent was there...but it was faint. She took a step forward to look for her. She could feel cool breeze coming in from the window. She came closer and peeked outside.

The red-furred Alpha was sitting on the grass with her back turned to Izzy. Her ears were twitching in the wind. Izzy smiled and called Clary out. Clary tilted her head to stare at the Beta who was leaning on her window frame.

“Ready to go?”, Izzy asked, leaning on the frame of the window.

Clary stood up and jumped back in her room, changing into her human form. Izzy kept looking outside towards the forest while Clary put on her clothes.
“Let’s go, Izzy”, she chimed. “I hope those pancakes live up to my expectations... because I have a lot of hopes.”, she winked as they hopped down the stairs, Clary holding her black leather jacket in her hand. “Mom...I’ll be back soon...off for breakfast. Do you need me to pick up something from the way?”, she waved.

“Nothing, sweetie! Just be safe out there”, Kaya smiled, sitting on the table across from Asmodeus Bane.

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“Rooms 105 to 114 are still up for cleaning Harper...and I’ll be running point on the laundry team for now because the database registered two rooms that had complaints being logged in. Dirty towels and stained blankets. I don’t think that we can keep going with such a substantial issue that could very well tarnish our reviews.”, Magnus spoke on the receiver. It was turning out to be a very exhausting first day for him. He had had no time to eat lunch or take a breather and it was all a big mess because of the reception party.

“Housekeeping department. This is Magnus Bane – how may I help you?”, Magnus had just put the receiver down when it rang again. “Yes, Ma’am. I understand that. I am sorry you had to call us with the complaint. We shouldn’t have given you the chance.”, he nodded typing out the form as the guest logged in their complaint. “I’ll have someone attend to your issue within the next 10 minutes. Thank you for your patience”, he said, putting the phone down.

Taking a short breath, he picked the phone up and dialed the staff correspondent instructing them to check on the complaint and resolve the issue as soon as possible. “Yes, good. Do that and report back to me. I’ll check in with the guests in 10 minutes to see if the problem has been resolved.”, he said hanging his third call in the last 5 minutes. Settling the receiver in place, he dropped his forehead on his arm and sighed.

“Magnus...? Oh my God...first day blues, huh?”, Magnus looked up hearing Raphael at the door. The man was leaning on the door with his hands crossed on his chest.

“That is one way of putting it”, Magnus rolled his eyes, leaning back on his chair, gesturing Raphael to take a seat. “I’ll be going for an inspection in about an hour...just to see how everything is going on”, Magnus sighed. Raphael placed a brown packet on Magnus’ desk.

“Housekeeping, Magnus Bane on the line – how may I be of assistance?”, Magnus picked up as the phone rang again. “New towels...of course Mam. I’ll send fresh towels right away.”, Magnus flashed a smile hanging the call again. He was about to ring his staff correspondent to check on the progress on complaint handling from 10 minutes ago when Raphael disconnected the call pressing his thumb on the switch hook.

“You and I... we both deserve this 5-minute recess”, he chimed opening the bag to take out bagels and two cups of coffee. “The guests, they can wait 5 minutes...come on. I know you haven’t had lunch. Eat something...”.

“Bagels and coffee...oh my God. Raphael...thank you so much. I don’t know how to thank you enough...”, he sighed seizing the food impatiently. “I haven’t eaten anything since the eggs Alexander made for breakfast...and this is such a beautiful sight for sore eyes and a hungry stomach”, Magnus licked his lips.

“Alexander...”, Raphael grinned. “Who would that be...if I may ask?”, he wiggled his brows. Magnus’ face turned a little awkward and he gulped. Raising his palm in the air, he pursed his lips.
“Alexander...hmm, *that* would be my fiancé”, Magnus lifted his shoulders and shrugged, showing off his engagement ring, shining in his hand.

“Fiancé?”, Raphael leaned forward, jumping on his seat. “Magnus...you’re engaged?”, he gasped grabbing Magnus’ hand to have a closer view of the engagement ring. “Why didn’t you say something...oh my God this is so good. Congratulations, Magnus! How long has it been...?”, he chimed. Magnus blinked, raising his brows letting Raphael fidget with his fingers. “Oh dear God! The ring is so goddamn beautiful...you’re a lucky guy. Alexander must really love you because this ring...this ring...”, he added. Magnus couldn’t help but chuckle at how excited Raphael had become.

“I am indeed very lucky... Alexander’s the best mate... I mean life partner I could have gotten for myself...”, Magnus exclaimed, absent-mindedly. “I... we got engaged last month...before we moved to New York”

“How did you guys meet? I can assume that there’s a very sweet story behind it.”, Raphael asked, with his mouth stuffed with bagel.

“Actually...our wedding was arranged by our parents. They’re best friends, mine and Alexander’s fathers and they thought that we would be good for each other...and we have been...*so far.* Alexander even agreed to accompany me to New York so that I can start working here... because my family was a little unsure about letting me come here alone. I always wanted to have a partner who would accept me with my dreams...and that is what Alexander does.”, Magnus sighed.

“Why? New York is such a good place...why didn’t your parents want you to come...and wait...arranged? You and your fiancé opted for an arranged marriage...and not...wait...how? Do these things even exist...?” Raphael gasped.

“Of course, they do. For a while I tried to find love for myself, but I was terrible at it...and then dad found a life partner for me, in his best friend’s son. I don’t think I could have found someone as good as Alexander if I tried. He’s a very nice person...with such an open heart. And a thorough gentleman, if I may add. I couldn’t have asked for someone better.”, Magnus said. Those words, sounded genuine, coming out of Magnus’ mouth. He meant what he said. He respected Alec for all that he had done for him. “And as for New York. My parents are overly protective of me...and they weren’t sure if they could let me go alone...so when Alec offered to accompany me so that I could pursue my dreams here, they agreed after some insisting. So, there’s the sweet story that you probably didn’t want to hear”, Magnus jeered.

“He seems like a really nice guy. And of course it is a sweet story. How many guys you know would do that for their fiancés? Especially in arranged nuptials...? Magnus...you are a blessed man. Alexander sounds like the type of person who would never let you go. That type, is extremely rare.”, Raphael added. “Although, I happen to know someone just like that. My boyfriend...”, Raphael smiled, with a hint of pride in his eyes.

“Your boyfriend...wow”, Magnus gasped.

“Yeah...he’s a singer...and he travels with a band... I have no idea what they’re calling themselves these days...it was Champagne Enema until a few weeks ago, which was when I last saw them...but God knows now because they change their band name every passing second! Anyway...”, he scoffed, blinking his eyes for a few seconds. “He’s a great guy...my man. Someone I never thought I was lucky enough to find. In fact, we should go and have drinks sometime...you, me, Alexander and Simon...that’s his name, by the way”, Raphael blabbered. “Simon Lewis”

Magnus licked his lips, choosing not to reply to this offer. He curved his lips into a smile. “I am very excited to meet this Simon”, he added.
They ate their bagels and finished their coffees returning to work because Magnus was swamped.

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“There you are”, Alec smiled taking out his beloved camera. Izzy had gifted this high-end model Nikon D500 camera to him on his nineteenth birthday three years ago and he had not parted with it since. He was planning to buy a more latest model, but since he hadn’t taken on any photography assignment in the last year, his last event being the New York Fashion Week Spring/Summer collection of 2017, he felt like he would be wasting his savings if he bought a new DSLR before he jumped back into his career.

He clicked the device open and pressed the screen to check the camera’s Gallery. There were some old pictures of the landscapes and forests in Idris that he had captured when the Fall set in three months ago. He was scrolling through the images of Izzy that he taken when she was in her wolf form because that was one of her fetishes...and then some from Max’s birthday party, his parent’s wedding anniversary, Izzy’s dance classes and then some random clicks of the Lightwood mother and their beautiful mansion by the riverside, when he stumbled across one particular snapshot that caught his attention.

The photograph was from an after-party of the New York Fashion Week that he attended in 2016. A man, very lean and tall, with a striking pale complexion had his head thrown back on his neck. His lips were curved in a grin, as he seemed to be laughing his heart out. Alec could swear that he could still hear the laughter through that photograph. He rubbed his thumb across the screen over the face of that man with blonde hair that fell haphazardly on his forehead. The quality of the camera made it possible for Alec to notice a few drops of sweat sticking to his forehead. The man’s eyes were shut with crinkles forming on the sides. He was a handsome boy indeed and Alec recalled how he made his heart skip a beat, once upon a time. Alec took a deep breath and closed his eyes. The lids squeezed onto each other and he gulped a lump down his throat.

Opening his eyes slightly, he pressed the button with a trash bin printed on it and deleted the image, scrolling forward through his Gallery. That was the last image of the thousands that Alec had deleted in the last couple of months. He didn’t even remember that he had forgotten to delete this one image of a certain ex-boyfriend.

After Magnus left this morning, he had spent his time arranging his things in the cupboard because Magnus being as meticulous as he was, he had already arranged all of his own belongings in his side of the closet leaving Alec’s side in a bit of a mess. He had also arranged the toiletries in two different sections in the bathroom shelves labelling them with their names, and Alec could not be more grateful that the man he shared his home with was as particular about all this as he himself was. The free time he got from not having a car at his disposal made him finally unpack his luggage and look at what he was supposed to do before his meeting.

Alec pressed the eye-piece of his camera on the socket of his eyes and focused the lens using one of his hands. He looked around the house through the lens, hoping to find something interesting that he could capture, just to see if he still had it in himself to capture life in two dimensions. The door suddenly clicked open and in walked his fiancé, looking exhausted and sleep-deprived. His phone was stuffed between his cheek and shoulder as he spoke to someone over the phone. One hand held the keys of the apartment and his coat hung over his other arm. His tie was loosened around his neck and the top button of the shirt was open. His lips were curved in a soft smile when Alec pressed the shutter release button and the camera captured Magnus’ photo.

He peered from one side of the camera and noticed that Magnus hadn’t seen him take his photograph and he smiled at how innocent his Omega was. He pressed the eyepiece of his camera back on and
looked around for something else to capture. Right outside the window, he found a drop of water that was about to fall from the roof and onto the balcony. Alec himself dropped on the floor, lying on his back to get a better angle and focused the lens on the drop. He wanted to capture the exact moment when the drop left the surface of the roof.

He was just about to press the shutter release.

“Alexander, what are you doing?”, Magnus gasped, grabbing his phone from his shoulder. “Bear, I’ll call you back in a second... and tell Mom that I love her...”, Magnus added, stepping closer to Alec. The sudden noise made distracted Alec and his heart skipped a beat. He lost his focus, and the camera fell loosely from his grip, hitting his nose right near his nostrils.

“Oh...holy shit!”, he groaned, holding his nose between his palms. The strap of the camera prevented it from crashing it fully on Alec’s nose, which could have possibly resulted in his nose being broken. Magnus chortled rushing to Alec’s help. He took the camera away from his hand and pushed Alec’s hands away from his nose to reveal the red bruise right below his nostrils.

“Why would you distract me?”, Alec complained, his brows curved in a frown. “Oh my God...it hurts.”, he complained, making Magnus laugh more hysterically. “Stop laughing Magnus...you distracted me, and I lost my grip on the camera... if the strap was not tied to my hand... we would have been on our way to the ER now with a fractured nose instead of a bruised one.”, Alec hissed at Magnus who was finding it difficult to stop chuckling.

“Your nose...”, Magnus held his chest, unable to control his laughter. And then he suddenly stopped when saw blood oozing out from the slit in the skin. “Oh my God...there’s a cut and you’re bleeding...Alexander get up. Let me help you clean the wound.”, he chuckled, holding out his hand. Alec covered his nose with one palm and grabbed Magnus’ hand with the other getting up from the ground. Magnus helped him sit on the bed and rushed to his bag to grab antiseptic liquid, cotton and ointment. Alec was still not letting his nose go from between his palms.

“Alexander”, Magnus protested, trying to stop the grin forming on his lips. Alec scrunched his nose in pain and looked at Magnus.

“First...remove that stupid grin from your face. You did this...this is all your fault. I don’t like you right now, Magnus... What did I do to deserve this...?”, he pointed a finger at Magnus. Magnus twisted it playfully and Alec retracted it. He sat on the bed close to Alec and gently pushed Alec’s hand away from his nose. There was minor cut and blood had already dried out from the wound. But there was a redness and swelling around the wound.

“What were you even doing lying on your back on the floor like that, Alexander?”, he chucked dipping the cotton ball in the antiseptic. Alec flinched and moved away when Magnus dabbed the cotton ball on the cut.

“I was trying to capture a water drop that was about to fall off of that roof. It would have been such a beautiful shot...”, he squinted his eyes and glared at his fiancé. “Until somebody decided to ruin it...”, he added, painfully frowning.

“Don’t move away. I am putting a bandage over the wound. The swelling should settle by tomorrow morning. It isn’t very serious”, Magnus shook his head placing a small cotton ball dipped in antiseptic cream and put a small patch of bandage over it. “I am sorry I ruined your shot though. I just didn’t see the camera in your hand...”, he added. Alec scrunched his nose feeling the white plaster right below his nostrils.

“On a scale of 1 to hilarious, how funny do I look?”, Alec arched a brow. Magnus covered his
mouth to hide his grin. Alec tilted his head on one side and gave Magnus a death-stare.

“You’re fine”, Magnus added, chuckling very softly. “Provided”, he raised his voice when Alec started fidgeting with his dressing. “...that you don’t touch it...keep your hands away”, Alec frowned again, and his nose felt scratchy.

“Whatever...I look like a sweet potato”, Alec observed himself in the mirror. “I feel like I am going to sneeze... these cotton fibers are doing things to my nose”, Alec gently pressed the bridge of his nose and winced in pain.

“Alexander...you won’t feel better if you keep touching it. It’s bruised. Let it rest and heal itself... Your nose isn’t used to feeling a camera drop on it every day”, Magnus rolled his eyes and chuckled, recalling the accident.

“Anyway, now that I am injured and taken care of...how was your first day of work? Clean a lot of rooms and put white towels. I always love how hotels work...and how they replace the toiletries every day.”, he said picking out a hoodie from his closet and putting it on.

“It was exhausting. It’s only 8:30 in the evening and I feel like I want to crash on the bed and sleep forever. Yes, Alexander...I did clean a lot of rooms and put white towels.”, Magnus sighed and dropped his head back on the bed.

“So, that means you enjoyed your first day!”, Alec sniffed, sipping water from his bottle. He zipped his hoodie up and sat on the bed next to Magnus. He leaned back and rested his head on his fist, facing Magnus.

“I did. It was good. I’ve always dreamt of doing all this anyway and it was a wonderful experience to actually do it. And yes, I also spoke to Clary...she and my mother wanted me to thank you personally on their behalf. For everything that you’ve been doing...”, Magnus informed.

He was abruptly stopped from saying anything further when he felt Alec’s fingers cupping his face. His breath hitched. He turned his gaze to the side to see the movement of his fiancé’s fingers on his face. Alec’s fingers were cold from holding the water bottle which ran a shiver down Magnus’ spine. Magnus’ eyes blinked shut when he felt Alec rubbing his cheekbone with his thumb. A lump formed in his throat and he quickly gulped it down looking back at Alec who was staring at him with the most beautiful hazel eyes Magnus that he would have ever seen in his life.

“You all don’t need to thank me, one by one. I am grateful I could be of some help to you and your family”, Alec whispered, pulling his hand away from Magnus and breaking the eerie silence that was creeping between them. Magnus’ released the breath he was holding and looked at Alec with big eyes. It seemed like Alec hadn’t realized what he had just done.

“I told them...”, his voice had become low and shaky as he sat up on the bed, gazing Alec who had stood up and was now standing down in the living room, inspecting something on his tablet. Magnus licked his lips and his hand went up to his cheek where moments ago, Alec’s thumb was rubbing his cheekbone. “...the same thing”, he completed. “But they were very insistent that I do it. So... thank you, Alexander”, he added, waiting for Alec’s reaction.

“You’re welcome again, Magnus”, Alec sang, not turning around to look at his fiancé.

Magnus found himself smiling again.

Like he never had before. Like nobody had ever made him smile before Alexander.
Alec was lying on the bed, thinking about the photograph he had deleted right before Magnus walked in the door earlier that evening. He lifted his head slightly to check on Magnus. The Omega was sleeping on his stomach, with his nose pressing in the pillow and soft snores coming out of his mouth. It was 11 pm in the night and Magnus had dozed off early because of his exhausting first day at work. Alec dimmed the brightness of his camera and looked at the photograph of Magnus in the gallery. Although he looked exhausted, based on his drooped shoulders and undone buttons of his shirt, there was a certain luster in his eyes. They were really dark brown, from up close. And, Alec found himself zooming in on them. His lips were curved in a grin because he was on a call with his sister. Alec rubbed his thumb on the screen and then his eyes flickered because he recalled doing the same thing on the photograph that featured another man that he used to be in love with.

Alec had never noticed before how the corner of Magnus’ eyes crinkled whenever he smiled, and that they deepened when he grinned ear-to-ear. It was the most beautiful sight he had seen in his life and that said something considering it was his profession to capture beauty in the nature. Magnus’ eyes were highlighted with a faded shade of black eyeshadow and lined with a hint of glitter which shined particularly in the corner of the eyes. Alec had photographed so many models and film and television actors in his short career, but nobody had given him such a perfect shot in one single take. And that happened without Magnus even trying to pose or even realizing that he had been captured. The whole process of focusing the lens on Magnus and then capturing him mid-way of his work had helped him not think about the photograph of his ex-boyfriend that he deleted seconds before he took that photo of Magnus.

He had spent the better part of the last year trying to forget how much he was in love with Sebastian Verlac, an aspiring actor and mundane who he met in the University of Dublin, while he was majoring in photography. Sebastian cheated on him with his best friend, Jace Herondale. Jace was Alec’s best friend and they knew each other because Jace was a Herondale – member of one of the founding packs of the Clave. He was a director by profession and Alec had introduced Sebastian, who was trying to kickstart his career, to Jace in the first few weeks of Sebastian moving in town to join Alec and start working in New York City. He couldn’t have imagined that his best friend or his boyfriend would do anything like that. Naturally, it was the most devastating moment of his life when he walked in on Jace and Sebastian making out on their couch. After that, he couldn’t find a reason to live in New York because everything reminded him of how two of the people closest to him did something like that. He completed all his signed deals and assignments after that and returned to Idris in the Fall of last year, deciding to never move back to the city that had ruined his life and taken love and friendship away from him in a single night.

That was the last time Alec saw either his best friend or boyfriend as he walked out of his own apartment that he had bought in the Queens, from his first savings. Sebastian tried to call him to explain himself as he dragged his luggage downstairs. He tripped on his way twice, primarily because his vision was blurred by all the tears brimming out.

Alec shook his head and blinked away the moisture that was collecting in his eyes again. He closed his eyes to take a deep breath. The flashback of his hands caressing Magnus’ cheek played in his mind. He opened his eyes and gaped for breath. The fact that he did not remember doing it when it happened but for sure, it did. He now remembered how his nose had stopped hurting the moment he pressed his thumb on Magnus’ caramel skin which was so smooth and soft to touch. Alec took a
deep breath and got up, sitting on the bed, facing his sleeping fiancé. He leaned forward and touched Magnus’ cheek. The Omega closed his mouth and shifted a little in his sleep, cuddling on his pillow further. Alec smiled and ran his fingers on his cheek once more.

Magnus was different than any other man that he had ever met.

And little did the Omega know that he had unknowingly saved Alec from drowning in himself.

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Magnus was on his regular morning round on the floors assigned to him, checking in on the housekeeping staff and the cleaned rooms supervising their work. He was cleaning the conference room himself, assisted by two staff members, when he got paged to return to his office. He walked back to the bullpen and pushed the glass door that opened in his room. Raphael was seated on the other side of his desk and next to him was a young woman wearing a crisp white shirt and ash grey pencil skirt. Magnus recognized her as the new recruit that Raphael was talking about, Catarina Loss. He immediately extended his hand towards her, plastering a smile on his face.

“You must be Catarina Loss!”, he smiled, nodding. The woman got up and shook Magnus’ hand. He introduced himself to the lady who had a certain spark about her. She grinned at Magnus as soon as she registered his name. Raphael stood up and asked Magnus to take Catarina on a round, as discussed, the day before. Magnus gladly took her around the right wing that was going to be under Catarina’s supervision and told her the detailed nuances of the job while Raphael closely listened and took notes.

“And then, after the first month...you host a rookie dinner for all the employees...because, well, you’re a rookie. I think. Or that is what I have been told by my boss yesterday”, Magnus winked at the woman as they got back in the bullpen where Catarina’s office was next door to his.

“A rookie dinner. That’s interesting”, Catarina rolled her eyes. “I think we could pool in and throw a common rookie dinner...could we do that Raphael?”

“and deprive us of the chance of eating good on two instead of one day. No thank you. Each rookie employee shall host a separate dinner and that isn’t up for debate...”, Raphael clicked his tongue, grabbing his things to leave the office. “I am leaving the two of you to figure out your work for the day...if you’ve any doubts...”

“You’re a text away”, Magnus completed Raphael’s sentence, earning a silent clap from Raphael who exited the door.

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“Magnus?”, Catarina called from the behind as Magnus was about to exit through the main door after his shift ended. He stopped midway and turned around adjusting the backpack on his shoulder and looked at her. Catarina covered the distance between them and huffed as she reached Magnus. “Hey...thanks for today”, she breathed out. “For helping me out...with all the minor details of work...it really helped”, she added.

“You don’t need to thank me for it... Alright? We’re partners...and friends...so let’s not make it too awkward.”, Magnus widened his eyes, quizzically.

“I know...but I should. Thank you for also being so nice all-day long. It is your first week at work, but you really made it so easy for me”, she confessed, making the Omega smile profusely. “Not a lot of the people I meet in our field do this...”, she added.
“I am glad I could help, Ms Loss”, he said, starting to walk towards the parking lot. Alec had agreed to pick him up from work since he himself needed their car for the day. 2 minutes ago, Magnus had received Alec’s text that he was waiting for him in the parking.

“So, where do you stay…and your family?”, Magnus enquired as they walked side by side.

“I live in outer Brooklyn with my college friend. We have a modest apartment. Ragnor and I have been sharing the rent for over a decade now... and please call me Catarina. Ms Loss sounds outlandish”, she shrugged. “As for my parents, the last time I heard from them, they were in Texas...living their lives based on their whims and fancies”, she added, rolling her eyes. Magnus understood that there was more to that story than Catarina was telling him and so he didn’t indulge in the conversation further. Catarina noticed Magnus’ unusual silence and awkwardness. “Magnus...it’s ok. I don’t mind talking about my parents”, she patted his back. “I come from a traditional African-American family who have their inhibitions against their daughters working in an industry like ours. It’s ok... I haven’t been home in a long time...”

“For what it is worth, I am sorry I brought it up... even if you have gotten over it. I didn’t know, and I shouldn’t have asked and invaded your personal space...we barely know each other...”, Magnus sighed. “Although, I can understand where you’re coming from considering I’ve been in the same position for a couple of years... well no, my parents didn’t abandon me...but...”

“Magnus...its ok!”, Catarina pulled herself forward and squeezed Magnus’ arm.

“I understand what it is like to be on that side of the discrimination. But, in a way, I was lucky because I had certain people who supported me...and honestly, still do”, Magnus’ thoughts went to Clary, his adopted sister who had been there for him for as long as he could remember. He then thought of his mother and father who went to the ends of the earth to protect him from the crazy, blood thirsty hormonal Alphas of Idris and then he thought of his fiancé, Alec Lightwood and how he had been the one person, in all this mess that had unexpectedly helped Magnus the most. “I am sure your friend, Ragnor... did the same for you...”

“Indeed, he did...Magnus... I couldn’t have done all this without his stupid ass supporting me throughout”, she chuckled, rolling her eyes. “Anyway, how are you going back home? And where is...this home...if I may?”, she asked as they reached the gate.

“Uh... I...my fiancé is here to pick me up. We live in a studio apartment in the Upper East Side...”, Magnus shook his head, his thoughts wandering to Alec.

“You’re engaged?”, Catarina widened her eyes. “AND you live in the Upper East Side...oh my Lord, Magnus, why didn’t you say something before?”, she squealed.

“I am... yes, as of 4 months now...I have been engaged”, Magnus chuckled. “Yeah...and we do live in the Upper East Side... Alec’s aunt owns the place and she was very kind to lend it to us for the time being... I mean before we found a place for ourselves...”

“Alec. That’s a lovely name. Oh my God... I really need to hear that story someday, but I also need to haul a cab to the train station or I will be super late and Ragnor would kill me if I don’t have dinner ready in time. We take turns in cooking and today’s my day. I’ll see you at work tomorrow, partner?”, Catarina broke her thoughts and realized.

“You will...but, I was thinking...if you’re ok with it... Alec and I could drop you at the train station? It is on our way... shouldn’t be a problem?”, Magnus offered.

“And invade your privacy...no thank you...”, Catarina winked. “I am sure there are a lot of things
you two need to talk about…”

“Oh no... it’s nothing like that... Alec and I... we’re not...”, he felt weird explaining the actuality behind his engagement. “our...wedding was arranged by our parents...we’re not...”, he stuttered. Catarina’s smile vanished, and her lips curved in an “o”

“He and I...”, Magnus waved his hands rapidly, trying to explain.

“It’s ok...it’s ok, you don’t have to explain it. I am sure we will have a lot of time for this discussion...wouldn’t we?”, she rubbed his arm. Magnus smiled. He felt an instant connect to the girl and deep down, got a feeling that he could trust her.

“I am sure we will. Now, I insist. Come on, we’ll drop you to the station. If Alec came to know that I left a colleague out alone...he wouldn’t be happy.”, he tilted his head, asking her to follow him. They walked into the parking lot and straight to the black Volvo that Magnus spotted as soon as he entered the area. He pulled the door of the seat next to Alec and the man looked up from his phone. Magnus’ heart skipped a beat. He wore a white khadi button up shirt and damaged faded blue jeans. His knees were visible from the big slits in them.

“Hey”, he chimed, plastering a soft smile on his lips. His hazels lit up when Magnus nodded and smiled back. The Omega noticed sunglasses hanging around in his chest pocket. For reasons unknown, Magnus’ heart leaped in his chest. Alec smelled beautiful. His intoxicating Alpha scent coupled the scent of cologne was doing wonders for Magnus’ wolf senses.

“My colleague from work...was going to the station alone so I offered that we could drop her...it’s late and...is that ok with you?”, Magnus narrowed his brows, hanging on the car door.

“You offered her without getting it cleared from me?”, Alec’s eyes grew serious and he glared at his Omega. “My car...is not...”, he growled softly, and Magnus panicked, assuming he had upset his Alpha. The rebel in him kinda expected Alec to get territorial and angry soon enough...but this was a surprise because the Alpha wolf had been perfectly in check for the last couple of days. So much so that Magnus assumed that Alec would never get offended if Magnus ever did make a decision without his consent. But I guess, that was fairytales and fantasies.

“I...uhh...”, he stuttered, not knowing what to do. He couldn’t refuse Catarina...it would look rude and surprising considering he had just praised Alec for what a wonderful man he was... “I am...sor”, Magnus wandered his gaze around until his eyes met Alec again. Alec’s shoulders were now turned to him and the man was grinning, ear to ear...with a hint of mischief in his eyes.

Magnus understood that Alec had been messing with him, pulling his leg and he leaped in with an aim of pushing Alec behind against the window. “I hate you”, he mumbled, stumbling as he lost his balance and collapsed on his fiancé instead, dropping his weight on Alec’s chest. Alec was taken aback, and he grabbed Magnus to hold him and prevent him from twisting his wrist. Magnus breathed out as his nose hit Alec’s chest. Alec was so beautifully warm and smelled so nice. His Alpha Magnus had always affected Magnus but ever since their mating, it had all become all the more intense. Magnus rolled his eyes at his own stupidity and he placed his palms flat on Alec’s chest and pulled himself up.

“I am sorry”, he whispered. Alec rubbed his shirt and sniffed, shaking his head. “But I still hate you...for a second, I thought...”, Magnus growled.

“Are you hurt...?”, Alec asked, growing concerned. “C’mon Magnus...you know me. You don’t have to run everything by me...you’re a grown-up individual and you can make your own decisions and be assured that I will support you! I mean unless those decisions require me to sleep with
ladies...which I can't support you in...”, he added making Magnus chuckle.

“No...no. I am fine. Did I hurt your...your nose? I know, Alexander. I know. But for a moment, I was taken aback because I thought you’d mind me inviting a stranger to ride with us”, Magnus pointed at the tiny bandage right above Alec’s lip. Alec shook his head in refusal and smiled.

“Not a stranger to you...and that is good enough for me! Ask your colleague to get in. We’ve kept her waiting for too long already. She must already be getting cold out there...!””, he changed the topic of the conversation.

“Yeah right...right... Catarina?”, he turned and called the girl who was standing a few feet away from the car, giving them space to talk. “Come on in. You’ll miss your train otherwise!”, Magnus jerked his head. Alec pressed the button and the back doors unlocked. Catarina hopped in, settling her bag on one side and putting on her seat belt.

“Catarina...this is Alec, my fiancé... Alec, that’s Catarina. My colleague from work”, Magnus introduced the two of them. Alec tilted his head up and looked at Catarina through the rearview mirror, scanning the lady.

“Nice to meet you.”, he nodded flashing a smile and turned on the ignition. He fished out a cup of coffee and handed it over to Magnus. “Figured you’d want one. It is from the same guy in Central Park”, he huffed as they took on the main road.

“Wow, I needed this coffee. You’re the best, Alexander”, Magnus squealed, grabbing his cup of coffee. Catarina saw Alec scoff adorably, staring at Magnus whose eyes were fixed on his drink. She shook her head and looked out of the window. “Were you out the whole day?”, Magnus asked, taking a sip of his coffee.

“I was... I mean atleast the second half of the day. Checked out a few stores for a better camera model...and uhh then went about the Central Park...and came here...after that”, he shrugged. “How was your day at work? You don’t look as exhausted as yesterday...which is a good thing...”, Alec added. “And Catarina...how was your first day? I hope Magnus didn’t trouble you a lot? Or judge you or hate you...he does that...especially when you first meet him, and he knows nothing about you. I mean, isn’t that every normal person’s first instinct...to hate everyone they first meet...so normal...”, he said, winking at his fiancé.

Magnus rolled his eyes and smacked Alec lightly on his shoulder, eliciting an adorable giggle from the boy.

“Magnus was very nice...and no, I don’t think he hated me. I mean I hope not. Although, thanks for the heads up. I’ll remember this fun fact...”, she clicked her tongue. Magnus sighed and rubbed his temple.

“How was your day at work? You don’t look as exhausted as yesterday...which is a good thing...”, Alec asked... breaking the silence between them.

Catarina thanked Alec and Magnus and got out of the car, waving at them.
“It was ok. Yeah... come on, make fun of me. I was praising you...so what?”

Magnus crossed his hands on his chest and leaned back on his seat, tilting his head towards the window.


“Yes...yes, of course. I would tell you if something was wrong. You can take my word for it... Luke is anything but dangerous. And, he is incredibly sweet with his fellow workers...don’t you worry about that!

Magnus mumbled as fatigue gripped him even though he had drunk in a whole cup of coffee. He was really making an effort to keep his eyes open.

“You can take a nap. There’s a long traffic jam ahead. I’ll wake you up when we reach home”, Alec whispered, gently squeezing Magnus’ hand that was resting on his knee.

“Hmm”, Magnus whispered and closed his eyes. “I will just close my eyes for a bit...”, he whispered as Alec adjusted the seat to lean it back further and Magnus dozed off. Alec lowered the volume of the stereo and gripped the steering wheel beneath his fingers.

Later that evening at their apartment, Magnus volunteered to cook dinner while Alec was replacing his bandage with a fresh one. Alec agreed and got down to check his emails while The Bachelor was airing on the television and it was a perfect evening for the two of them post work. Magnus observed as Alec typed out replies on his laptop.

“One of my meetings got rescheduled to tomorrow”, Alec informed between the buzzing of his trimmer. He was removing the bulk of his beard leaving a light stubble on. Magnus was tossing vegetables in the bowl when he looked up, widening his eyes.

“Now?”, he gasped.

“Now, I need to shave and become presentable 4 days before I was supposed to. That is all. And that meeting was supposed to happen at the Plaza. So yeah, I am accompanying you to work tomorrow!”, he shrugged.

“Are you ready for the meeting...?”, Magnus asked, concern rising in his voice.

“Yeah...yeah, don’t fret about it. I am fine. They have to convince me to take the job...not me. Their management has been behind me for weeks now and I just have to have a formal chat and discuss my payment and other such deets.”, the man said.

“What is the shoot about?”, Magnus asked, spooning the vegetables onto a heated pan. The vegetables simmered as Magnus tossed them with a wooden spatula.

“I don’t know...exactly. Something about the up and coming of the fashion industry. Models, designers, stylists, photographers...all featured in one cover”, he informed, going through the email that he had received explaining the details of the job. “They did this survey a while ago...or so I have been told and the winners are getting featured”

“That is exciting... I mean I, for one, would love to read this cover”, Magnus chimed.

“Well, if you can make time from work some day, I’ll take you to the shoots”, Alec offered.

“Really? In that case, I look forward to accompanying you...”, he said, pouring tomato puree over his vegetables in the pan. He

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Alec put on a grey button up shirt and wore a black vest over it. He left the buttons of the vest open. Coupling this with a pair of dark blue jeans, he put on matching combat boots. Magnus changed into his own office apparel and they set out to work together in Alec’s black Volvo. Alec packed his camera and laptop in his duffle bag. They bought their coffee orders in a drive through and reached the Plaza hotel well in time. There was still an hour left for Magnus’ shift to begin and Magnus decided to stay back with Alec until the time came.

“You should go and report to your work, Magnus. I’ll be fine here. It’s not like I haven’t done this before. I’ve been to thousands of meetings and deals... You don’t have to be here to have my back. I am sure there are matters that you need to attend to...? It is already 8:45 am...”, Alec insisted but Magnus stayed back.

“I am here because I want to. Not because I think you’re nervous or anything. I’ve seen your photographs, Alexander. You’re talented. Immensely talented. I don’t for a second believe that you’ll stutter or fail... I just want to be here...as your friend. You, of all, should understand that because you’ve supported me multiple times in the last fifteen days. In a way, I am just returning the favor. Alright?”, Magnus smiled brushing his shoulder against Alec. Alec looked at him in astonishment and smiled.

“Thank you”, he managed to say before staring into his fiancé’s dark brown eyes. He noticed the pupils dilate and constrict as Magnus stared back at him with a smile on his face. There was honesty in those eyes...and affection. There was nobility and humbleness oozing out of them and Alec couldn’t help but find himself being at awe. Magnus was so real.

Their eye-contact was broken with heavy clanking of leather boots on the wooden flooring. Alec blinked and looked in the direction of the sound. His face paled when he saw the owner of those shiny leather shoes. He gulped, blinking rapidly. His fist clenched tightly, and Magnus noticed Alec’s Adam’s apple go up and down rapidly. His gaze on Alec was shifted when a stinky and piercing smell entered his nostrils. He sniffed, and his hair erected in his arms. Alpha. He turned his gaze towards the source of the smell and looked at a young man, roughly as old as Alec walk towards them. He had blue-green eyes and a blonde hair color. Toned muscles and height shorter than Alec and himself.

“Jace”, he clenched his jaw. Magnus gasped. He knew that name. He had also heard of it a lot in Idris. But could it be the same Jace Herondale of the Herondale pack. The same boy who was known for his mischief. From the way Alec was looking at him, it looked like Alec knew him. Not just knew him at that. Alec knew him well.

“It has been a while”, the blonde man slyly remarked. Alec scoffed and rolled his eyes. Magnus pursed his lips and gulped, leaning closer to his Alpha.

“Mr Lightwood. It is indeed a pleasure to meet you in person finally. I am Jem Carstairs, from
Vogue. I am the one who has been bombarding you with emails. So sorry about that. I just couldn’t imagine doing my first editorial without you. Your photographs are to die for, Sir. This is Mr Herondale, our Director for the upcoming shoot. But I can see that you already know each other...which is even better.”, another man, next to Jace spoke up noticing the tension between the two men. Alec blinked his gaze to him and nodded, his pale face getting paler still.

“Jace Herondale is the Director of this shoot?”, Magnus heard Alec’s voice choke and stutter with lack of confidence. It was the first time that Magnus had seen Alec this nervous. As if on reflex, Magnus’ hand lifted, and he grabbed Alec’s fist, uncurling the fingers and sliding his own between Alec’s sweaty fingers. The Alpha exhaled a deep breath and looked at Magnus and then their fists curled together, unable to understand the gesture. With his other hand, Magnus grabbed Alec’s bicep and squeezed it, nodding his head.

“You got this”, he whispered very close to Alec, flashing a comforting smile. Alec gulped and nodded, for a moment believing Magnus and whatever he said.

“Mm”, Alec fluttered his eyelids and mumbled.

Magnus trailed his other hand down and grabbed his and Alec’s entwined hands in his second hand making a larger fist. He pulled it closer to his body with an aim of comforting Alec as much as he could. It was working. He could sense Alec getting calmer. Alec closed his eyes for a second and then turned to look at Jem and Jace again.

“Should we sit down and discuss the contract and other details? And...who is this gentleman standing next to you, Mr Lightwood? If I may.”, Jem flashed a welcoming smile to Magnus. Magnus turned to Jace who was frowning quizzically at the two of them before turning back to Jem who was patiently waiting to hear from the older boy.

“I am... Magnus Bane”, Magnus introduced himself. “I work here at the Plaza and am also Alec’s fiancé.”, he added, leaning closer to his Alpha. Alec sighed in relief and licked his lips flashing a small smile, albeit a genuine one.

“Oh. That is wonderful. Would you like to join Mr Lightwood and us for the meeting? We have plenty of room for fresh minds”, Jem offered.

“You should go, Magnus. Your shift starts in 15 minutes. I’ll be fine. As soon as I am done with the meeting, I’ll drop by before I go back home”, Alec whispered in a shaky voice, visibly trying to pull himself together.

“I can stay if you want”, Magnus offered. Alec smiled and rubbed Magnus’ arm that was brushing against his.

“I can handle this. I swear. If I need you... I’ll find you. You’ve done enough. You should go.”, he whispered, giving Magnus a genuine smile.

“Ok... call me once you’re done. I’ll wait to hear from you”, Magnus smiled. He turned to Jace and frowned. Looking back at Alec, he leaned forward and raised himself on his toes. Alec widened his eyes when he noticed Magnus come close to him. His breath hitched when Magnus cupped Alec’s check and pulled him closer. Alec sighed and closed his eyes as he felt warm lips brush against his cheekbone.

“You can do this. You’re the bravest person I know”, Magnus whispered very close to Alec’s skin, making the latter shiver. “I trust you”, he added, pulling himself away. Alec felt a new rush of confidence searing beneath his skin. Somehow, he could feel that after all, he would be ok. He
would be more than ok, if that was believable. “I’ll wait to hear how you crushed this son of a bitch at the meeting”, Magnus added, winking. Alec scoffed gently, amused at Magnus’ apparent humility and kindness.

“Mr Carstairs, I’ll leave you and my fiancé to discuss the minor details of the photoshoot. Have a good day”, Magnus greeted Jem and only Jem, before receding to his own job. Alec watched Magnus turn around at the end of the gallery and smiled. He felt a lot better knowing that he had someone who didn’t expect him to explain anything. Rather, he just promised to be there for him. Those people were hard to come by.

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“According to the schedule, this assignment will take a month and a half to finish”, Alec muttered, going through the papers. 20 different people to shoot, in actual locations across the five boroughs and Jace Herondale directing each one of them. Of course, it couldn’t get any worse for Alec. “I can’t tell you...”, he shook his head, unsure if he could complete the assignment without losing his mind. Why was he so damn unlucky? Of all the meetings he could have gone to, the first happened to be with Vogue where he bumped into the one man he never wanted to see again in his life.

“It is absolutely ok if you can’t do this Alec. I am sure there are tons of photographers waiting to work for Vogue”, the blonde shrugged. Alec’s nostrils flared as he glared at Jace. Jem stuttered when he realized he could lose Alec’s consent and he couldn’t afford that. His bosses had gone gaga over Alec’s photos and they had specifically asked to sign Alec on.

“I am sure we can accommodate any changes that you desire, Mr Lightwood”, Jem intervened, with an attempt to do damage control. Alec composed himself down and smiled at Jem.

“That wouldn’t be necessary, Mr Carstairs. I’ll do this assignment. But, I have one condition. Can you send me the actual dates and locations for all the shoots by today? I need to know when and how I will be occupied because I have to inform Magnus that I’ll be away on those days”, Alec smiled.

“Yes, of course, Mr Lightwood. I understand. If you could just take these papers home and give it a read before you sign the contracts? I’ll email you the details as soon as I go back to the office”, Jem informed, delight oozing out of his voice.

“Sure”, Alec nodded, grabbing the files. He stood up and headed to the door when Jace caught up with him, stopping him midway with his arm.

“How dare you?”, Alec growled. His eyes flickered and changed colors between golden brown and hazel rapidly. Jace took a step back and gulped. Alec’s Alpha was dying to come out.

“Why are you back here?”, Jace muttered, clenching his jaws.

“It is not your concern, Herondale”, Alec gritted his teeth. "...and you and your boyfriend don't own New York. I may come and go as I please”, he hissed.

“It is. I will not let you ruin my life”, Jace pointed his finger at Alec. Alec flared his nostrils once again and twisted the finger, making Jace yelp softly.

“You were the one who ruined my life, Herondale. It wasn’t me. And I don’t give a damn about you or him.

"...and you and your boyfriend don't own New York. I may come and go as I please”, he hissed.

“It is. I will not let you ruin my life”, Jace pointed his finger at Alec. Alec flared his nostrils once again and twisted the finger, making Jace yelp softly.

“You were the one who ruined my life, Herondale. It wasn’t me. And I don’t give a damn about you or him.”, Alec’s voice choked as he referred to his ex-boyfriend. “I am engaged, and my fiancé is a man I am loyally mated to for the rest of my life. He’s the most wonderful person I could have found and I did. So, back off. I am extremely happy in my relationship and I don’t care what you do with
yours...but don’t ever try to threaten me again...or interfere in my life...”

“You and Magnus... you think you’re soulmates”, Jace jeered.

“I don’t care what you think we are. Magnus is special to me and I don’t need to explain anything else to you”, he hissed at Jace, pushing him away softly.

“Watch it, Lightwood. I wouldn’t let you interfere in my life”, Jace threatened. Alec widened his eyes and scoffed at Jace’s absurdity.

“You can take your life and shove it up your ass, Herondale.”, Alec whispered and walked away from Jace, burning with fury.

He didn’t realize where he was headed until the sun’s stinging rays fell on his forehead and he looked up. He was out in the open, standing right outside Plaza’s main door. He could see his car at the end of the parking lot. Clutching his bag with him, he trudged down the steps to head towards the parking lot. He was angry and hurt and his blood was boiling under his skin. Meeting Jace after so many months was unexpected which is why it was bothering Alec so much.

Magnus was walking through the corridor of the second floor when he gasped and grabbed the wall for support. He felt a strange sensation in his mind – like he wanted to break something. Magnus felt his surroundings get warmer but that wasn’t what was happening. He widened his eyes when he realized. It was Alec. This was Alec’s emotion that Magnus could feel. He gulped and sprinted through the galleries to find Luke. The Alpha was the only one who could understand. Luke was sitting on his desk, reading a newspaper when Magnus barged in.

“Magnus, are you ok? You’re pale”, Luke gasped.

“Alec. It is Alec. I don’t know why but I think he needs me”, Magnus gulped the fear in his voice.

“Where is he? You wouldn’t have felt this if he was away from you...is he here?”, Luke stood up, crossing his hands on his chest.

“He was here for a meeting. I knew something is wrong with him. Luke, can you excuse me? I really need to find him!”, Magnus requested.

“Of course. Do you want me to help you find him?”, Luke offered.

“No...no, I don’t think Alec would be comfortable having another Alpha when he is raging with anger”, Magnus shook his head. He turned towards the door and ran out, following his instinct. He wished he were in Idris or in the forest. Tracking Alec down in his wolf form would be so much easier than this. He ran through the galleries towards the hall where he’d left Alec. Jem was wrapping up his documents.

“Mr Carstairs? Have you seen Alexander?”, Magnus huffed, catching his breath.

“He headed out the main door”, Jem shrugged. Magnus looked around to find the blonde Alpha but the man was missing. Closing his eyes to pray for everything to be ok, Magnus retraced Alec’s steps out the door where he felt the scent get stronger. He was onto Alec. He squinted his eyes once he was out in the sun and looked around. The black Volvo was still there.

That is where he saw Alec. Sitting on the bonnet of the car. He covered the distance between himself and his Alpha. Alec’s head was dropped down, his gaze fixed on his lap. His hands were hanging, fisted together.
“Alexander?”, Magnus called, inching closer towards his fiancé as he spoke. Alec looked up and stared at Magnus with his bloodshot eyes. Magnus’ heart skipped a beat as he realized that Alec was furious and overwhelmed at the moment. He took a deep breath and stepped further.

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to write further...but then I thought I'd rather have the Malec conversation in a new chapter.
So, see you next sunday!!
you and I, we're in this...together!

I am sorry I didn't post a new chapter last Sunday. I had so many assignments.
I also need to write "Not Your Housekeeper"
I am so behind...but anyway, I hope I didn't write a shitty update!

Alec took a deep breath as he headed to his Volvo, the bright rays of the sun piercing through his eyes. He was sweating profusely, and his muscles were tensioning – with a pace fast enough for him to notice. His blood was boiling in his veins and he could see them pop out as he clenched his fist and reached his car. A huge part of him was cursing himself and feeling ashamed at the same time, for letting his past affect him but he couldn’t hide it either. The fact of the matter was that Alec had wanted to punch a hole through Jace’s chest as soon as he saw him in the meeting earlier that morning. Jace being the Director on the shoot meant something else too. Sooner or later, he would bump into Jace’s boyfriend...and his ex-boyfriend, Sebastian Verlac – the blonde-haired model that Alec had given away his heart to. Alec dreaded meeting that man. He just couldn’t make himself imagine a scenario where he would bump into him again.

He had been consistent with the fact that he had gotten over Sebastian. Of course. He wasn’t in love with the model. He wasn’t. Alec had told himself on multiple occasions. But the pain of heartbreak was still very fresh in his mind. And nothing could take away the reality that once, Alec had been madly in love with his boyfriend and the aspiring model did love him back. Although, it wasn’t enough for him. Alec could feel like it was yesterday that he had walked in his apartment, earlier than he usually did, and had found Sebastian on the couch with his legs straddled apart and Jace atop him, holding Sebastian’s face in between his hands. There were hickeys all over Sebastian’s neck and chest area that was bare to Jace and Alec had felt nauseous at the sight.

Alec’s nostrils flared as he recalled the visual. He found his eyes burning as they moistened and teared up. The world around him blurred as one or two drops of tears spurted out of his eyes. He sniffed and shook his head, making the tears jump out into the air. He took a deep breath and jumped on the bonnet of the car. Scrolling through his phone, his fingers paused at Izzy’s name in the contact list and he pressed the call button next to her name.

The call went to her voicemail.

“What happened to you being there to listen to me!”’, Alec murmured, stuffing the phone back in his pocket. At that moment, all he wanted was someone who could listen to him. Not talk back. Just listen to whatever he had to say. He dropped his head down, eyes fixed on the clenched fist in his hand. After taking a deep breath, Alec closed his eyes.

“Alexander?”

He heard the husky voice of his Omega. A few minutes had passed since the Alpha had jumped on the bonnet to pacify himself before driving back home. He didn’t want to see Magnus or tell him about any of this. And so, he never expected the Omega to come looking for him. Alec opened his eyes. Magnus. He gasped, repeating Magnus’ name in his mind. Right. Magnus was his mate. He could feel Alec’s thoughts and anger through their bond. That is why he was here. At that moment, the Alpha felt guilty. Magnus didn’t deserve his baggage when he had so much of his own to carry.
He deserved to work and enjoy his life in peace. That is why they had come to NYC. Magnus didn’t deserve any of this. He looked up and saw the older man looking back at him with concern and care in his dark brown eyes. He heaved a deep sigh.

Stop. He heard his Omega in his mind and his eyes flickered. Stop fighting this... he heard Magnus again, but his lips weren’t moving. Magnus was using their bond to communicate with him. Alec nerves calmed down when he heard Magnus snap him out of his thoughts.

Magnus Alec thought back...eyes fixed on Magnus.

Can I drive you back to the apartment? You’re in no position to drive this car, yourself. Magnus asked. Alec pursed his lips, eyes still tearing up. He did not want to let Magnus see his tears and so he looked away for a millisecond before looking back at his mate. Magnus took a deep breath and nodded, his stance offering a hint of comfort. Alec blinked his eyes twice and then jumped off the bonnet, throwing the keys to Magnus. He opened the door of the car and sat next to Magnus who was fastening his seat belt.

I am here. I will listen. Talk to me. Magnus thought as he pulled the car on the road. Alec looked up from his thighs and stared at Magnus, albeit blankly. How did Magnus know? And even if he did, why would he want to listen to him. Why would anyone other than his own family be so kind to him? For all he knew, Magnus could leave him the second he fell in love with someone – just like Sebastian did. He’d himself given Magnus the freedom to walk away, if he so desired so why would the Omega willingly want to listen to him. Especially considering he spent the last few months generously hating the Alpha.

Alexander...I don’t. Magnus rolled his eyes. Loud thoughts. Alec rubbed his temple and closed his eyes in frustration.

“I know. I am sorry”, Alec blurted out, closing his eyes in frustration. Magnus popped his eyes open and looked at him. The man was really in some other trance right now. Magnus instinctively held out his hand. Alec looked between Magnus’ raised palm and his face, confused.

Give me your hand. Magnus blinked his eyes open and shut, giving Alec a soft and reassuring nod. Alec swallowed and gave his hand in Magnus’. Magnus slipped his fingers between Alec’s and tightened his fist around his Alpha’s hand. He felt Alec’s breath hitch and blood rise in his veins as he retracted their hands placing it on his thigh, continuing to drive with the other free hand. Alec gently closed his eyes and threw his head back on the backrest.

Magnus... Alec began, curating his thoughts for Magnus to understand. I have not had a perfect life myself... despite being an Alpha...a Lightwood Alpha from Idris. I’ve had some experiences... met some resentful people... had my heart broken... and I just... didn’t expect to bump into my past so early on in our trip to New York. I spent the major part of last avoiding all these situations because I thought I wasn’t ready...and I was right. Alec wasn’t sure if Magnus was ready to hear about himself, Jace and Sebastian. I just...wasn’t... he fumbled for thoughts, not knowing how to explain Magnus without divulging a lot of details.

I am sorry that you have to see this. You don’t deserve this waste of time. In fact, you shouldn’t have come to drop me home, leaving all your work behind. Alec squeezed his hand that was curled between Magnus’ fingers and bit his lips.

Magnus looked at him but didn’t speak. He just lifted his thumb and rubbed it against Alec’s knuckles. Alec closed his eyes, taking in the comfort that caressing brought him.

You are my fiancé...Alexander. He thought at last, speaking through his mind. And... even though I
know that that means nothing for us...we’re not in love...and I am free to choose what I want to do with my time and life. I need you to know that I choose to be with you. It’s been over a month since we got bonded to each other under the full moon. I’ve had enough time to judge you for the kind of soul you are...

Alec sniffed and looked at him, tears welling in his big hazel eyes.

*I have never met anyone who I respect from the bottom of my heart, outside my family. I respect you, Alexander. For all that you are and all that you can potentially be. Yes, the circumstances of our engagement were different from what they usually are...yes, we are not in love with each other...and yes, we are not dating each other...but I do respect you... and I care about you. You’ve earned that solely because you’re a good and brave man.*

Magnus turned his head to the right and looked straight at Alec, who was looking at him, and listening very carefully. He had to choose his words wisely if he anywhere intended to make Alec feel good about himself.

*Don’t believe for a second that you’re not brave...or strong. And so what if you’re broken and sad? It is absolutely ok to be broken. It only means that you feel something. And that Alexander, is a mark of strength. You don’t get courageous without having emotions. Because being fearless is also an emotion. You know it. But I want you to understand what it truly means. Vulnerability doesn’t make us weak. It doesn’t make us unfit for this world. It makes us capable of having human emotions and it makes us empathetic.*

Magnus continued stroking Alec’s knuckles with his fingers. *And your past... our past. Our past, is what we have to live with. You can’t change it or get rid of it, but you can choose to do what happens to you because of it. You can choose to make it your power, Alec. And not your weakness. Because, accept it or not, our past has made us what we are today. All the experiences that you’ve had, the troubles you went through, the sacrifices you made; all the pain you endured and the heartbreaks you suffered have made you the kind of man who would agree to leave his life and family behind in Idris to support his fiancé’s career in a city that he has bad memories of. And that man did all this without thinking about himself. Just to make sure that his mate, his Omega...deserved to have a chance at creating his life. You know how special this makes you special, Alexander Lightwood? It is a mark of how pure and beautiful your soul and heart are.*

Alec was dumbstruck. Sure, he had been appreciated before, but this was different. It meant something, coming from Magnus Bane. Alec hadn’t realized how much had let Magnus in his mind until this moment when a few words from the Omega did wonders for the boy’s self-esteem. A sense of renewed confidence instilled in him as he registered everything that Magnus had told him. “Thank you”, he whispered, closing his eyes and taking deep breaths. He felt better. Definitely better.

“Don’t mention it”, Magnus replied, his voice indicating that a small smile was tugging in on his lips. He kept their hands close to himself as he drove back to their apartment. Alec didn’t speak a lot on their way back, but Magnus could feel his Alpha’s nerves calming down. Magnus kept their hands curled together all the while they were in the elevator. He clicked open the door of their apartment for Alec and pulled him in, helping him sit on the couch. He brought him a glass of water and pulling the coffee table in front of Alec, sat down on the edge.

“I have to go back to work, but that’s if you’re going to be alright here? All by yourself?”’, he sighed after Alec put an empty glass down on the table next to Magnus. He looked up at his Omega who was staring at him, looking for any signs of distress or anxiety.

“I’ll be fine. You should get back to your job, Magnus. It is your first week and I don’t want you to
make a bad impression on your boss. You have a whole career in front of you and you’re only just starting. Please don’t make me keep you from it”, Alec shook his head, guilt panning on his chest. The world shouldn’t have to stop rotating just because Alec Lightwood wasn’t able to handle meeting his past again.

“I don’t care about that. I will be here for as long as you want me to be. Besides, Luke understands our kind, and he insisted that I come and be with you while you are...feeling whatever you are. He is very understanding. I am pretty sure you’ll enjoy his company...if and when we meet”, Magnus explained, hoping Alec would stop feeling so guilty.

“It is still your first week... I don’t want to keep you here. Go, Magnus. Do your job”, Alec pulled back on the couch, throwing his head back on the backrest.

“Ok...I’ll leave. But, be ready in the evening. We’re going out for dinner and drinks. Alright? It’s been a while since I had a good martini and I am counting on you to choose a nice place for us to hang out...alright?”, Magnus informed, standing up on his feet.

“It’s a weekday, Magnus”, Alec widened his eyes and lifted his head up.

“So...? Booze and good music...they don’t the weekend to be enjoyed. We’re going out and that is final. I’ll see you tonight. Take care of yourself and text me if you need anything. Without hesitation”, Magnus instructed, pointing his index finger at his fiancé. Alec licked his lips and nodded. Magnus stepped forward, unaware of his actions and their probable effect on his mate and raised his hand to cup Alec’s face. Alec looked up, his hazel eyes flashing open. Magnus’ stroked his thumb across Alec’s cheekbone and withdrew his hand.

“I’ll see you in the evening”, Magnus repeated as he reached the door. Alec didn’t look at him or reply. His hand was pressing on his cheek, reliving the last few seconds when Magnus’ thumb was caressing his skin.

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A large she-wolf with shiny and luscious black fur was scratching the loose mud and soil, sniffing in between her ordeal. Cool breeze was rustling the leaves of the trees surrounding the ditch where she stood. It was obvious that the wolf was impatiently looking for something. Soft whines and growls were coming out of her mouth as she turned in every angle.

“You wouldn’t find your phone in your wolf form, Iz”, Clary chuckled. “You can’t just sniff it...come on, babe!”, Clary leaned on the nearby tree with her hands crossed on her chest. She wore a grey top below an orange leather jacket. The black wolf looked at Clary and emitted a low growl shifting back to her human form. Clary picked up Izzy’s jacket and threw it at her.

“The calls are going to your voicemail. I’ve tried calling your number so many times. Either someone took your phone, or it is just washed off down the creek. Any which way, I don’t think you’ll find it. Come on. Let’s get going”, she sighed as Izzy put on her clothes.

“I need to get my number blocked and a new phone...and number...and what if Alec called. What if he needs me for something? And what if someone of my dance academy...”, Izzy cried, feeling a strange uneasiness.

“Come on...we’ll do all that and grab a cup of coffee. Alec has my brother. He is not alone. They’ll be fine for these few hours. Trust me, Iz. Nothing bad would happen.”, Clary leaned forward and pulled the Beta with her arm, wrapping her own around it. Izzy tilted her head and rolled her eyes, tagging alongside the redhead Alpha as they walked towards the highway.
They had barely reached the outskirts of the forest when Clary’s phone buzzed. She pulled it out of her pockets and saw magnus flashing on the screen.

“Hey big brother”, Clary chimed, picking up the call. Izzy peeked at her, eavesdropping for any and every news on Alec. “Good morning”, she added, grinning.

“Bear. How are you? Are Mom and Dad doing ok? Tell them I’ll video call them very soon”, Magnus replied as he took to the main road, heading back to the Plaza hotel.

“I am good...so good in fact. And so are Mum and Dad. Don’t worry about them. They’re just so happy that you’re finally getting everything you deserve. You tell me...why aren’t you at work though? It’s almost lunch time. Are you alright...?”, she asked getting inside Izzy’s car as the latter tightened her seatbelts.

“I was just returning...to the hotel. Had to come back home for something...”, he shrugged. “I... have you heard from Isabelle lately?”, Magnus asked, getting straight to the point and reason behind his call.

“Izzy...yeah, in fact...she’s sitting right next to me...driving actually. Why? Why do you need to talk to Izzy all of a sudden...is everything...alright?”, she said, her breath hitching. Izzy turned her head to the right as she heard her name pop up in the conversation.

“Where’s her phone? I’ve been trying to reach her for some time now, but all the calls are going straight to the voicemail. Is her phone dead?”

“We were having a run in the forest and she dropped her phone somewhere. We’ve been trying to locate it but I don’t think we will...so, we were on our way to get her a new number and phone. Anyway, do you want to speak with her...? I’ll give her the phone...wait”, she said, pressing the phone to Izzy’s ear.

“Isabelle”, Magnus chimed, greeting his sister-in-law.

“Hey”, Izzy smiled, trying to remain calm and not panic. “Is everything alright? How can I help you?”, she added.

“Can you...talk to Alexander? Can you give him a call...as soon as possible?”

“Yes... I’ll do that as soon as I am home. But, what happened? Is he ok?”

“He is... I think so. He bumped into Jonathan Herondale this morning...”, Magnus shrugged.

“JACE?”, Izzy shrieked, pulling the car to the side and turning off the engine. “Alec bumped into Jace Herondale? Of the Herondale pack?”, she asked.

“Yes... yeah...the same. And Alec wasn’t quite himself when I found him. And he refused to talk. But I drove him back home safely. Don’t worry about that! I am sure he is not ready to tell me everything about what happened between him and Jace... and I wouldn’t force him to do anything like that. Not until he’s ready. But can you talk to him? That could help him feel better...and I will be a little less worried at work?”, he added.

“Of course...I am heading home, Magnus. Thanks for the heads up. I’ll talk to Alec. He’ll be fine. My brother is a strong man”, she assured.

“I am aware, Isabelle. Um... I’ll just...thanks? I’ll talk to you soon?”, he said, hanging up the call.
“Yeah”, Izzy whispered, panic setting in. She closed her eyes and threw her head back on the seat.

“Hey...Iz, what happened?”, Clary squeezed the Beta’s shoulder.

“Something I’d been dreading ever since Alec left for New York. I shouldn’t have let him go alone...he just behaves so stupidly at times. There wasn’t a need for him to go to New York with Magnus... not so soon after all what happened last year.”, she hissed. Clary’s lips curved into an awkward smile. She wasn’t blaming Izzy for what she had just said but she couldn’t help but feel responsible. “I am sorry”, Izzy cleared her throat realizing that what she had said to the one who happened to be Magnus’ sister. “I didn’t mean what I said... this is not Magnus’ fault. I don’t believe that. I just am worried that Alec is out there, all by himself, and I can’t do anything about it”, she sighed.

“It’s fine. I wasn’t offended. You are Alec’s sister. Of course, you’ll look out for him. As would I. But it wasn’t Alec’s fault that he chose to accompany Magnus. Nor did my brother force him to do anything like that. It was their choice. And you did mean what you said... because otherwise, the thought wouldn’t have crossed your mind. But, I don’t blame you Iz. I don’t.”, Clary rolled her eyes, looking away from the Beta.

“My brother was in love with this mundane...from Dublin. They had been dating for a few years when Alec got a job in New York and he came to the city. His boyfriend joined him a little later after completing his own studies. He wanted to be a model. Alec was so happy to have his boyfriend back with him and he didn’t even realize when his best friend swept his boyfriend away from him. His best friend, Clary... cheated on my brother with his boyfriend. How can I not worry? Those two assholes are still very much in New York and I can’t help but be scared of Alec bumping into them... every day. I can’t take his heartbreak. He is alone, and I should have been there with him.”, Izzy explained. “I should have been there to slap the shit out of Jace”, she gritted her teeth.

“He’s not alone, Izzy. Not at all. Magnus is with him. I know you don’t know my brother like I do but Magnus would do anything for the people he cares about. And I know that he cares about Alec and respects him a lot. He wouldn’t have called me if he didn’t care. So, you have to be strong and trust our brothers to have each other’s backs. Because they would. They are not alone. They have each other. And...”, she turned to face Izzy again and lifted her hand up to caress the Beta’s cheek. “...you have me”, Izzy lifted her eyes and looked at Clary. Her eyes were wide open, and she was smiling at her, lovingly.

“I should get back home...and call Alec.”, she said, in a determined tone, pressing the ignition. Clary withdrew her hand when she realized that she had gone way too personal with a girl she barely knew. “I’ll have the driver drop you home”, she added, telling Clary.

“No... I’ll be there until after you’re done talking to Alec”, Clary affirmed, tightening her seatbelts as they sped through the highway.

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“Alec?”, Izzy squeaked as soon as Alec picked up the call.

“Izz? Is that you?”, Alec frowned and took a second look at the phone. It was from Clary Morgenstern’s number. “Why are you calling from Magnus’ sister’s number. Where the hell is your own phone? I have been calling you for an hour now”, he sighed rubbing his temple.

“I lost my phone, long story. I’ll explain later. Did you...did you call me? I am sorry I didn’t answer.”, she asked, not sure if telling Alec that Magnus had called her would be a good idea.
“Yeah...yeah I did. I just wanted to talk. But if you’re busy, we can talk later. It’s nothing huge”, Alec shrugged, trying to sound normal.

“You always say that when there’s something bothering you. So, speak up”

“I... the photoshoot that I signed a contract for this morning, Jace...is the Director for it. It will take about 45 days to finish and it starts in a few weeks from now.”, Alec sighed, rubbing his knee, making circle with his finger.

“Jace is directing the whole thing? The entire 45-day schedule? Let it go Alec. You don’t need to do this assignment. You’re not desperate for work...and letting this go won’t make a different.”, Izzy’s eyes popped wide open.

“Yeah...and I wasn’t expecting to meet him...anytime soon and I wasn’t prepared. So, I don’t know Iz. I think I may have just overreacted and panicked myself more than I should have. I mean it isn’t even the worst thing that could have happened. Sebastian wasn’t even there. I am not sure if I will be ok when I see him. But, I don’t think I should let this project go either. It’s Vogue...for crying out loud. It is the best way for me to put myself back out there. I do need work as long as Magnus is working here. Can’t live on his money...or Dad’s.”

“You will be ok. You’re strong Alec. Even if you don’t realize it right now. And you don’t love Sebastian anymore. You will be fine and kick their ass if you have to. And even if you are not ok, it is alright. You have emotions. You have the right to feel heartbroken and grieve for as long as you want to. Grief doesn’t have a deadline. I know I sound confusing but the point I am trying to make is that no matter what you feel like, when you meet Sebastian, you’ll be alright. You’ll survive. You’ll move on... and if you think you want to go ahead with the project, you should. I am here with you no matter what you decide...so just...do what you feel like!”

“You think so?”, Alec whispered, and Izzy snapped out of her stare.

“You will. One day, you’ll find someone new...and fall madly in love... more so than you ever were with Sebastian and you would have moved on...without even realizing it”, she smiled, peeping from her door to the living room where Clary was seated on the couch, with her hands crossed on her chest. She was waiting for Izzy to finish her call with Alec. “I am not saying this because you’re my brother...but I am sure that you would move on eventually, if...you haven’t already”

“Yes, I do. I really think so. For weeks now, I have been afraid of you bumping into either Jace or Sebastian but now I think that it’s high time you let go off them. Both of them. NYC is a big city but you will run into them sooner or later. I don’t want for that to happen but if it does, the only way you’ll truly have a closure is when you face it...and when you let them go...”

“I am not sure I can”, Alec took a deep breath.

“You can. If there’s anyone strong enough, it’s you, hermano”, Izzy smiled.

“I love you, Izzy. I really love you. Fix that phone of yours...you promised to be there to listen and just...buy a new handset please”, Alec whined.

“I love you too, big brother. And I’ll send you my new number very soon, alright? Stop complaining. I am still mourning the loss of my old phone”
“Yeah...yeah, I’ll call you later...alright. I need to tell Magnus that I am fine or else he will leave his work and rush back home again”, Izzy chuckled, knowing that Alec must be rolling his eyes while talking about Magnus.

“Alright...give my love to your fiancé. Bye”, she grinned, hanging up the call.

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Magnus was pacing up and down the corridor, waiting for one of his staff members to bring him fresh toiletries that one of the rooms needed. Raphael was waiting for him with lunch in their office, but Magnus had had no time to rest ever since he came back after dropping Alec. He was starving and craving some food, but he knew that he had to get all that work done before he could join Raphael in his office. He also wanted to call Alec and check if the boy was doing alright but then again, the day only had 24 hours and as much as Magnus wanted a few minutes to himself, he didn’t have the liberty for the same.

With a genuine smile on his face, he scooted around the corridors, filling in for his missing staff and catering to the guests’ requirements. He texted Raphael telling him to start eating because he could see that he wouldn’t get time off to eat lunch until much later. He also sent a quick text to Alec asking for an update and received a reply that Alec had had lunch and was now going to rest for a while before hunting a place for them to have drinks in the night.

Sometime after the lunch hour was officially over, Magnus sat down in his office to eat a sandwich since he had had no time to eat anything for lunch. He was scrolling through his Instagram when he decided to look at Alec’s photography page. Stalking Alec’s public account had become a sort of his lunch time hobby primarily because of how beautiful and full of life the images were. Alec had the eye for the unusual and unique. He captured life in places and moments where people couldn’t even imagine.

Scrolling way below where he had last left looking, Magnus reached the photos Alec had posted last year. They were from the New York Fashion Week. He had covered Prabal Gurung, Michael Kors, Marc Jacobs and Oscar De La Renta to name a few. Magnus’ eyes widened as he went through the captures from the runway and his heart felt proud to be associated with Alec. There were tons of backstage coverage, up and personal photos with the designers and the show stoppers and what not. Magnus knew that Alec was talented but observing it by his own eyes was a different experience for the Omega. Amidst the glitz of the NYFW, there were photographs of a boy with blonde hair and blue eyes. He was featured very frequently on Alec’s page until Alec had returned from New York in the Fall of 2016. In one of the photographs, the boy stood with his back towards the camera. He wore a pair of beach shorts and looked over at the Sunset at Tulum beach. The photograph was captioned – *Just you and some sunsets <3*

Magnus didn’t want to assume anything, but he could make out that Alec was deeply in love with this boy and that love came from somewhere very deep within his Alpha. Magnus cleared his throat and shifted uncomfortably in his chair. Something about that photograph and the caption bothered him. He rubbished out his thoughts that he might have been jealous because there was nothing to be jealous about. Alec was his, for all intents and purposes and then they weren’t meant to be in love with each other. It was just solid friendship.

Magnus pressed the back button and scrolled down. There was a picture of the same boy with Jace Herondale, the man who Magnus met this morning. Alec had captioned it – *happiness.* It was a joyful moment between the two blonde men, laughing their hearts out. They were in a club, with martinis in their hands and the purple and blue lights from the disco ball were falling on Alec’s boyfriend’s forehead, making him look all the more stunning. Magnus blinked and tapped the
photograph. Both the men were tagged. The Omega felt guilty for doing this, but he tapped on the screen where the other boy’s username had popped up.

**Sebastian Verlac**

British | Model

Wanderer

EIDW | NYC

“Imperfection is perfection to a beautiful perspective”

Magnus sighed. Alec’s ex was a model based in New York. This wasn’t getting any better. He scrolled down Sebastian’s profile and choked when he saw a couple of astonishing uploads. Sebastian was featured in all those, kissing Jace Herondale. Magnus checked the date of the uploads and some of them were as recent as 18 hours ago. Somehow, the entire picture became absolutely clear to the Omega. He rubbed his temple, nostrils infuriating at what he had just found out. Alec’s best friend and ex-boyfriend were together. He pressed the back button and returned to his profile. Shutting his phone down, he dropped it on the table, mentally cursing the two men who had ruined a year in Alec’s life.

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Magnus returned from work and found Alec ready to leave. He wore a navy-blue blazer over a white t-shirt and paired it with rugged jeans. Magnus gasped when he looked at Alec rubbing cologne on his wrists. His stance was calmer than he had left him this morning and the scent...oh his Alpha’s scent – Magnus choked under his breath. He smelled divine. Too good for Magnus to resist.

“Someone is eager to leave?”, Magnus turned his gasp into a smirk as he headed inside, dropping his bag on the couch. He removed his blazer and unbuttoned his vest. Throwing both of them in the laundry, he grabbed a glass of water from the kitchen and gulped it down his thirsty throat.

“Yeah...you were so persistent, Magnus”, Alec rolled his eyes, stepping down into their living room. “It’s a weekday and you have to get to work tomorrow...but you wouldn’t listen. So... I had to give in...”, Alec added, with a wink. Magnus smiled. His old Alec was back. The Alec who made him laugh and smile with his mischievous tongue and antics.

“I was...wasn’t I? So... where are we getting me martinis tonight?”, Magnus rubbed his palms together hopping towards his closet. He opened it and pulled out something to wear.

“Pandemonium...it is in Brooklyn...and very mystic and exciting...plus, when I used to work here earlier, I heard people talk about the club. So...is that alright with you?”, Alec asked, marching to the kitchen and pouring himself a glass of water. Magnus hummed a affirmative and went inside the washroom to change while Alec pulled on his boots.

He was leaning on the couch when Magnus came out of the washroom, dressed to impress. He wore a shiny satin shirt which was dark maroon in color. It had a velvety feel to it. Alec’s jaw dropped when he saw Magnus’ tight black jeans studded with gems. There were belts hanging down from his waist as he cuffed his shirt. Something about Magnus was so attractive. Correction. Everything about Magnus was so attractive. The Alpha gasped as Magnus spiked his hair up and sprayed a bright red color on the tips, matching his shirt.
The Omega meticulously picked out a kohl stick and lined his eyes. After that, he applied a smoky black eyeshadow to his lids and contoured his cheeks, smiling softly as he noticed Alec staring at him, from the corner of his eyes. Spraying perfume on himself, he took a final look at himself in the mirror and then peered to Alec to ask if they were good to go.

“What are we waiting for?”, Alec shook his head and cleared his throat. He reached the door and opened it, asking Magnus to lead him. The Omega chose to drive the Volvo and they added the address for the club onto their car’s GPS and took to the road. The drive was supposed to be uneventful. Magnus had made a mental note to bring up the topic of Jace Herondale anytime today. This time was meant to distract Alec from everything and give them a healthy new beginning the following day.

“Jace and I grew up together”, Alec spoke up suddenly, when they were halfway through. Magnus gulped and looked at his Alpha. Alec was looking down at his lap.

“We were best of friends...we were like brothers. Our parents practically raised us together...until Dad sent Izzy and I to Dublin. But we were still family”, Alec continued, taking a deep breath. Magnus licked his lips and gripped the steering wheel harder.

“I met Sebastian in Dublin. He was tall and beautiful and was into me ever since we had met. Sebastian was a great guy. He helped me accept and deal with the fact that I was never going to be into women. He stood by me when I told this to my family...who were so supportive, as opposed to what I had thought. Sebastian was my pillar, Magnus. He was my strength. He was the one mundane I knew I could trust with my secret. When I told him what I was...when I transformed in front of him, he put my head in his lap and ruffled by fur...played with my ears and not even for one second flinched or yelped in fear.”, Alec shut his eyes, trying to block the pain out. “I could see my whole life with him...happily in love with him”, the Alpha scoffed. Magnus bit his lips and his eyes flickered.

“He joined me in New York after I graduated from my University in Dublin. He wanted to be a supermodel and walk the ramp for the top designers in the NYFW. That was his ultimate dream. We both moved in together here...and started looking out for our careers when Jace happened to join us in New York because of this Directing job he had been offered. I was ecstatic. My best friend and the love of my life. Life couldn’t be better. And, we started spending more and more time together...the three of us. I wish I could see what was really going on...but then I was so loyally in love with Sebastian and I trusted Jace that I couldn’t even...”, Alec shook his head, leaving his sentence incomplete.

“I found them having sex on my couch one evening when I returned from work earlier than I was supposed to!”, Alec blurted out.

“What?”, Magnus snapped, all of a sudden. He had a faint idea that Alec’s heartbreak had something to do with infidelity but even he wouldn’t have assumed that Sebastian or Jace could do something so unethical and horrific.

“I left the apartment with my stuff... vowing to myself to never talk to Sebastian or Jace again. I completed all the assignments that I had taken up and returned to Idris to get over everything. To move on from Sebastian”, he added.

“Oh...”

“I wasn’t entirely honest when I agreed to see you for a prospective mating and wedding. In fact, when your father asked me... I partly said yes because I thought that maybe I would move on faster if I had someone with me...”
“Alexander”, Magnus breathed out...pulling himself together.

“I am sorry. I should have told you earlier. You didn’t deserve to be kept in dark”

“Hear me out...”, Magnus rolled his eyes. Alec stopped talking and looked at Magnus giving him his full attention. “I am not angry, and I don’t feel betrayed. You did what you had to do to protect your heart. And that is alright. You are entitled to do that”, Magnus flashed a soft smile at his fiancé.

“I am also glad that you told me this...even though it would have been ok if you didn’t. I am happy to give you all the time and space you need. But...even though I don’t need to say it...if you need someone to talk to...other than your family... I am happy to help!”, Magnus offered.

“You are my family too, Magnus”, Alec replied, absentmindedly.
They'll be right for each other...

Chapter Notes

Ok, I know it's been months since I updated. For those who follow my Twitter account (@mymalecstories) I posted a thread saying that my life has been a really topsy-turvy ride in the last couple of months. I got a scholarship to study abroad, which is a great thing...and I was busy doing the formalities associated with it. Then, I had a break-up which are never good...so...there's that.

I barely got time to write this one chapter down. I will continue the other story very very soon because I have to finish it up.

So, I hope you like this one. It's not up to my liking...but yeah...!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You’re my family too, Magnus.

Magnus shook his head once more as he parked the car below the club. The rest of the car ride was a silent one. He had fallen numb ever since Alec told that line to him a few minutes ago in the car. And he didn’t realize that he had made Magnus feel something that he had been waiting for his whole life. From the time when Magnus had presented himself as an Omega, a very small part of him felt like he did not belong anywhere. He, technically, shouldn’t have felt like that considering he had a very supportive family backing up but he did. Clary was the best sister he could have gotten, and his parents were so encouraging. Blame it on his second gender which possibly wanted a pack to associate itself with. A part of him always felt alone and untethered. Even though he didn’t want an Alpha to tie himself to, he knew in his heart that he longed for a companion – someone who wouldn’t want him just for his gender. That emptiness was almost always there.

Until today.

It was strange how Magnus suddenly felt like he finally had a place he could call his home and a place where that emptiness he used to feel disappeared. And that home was right here, with Alec. Alec had given him his entire life and even though they were still getting to the point where they could be together, Magnus felt right. He felt good about this. About his relationship with Alec. He lifted his head up in the direction in which Alec was walking next to him and smiled. He was staring at Alec as they walked towards the club and did not realize when his Alpha fiancé softly curled his hands in Magnus’ as he spoke to the security outside the club. Magnus was just to lost staring at Alec.

“Magnus Bane and Alec Lightwood. We have a reservation for tonight.”, Alec spoke in his deep and attractive baritone. The guard looked at Alec and then at Magnus which finally brought Magnus back to his senses. He flickered his eyes and looked away realizing that he had been ogling his fiancé for the last few minutes. He looked at his palm after it felt warm and sweaty and saw it wrapped with Alec’s hand. When did that happen? Magnus widened his brows as he looked between their hands and Alec’s face. He gasped and stepped forward after Alec pulled him inside the black sound proof door of the club. The sudden noise and music made Magnus stop walking. Alec let go off Magnus’
hand and turned around to look at him. He jerked his head up, narrowing his brows, asking if everything was alright with Magnus. Magnus flashed a soft smile and nodded. His eyes shone, and the glitter sparkled on his cheekbones when disco lights fell on him.

They walked to the bar table and sat on the high stools. Alec ordered a glass of Bourbon while Magnus ordered his favorite traditional martini.

“I honestly didn’t take you for the kind of guy who would go for Bourbon as his choice for a drink. You look like the kind of person who would go for a Beer...or Vodka at best. Bourbon...that was an unlikely one, but I am impressed, Lightwood. You’ve amazed me... you...of all people...””, Magnus yelled near Alec’s ear because of the loud thumping of the music. Alec scoffed and shook his head, pulling the glass towards himself.

“You didn’t take me for a guy who would be good. Period, Magnus. Besides, I like the sweetness of Bourbon...and the slight hit of smoke... although just the right amount... it does wonders for your taste buds and your spirit...”, Alec clicked his tongue. Magnus sighed and rolled his eyes. To be honest, he did like this version of Alec. The one who never stopped reminding Magnus of the fact that the Omega once detested the sight of his Alpha-to-be. He scoffed and looked down to stare at his drink, swirling the olives in his martini. Something was terribly wrong with him. He was loving each and everything that Alec was doing or saying.

“You’d never let that go...would you, Alexander? How many times have I told you...that I don’t hate you...”, Magnus questioned, raising a single brow at the boy. Alec clicked his tongue again and nodded, making Magnus facepalm himself. He hid his face in his palms for a moment and then looked away, gazing at the people dancing on the dance floor. It was the sudden flash of the camera that made Magnus turn back to look at Alec who was now hidden behind his phone.

“Are you taking a photo of me?”, Magnus gasped, faking shock and being offended. “Please tell me you’re not...?”, he widened his eyes, scanning himself if he looked presentable enough.

“The lighting here is beautiful...and so are you”, Alec gulped, realizing that the now two glasses of Bourbon were starting to finally get to him. He really shouldn’t have said that. He had been away from alcohol for way too long and it seemed that he lost his ability to tolerate the same. His head buzzed with the sound of people around him and he felt his breathing go uneven as the drink spread in his blood, making him tipsier. “I mean...uhh...I am sorry... I meant to say that...you look nice... this shirt looks good on you.”

“It is alright, darling. I was just trying to be mean.”, Magnus chuckled, actually taken aback by the compliment. He felt heat rush up to his cheeks and the throbbing of his heart in his chest. “Thank you, by the way”, he added, winking.

“I meant that you...that...you”, Alec fumbled for words, with an aim of doing damage control. “You clean up well...”, he managed to say. Magnus popped his eyes open realizing how tipsy Alec was getting and gently nudged his shoulder to comfort his embarrassment.

“You are not so bad yourself. So good, in fact.”, Magnus sighed. Alec’s lips curved into a wet and he gulped the remainder of his third glass down. “Do send me that image though... let’s see if you’re any good...or the photos on your page have been taken by someone else...”, Magnus added, softly rolling his eye. Alec popped his eyes open and gasped before breaking into a gentle chuckle. Magnus was crazy. He was so different from the first time Magnus had met him and given him his characteristic scorn. He looked back at Magnus who was now swaying with the music that was playing in the background. Alec observed him and after a while, Magnus was the only thing he could make out in the whole crowd. The other people seemed unimportant or just blurry. Damn, he couldn’t drive back tonight. Not at all. He pulled out his phone once again and clicked another photo
of his fiancé, this time, without Magnus noticing at all.

“Do you want me click a photo of the both of you...”, a bartender cleared his throat in front of Alec. Alec flickered his eyes and looked at him and then at Magnus. “You guys are great together... and look great too... Plus, you’ve been clicking his pictures for quite some time now!” the bartender added, shaking his head. Alec looked at Magnus who was now staring between the guy and his fiancé, confused and embarrassed.

“We’re just friends...”, Alec shrugged, attempting to clear the confusion. The bartender’s lips curved into an “o”. Magnus blinked his eyes and looked at Alec.

“Doesn’t mean we can’t take photos together... friends take photos with each other all the time..., Alexander. Come on. We also need to show our families that we’re not ripping each other’s throats out in New York. This would be very convincing to them.”, he tilted his head in one direction and curved his lips upwards. Alec rolled his eyes and shifted closer. He handed over his phone to the bartender. Magnus folded his elbows and rested them on the table, standing closer to where Alec was sitting. Alec moved his hand around and placed it far away on the table, enclosing Magnus between it and his shoulder. Magnus gulped as Alec’s shoulder brushed against his back. He blinked and plastered a smile on his face, tilting his head towards Alec as the camera flashed.

Alec took a deep breath as Magnus drew closer to him. Magnus’ rosy and sandalwood Omega scent was seeping into his lungs every time he inhaled air. Magnus cleared his throat and turned his head to face Alec again. Alec let his breath out, brushing Magnus' face with warm air which made the latter close his eyes. Magnus inched closer as the fruity smell of his Alpha mixed with woody components filled his body. Both of them didn’t realize how close they were or how many pictures the bartender had clicked until he called them, handing them their phone back. They pulled away from one another and just fell silent.

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Magnus groaned in his sleep as his alarm went off the next morning. Going out for drinks on a weekday had been a terrible idea. But if it meant making Alec’s mood better, Magnus would do it all over again. Nevertheless, he cursed himself and opened his eyes, groping for his phone. All of a sudden, his hand hit a warm and soft surface and he blinked his eyes to clear his vision to see what it was. It was a hand. Alec’s hand, to be exact. Magnuss Lightwood’s hand. Magnus screamed internally as he got up realizing that he had fallen asleep on Alec’s chest – his Alpha’s chest. Hurriedly, his eyes went to scan his clothes – ok phew, he had them on. Thank God. Thank the Moon. Alec was himself in his clothes he wore last night. They were both fully clothed. Nothing had happened. Good...that was good news. As he woke up completely from his sleep, he also realized that they had fallen asleep on their couch and did not make it to the bed in time last night. Alec’s other hand was resting on Magnus’ back which pulled him down as the latter tried to get up from atop Alec. He spread his palm flat on the couch to regain his balance and looked at Alec blankly. He had seen Alec sleeping before but not from this close. Never from this close. He let out a deep breath and Alec’s nose tingle and he slowly shifted his face away. He was so beautiful when he was asleep. Correction – he was always so beautiful. The pale skin with such sharp cheekbones. His hair had fallen messily over his forehead while his other hand was flat on his chest and he was snoring softly.

“Alec! Wake up...”, Magnus whispered, taking his hand around his back to remove Alec’s hand from his waist. Alec didn’t budge or move. He also didn’t wake up. Instead, he clutched the back of Magnus’ shirt and squeezed his shirt tightly between his fingers. Magnus shut his eyes for a second and then opened them again.

“Alec... wake up, please”, he pleaded in a whisper, very close to Alec’s ear. His warm breath hit
Alec’s face making his ears tingle, and he shook his head in his sleep, licking his lips with his tongue. He may have also let out a soft growl, very peculiar to his wolf sound which startled the Omega and froze him in his spot. Magnus wanted to facepalm himself now. Everything was happening the way Magnus didn’t want. Attempting to wake Alec up again and proceed with his day, he gently lowered himself and patted his Alpha’s cheek.

“Alec... please wake up, darling. I am so late for work... it is still my first week...”, he whispered, almost moaning now. To his relief, Alec finally heard something, and he mumbled in his sleep. It was mostly gibberish though, much to Magnus’ disappointment. To make matters worse, Alec now turned to his side in his sleep and squeezed Magnus between the backrest of the couch and himself. Shit. Magnus pursed his lips and inhaled his Alpha’s scent. He wasn’t expecting this turn of events. And now, he also couldn’t do anything else because he was trapped until Alec decided to wake up from his slumber. As if on cue, Alec’s other hand slowly wrapped around his waist and his leg curled into Magnus’. Magnus closed his eyes and dipped his head, digging it slightly into Alec’s neck. There was no way out of this now. To top that, Alec’s scent was driving him insane. He could feel himself hardening in his jeans. He was hard as fuck and he wanted to get away from Alec although he knew that Alec would wake up being equally awkward. And it was none of their faults. Then, there was this other thing about him getting late for his shift at the hotel.

Alexander... you need to wake up. I am trapped...and also late... please, if you can hear me, wake up and let me go! I’ve tried waking you up in the most humanly way possible...and I don’t know what to do now... Magnus shut his eyes and thought. This better work. But, Alec didn’t move. Ok, it wasn’t working. There was complete silence on the other end of the thoughts, much to Magnus’ dismay. Magnus felt defeated and stupid. He scoffed at his helplessness and somehow that noise was enough to make Alec open his eyes. A moment later, when Magnus looked up from Alec’s neck, he saw the boy staring at him with horrified eyes.

“Hi!”, Magnus smiled, cheekily. Stupid move. He cursed himself for behaving like an idiot in front of his Alpha. Alec took a deep breath and jerked back. A terrible idea. Well that was the thing, the couch wasn’t too big. Because of the force that Alec put to pull himself away, he reached the edge of the couch and the gravity did the rest. Magnus’ eyes widened as he saw Alec slipping from the couch in front of him and he grabbed the lapels of the boy’s shirt to hold him. A very bad idea indeed. Alec did not stop from falling flat on his back on the carpet, instead Magnus was pulled over along with him because of how entangled they were while sleeping. Magnus let out a huge squeal as he fell on the floor over Alec.

The Alpha groaned as Magnus hit him on the chest with full force. Magnus’ eyes were closed as he held on to Alec protectively. They pulled themselves back to their senses in a few seconds and looked back at each other. Alec’s hands were protectively wrapped around Magnus squeezing him to his chest to protect him from any sudden shocks. Magnus’ head was dipped and hidden in Alec’s neck. The Omega blew out air from his mouth and looked up.

“Alexander...oh my Lord! Are you ok?”, he asked, in horror. Alec frowned and nodded, the pain in his back slightly growing as he spoke.

“Thank the Moon for this carpet”, he whispered, letting Magnus go off from his arms. Magnus slid down from atop Alec’s body and sat up cleaning his shirt. He cleared his throat and got up, holding out his hand to Alec. Alec grabbed his hand and got up, holding his back.

“I hope they don’t steal my girl and drop it home by tomorrow morning... just like they promised"
Alec rolled his alcohol laden eyes as he pushed his way inside their apartment. His coat was hung on his arm. Magnus followed him inside, shutting the door tightly. He bolted the door and unlocked it again... twice – just for science. To be sure that there’d be no break in while they were heavily drunk. Alec pulled his blazer out of his arm and threw it on the recliner. He went around and sat on the couch, inspecting whether the couch was fluffy enough.

“I never thought this couch was that soft and comfortable, Magnus... did you ever?”, Alec gasped, widening his eyes at Magnus. Magnus chuckled and nodded, as if he was in total agreement with his fiancé.

“They usually put cotton inside... so that it’s bouncy... and comfortable...and good for people to jump and inspect...”, Magnus pressed the tip of his finger on his chin and narrowed his brows. “...and Clary tells me that they let kids jump on the recliner...as the test for the softness. It sounds bizarre...but it makes sense... our strong and calloused hands would no way detect the sensitivity of that heavenly recliner...”, Magnus elaborated, using his hands to prove his point.

“Oh...ohh”, Alec sighed. “It makes sense though, Magnus... and I think we should try testing the couch for our own selves. I mean...y’know, if we end up inviting someone over for a sleep-in. We should look after their needs... and make sure that they’ve got a comfortable night-in”, Alec wondered.

“Right... that’s true, Alec. We should clean the apartment first... and then decide on the dinner menu....and the guest list. Such parties require careful planning...”, Alec licked his lips.

“I know... I’ll grab a pen and paper...and let’s start planning...”, Magnus offered. Alec sighed and leaned back on the couch, waiting for his husband.

“Did we plan an entire party last night?”, Alec gasped, holding the notepad in his hand. Magnus widened his eyes in confusion, unable to recollect the events that had occurred before they collapsed on the couch together. Indeed, they had had an elaborate planning session last night. Magnus had divided the notepad into various sections and very meticulously jotted it all down as they discussed it all along. There was a tentative guest list with over 50 names, menu... a very impressive one at that, drinks and cocktails... décor ideas, themes and there also happened to be a “not-to-be-invited” list wherein Jace Herondale and Sebastian Verlac were the top and only entries. Alec’s smile dropped as he reached that section.

“I guess we did!”, Magnus rolled his eyes, inspecting the notepad that Alec was holding. He took a deep breath and huffed at the same time. “We’re honestly so weird at times... it is not even funny now... I am never going back to that club. We must have created a ruckus there as well.”, he added, with a shy smirk. He didn’t realize that Alec had gone silent on him. He was staring at one corner of the notepad and Magnus bit his lip when he read that part. They had discussed Sebastian and Jace as well. Wow, great... there goes the whole thing...

“I am so late for work”, Magnus snatched the notepad from Alec’s hand and pretended to panic. “Alexander... make me something to eat or I’ll have to go to the office starving...please?”, he folded his hands in front of Alec, hoping his fake distress would distract his fiancé.

Alec flickered his eyes and looked at the clock. Magnus was definitely running late. He looked at his Omega and then at the kitchen. What could he possibly make so quickly? “Uhh...”, he stuttered, thinking while his feet scurried to the kitchen. He was confused and afraid. There was literally
nothing that he could make without making Magnus later than he already was. “Will cereals do for
today...? I don’t know what else would get ready so soon...”, he yelled, hoping Magnus would hear
him over the sound of the shower running.

“Will do!”, Alec heard a muffled reply from the shower and a relieved smile tugged his lips. He
quickly warmed some milk and poured cereals in a bowl waiting for Magnus. Cutting a few fruits to
go with it, he put them in a plate in front of Magnus’ seat. Magnus rushed out with his hair dripping
water on his forehead. He hadn’t had the time to gel them up in his usual spikes and as such, Magnus
looked unrecognizable to Alec sans his makeup and usual demeanor. His hands tingled to move his
fingers in his wet locks. Stop thinking like that, Alec. He is just a friend... a very gorgeous friend...but
only a friend. He mentally smacked himself.

“No...no, I’ll manage.”, Magnus gasped. That was really upfront, even for Alec. “Will you be able to
drop me to the hotel though? I don’t think I can reach there on time using a cab at this hour...!”,
Magnus rolled his eyes, calming himself down.

“Do you want some help getting ready?”, Alec offered, pointing haphazardly at his hair. Magnus’
pupils went up awkwardly and he smiled. He looked like he wasn’t expecting that offer from Alec
and was a little flushed at it.

“Yeah... yeah, of course... let me see if the club brought my car back...”, Alec went ahead to check
on his phone.

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Clary had never been out to the Lake before. She knew that there was a massive clear water lake in
the heart of Broselind Forest that surrounded Idris, but she never had the opportunity of witnessing
its magnificence first hand. As she stood on the shores of the lake, the waves of clear blue water
brushed against her feet chilling her to the bone. She looked over her shoulder and saw Isabelle
Lightwood, her brother-in-law’s younger sister sitting on one of the large rocks, sipping her ice-tea.
Her jet-black hairs were flowing all over her face in the wind and she used her bright red-painted
nailed fingers to remove them from her face. There were multiple times when Clary found herself
staring at the brunette Beta. She had gotten very close to Izzy in the last few weeks, especially after
her brother left to work in New York with his fiancé. Isabelle was kind and empathetic; she spoke of
Magnus as if he was her blood brother like Alec was. They’d bonded over their brothers and how
Clary knew little-to-nothing about Idris. It was an unlikely alliance but a very pleasant one for both
the she-wolves.

They would grab breakfast together on most of the days when Clary was not late for her classes at
her culinary school. Izzy dropped her off to College afterwards and then she continued with her
dance classes. Today was a peculiar Sunday afternoon where Isabelle had promised Clary to show
her the most beautiful lake in the city – an experience that Clary would never forget. And Isabelle
had been right about this. This place was serene and quiet and right up Clary’s alley. The water was
blue and clear, Clary could see the pebbles on the floor of the waterbody. Soft waves crashed the
shores and the sound of water birds echoed around.

“You were right, Iz... this place is beautiful. I really didn’t think Idris had it in itself to be so
flawless...amidst all the canine crap that it harbors...”, Clary chimed, stepping forward to reach out to
Isabelle who was still sitting on the rock. The Beta wolf looked over her shoulder and smiled. She
 jerked her head ahead, gesturing her to sit next to her on the rock and enjoy the waves crashing at
their feet.

“Alec and I used to come here when we were little... to turn into our wolf-selves and play around in
the grass. This was one place our mother never got worried. She knew we couldn’t rip each other
apart here. There was so much ground that two wolves would never bump into each other...”, Izzy chuckled, recalling what seemed like a fond memory to her. “Jace... he used to come with us as well...”, her voice lowered down as mentioned the Herondale Alpha who Clary had just heard stories about. She was very young when she first met him, at one of the council meetings of the Clave when her biological parents were still alive. She didn’t remember what he was like and the only character description she had of him was from what Isabelle had told her.

“We never knew then...”, she rolled her eyes. Clary settled on the rock next to the Lightwood wolf and she wrapped her arm protectively around her shoulder.

“We don’t know what intentions people have with us, Isabelle”, she whispered, pressing a peck on the brunette’s shoulder. “Especially our friends”, she closed her eyes, as if a similar memory had been triggered in her mind. “Magnus...he used to know this girl in his hospitality school... uhh Maria.... She was Magnus’ best friend and they were close enough for me to be jealous of their relationship... It’s kind of silly... I know that now... but at the time, all I wanted was to be like Maria so that I could be close enough to my big brother”, she rolled her eyes. Isabelle was now facing her, giving her undivided attention.

“...and then, on Magnus’ 18th birthday, he got his first heat and we came to know that he was an Omega... not the Alpha all of us were expecting him to be...”, she whispered. “Maria had presented herself as a Beta herself... two months prior. But the moment... the moment Magnus’ first...”, she cleared her throat, unable to put words together in a sentence. “...he fainted, and we had to take him to the room, secluding him from the other Alpha wolves. Maria waited till Magnus was alone...and then ridiculed him for being a weak enough wolf to present himself as an Omega”

“Oh my God...really?”, Isabelle shrieked at the thought of someone insulting her brother-in-law on the night his life changed forever.

“...yeah. Apparently, she’d been hoping to mate with Magnus...”, Clary sighed.

“...the audacity!!”, Izzy widened her eyes.

“I know right”, the redhead pursed her lips and licked them softly. “But...hey...all that us wolves are meant for is mating right...”, she taunted. “I mean...it’s not that big of an issue if you think about it right now...but at the time...with everything going on, Magnus took a really solid hit. In fact, he didn’t speak to anyone for weeks. Maria was his best friend...and... the way she treated him after he presented him. Part of why he hates Alphas and the gender system is because of the fact that the same system brought him pain the first night of his life...”

“Betrayal does not have a measurement scale, Clary ... what Maria did... was betrayal...no strings attached to it... and I am sorry that someone as amazing as Magnus had to go through that...”, Izzy leaned closer and dropped her head on Clary’s shoulder. “I am so sorry...”, she whispered. Clary lifted her hand and cupped Izzy’s face.

“Thank you. And thank God that Magnus found Alec. Of all the potential Alphas he could have mated with... Alec’s just the right person for him...”

“If everything goes well, they’ll both be right for each other”, she sniffs at the Alpha’s shoulder.

Chapter End Notes
I'll update as soon as I am able to.
Let me know how much trouble I am in by penning down this chapter.

Also, I ended up writing a 3-part ficlet on Malec because I had really hit a block with these two on-going stories. I know, not a very good move. But...umm, I'll post it after I am done writing my other story!
Chapter Summary

Alec begins his work on the Vogue project and two men start being a little touchy-feely...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

With “Sign of the Times” blaring in his ears, Alec walked in the studios on the first day of his assignment with Vogue. He had agreed to take it up knowing what it meant for him, Magnus, Jace and Sebastian. Sebastian had been his past, but Magnus was his present and future. He was the closest thing Alec had to a family in this city of which he had only painful memories. It was going to be a long project, emotionally speaking, and he knew that. With Jace as the DOP and his past slowly catching up to him, he knew that sooner or later, his life was going to put hurdles in his way with the chances of him bumping into Sebastian growing every single day. Jem Carstairs, the coordinator from Vogue had taken care of all of Alec’s special needs which included a separate trailer for his belongings– a highly unlikely scenario for a photographer but Alec’s previous record had made it possible. He entered his allotted trailer after requesting a meeting with Jace before they began the shoot and settled his things down. There was a square table for his laptop and camera. A comfy bed behind the table for Alec to rest and a small kitchenette on the other side. This was more than what Alec could have asked for. Sitting in front of his desk, he turned his camera on and clicked a photo. Uploading it on his Instagram story, he captioned it - “First day back at work. Loving the vibes”. He pressed the send button and there was an immediate reply from his fiancé.

magnus.bane – Good luck but please take care of yourself. I’ll see you at home :)

Thank you so much. I will look after myself, Magnus. Wait, do you have my account on your active notifications? – theworldthroughmylens

magnus.bane – No! Why would I do that? :/

It hasn’t been a full minute since I posted the story :) – theworldthroughmylens

magnus.bane – I just happened to be browsing the App when you posted it. You’re so full of yourself. Anyway...now that you’re online...? The Plaza is throwing its annual staff party and I can bring a plus one...what do you say? I wanted to ask you in the morning, but it completely slipped my mind.
Admit it Magnus! You were stalking me because I am that good! Oh...party? When...? If I am not shooting that day, I’d love to join you! – theworldthroughmylens

magnus.bane – It is on next Tuesday...? The 17th of this month. And no, dear fiancé. I was not stalking you. I’ve got better things to do.

Ok. I am in. But, I have to go now; the shoot is about to start anytime soon. See you at home later tonight. Let me know if you want me to pick you up. (PS: The other conversation is far from over. I am not letting it go ;) )– theworldthroughmylens

magnus.bane – Copy that... all the best! (PS: Can’t wait)

“Jace...”, Alec sighed, keeping his phone down. He had seen someone open the door of his trailer and figured it would be the DOP. “Thank you for coming here...”, Alec straightened his neck and put on a calmer disposition. Jace was frowning at him, which was expected. Two Alphas in that proximity. That never went down well.

“Jem mentioned that you wanted to talk to me? What do you need Alec? I don’t have the time to go through stupidity with you...”, Jace spat, crossing his hands on his chest. He stood at the steps, not willing come inside.

“Yes, I did. And no, Jace Herondale. You have to make time for this because it’s important.”, Alec rolled his eyes and lifted his hands to rest on his hips. “Whether you like it or not... I am back in New York and our paths are going to cross more often than not. Especially on this project. I’m kinda hoping you understand that...”

“Yeah. As a matter of fact, I do. But how does that have to do with anything? Care to elaborate? Are you going to state the facts or make a point...?”, Jace raised a brow. Alec’s blood boiled but he kept his calm.

“I was coming to that. But, if you’ll let me”, Alec arched a brow and frowned at his former best friend. “If...we’re going to work together for the rest of this month and the half of next... I suggest that we set some ground rules”

“Ground rules...like what? You don’t piss in my territory and I don’t claim yours?”, he scoffed, making Alec’s fury grow stronger.

“I don’t care about your boyfriend or your territory, Jace”, Alec raised his voice, almost yelling at Jace. The Herondale wolf flared his nostrils and clenched his fists. “I don’t give a damn about your relationship. You both are inconsequential to me... have been for a very long time. Besides, I am a taken-man and I am loyal to my partner. So, believe it or not... I don’t who you’re dating...or whatever your territory is...”, Alec lifted his left hand to show his engagement ring, with a relief flowing in his veins as he thought about Magnus. “I meant ground rules for working together. You’re the DOP of the project and I am the chief of photography... we have to and will interact a lot
in the next 45 days. I don’t think Vogue would benefit if we’re constantly at war with each other. As long as we keep our remarks on each other’s personal lives away from our tongue, I really don’t have a problem. We can work this out as two professionals...”, he huffed, letting out a deep sigh.

“Wow...”, Jace widened his brows. “Umm... ok, I can work with that. I didn’t realize that the boy who was so lovestruck and stupid...could finally talk sense. You’ve grown up, Lighty”, he smirked. Alec clenched and stepped forward, his nostrils flaring in rage. But then he shut his eyes and stopped himself from taking this any further.

“Never call me that again. Do you hear me, Jace? I may be willing to work with peace...but don’t for a second consider my attempt for peace as a proof of my apparent weakness. You remember the boy who would do anything for you and the people he loved and cared for”, he carefully left Sebastian’s name out of the conversation. “What you don’t remember is the man who would break people’s ribs and accept the consequences... You’ve been on the former side for most of your life, Jace Herondale...and you don’t want to get on the latter... Now, one last time. Do we have a deal?”, Alec arched a brow.

Jace’s eyes flickered as his proximity to Alec made him uncomfortable. He could feel Alec’s Alpha rage from his bloodshot eyes. “Yeah. Ok”, Jace shrugged, keeping himself calm and stepping away from Alec very gently. “The set will be ready in the next 10 minutes. Do you have the theme briefing documents with you? We should probably go over it before...before the shoot begins”, Jace rubbed his temple.

“Yeah... yeah, I do. Is Miles here already?”, Alec stepped back from Jace and calmed himself down. He opened his backpack and took out the folder with Miles McMillan’s portfolio and details of today’s shoot.

“He’s getting ready... makeup and costumes. I’ll see you outside”, Jace mumbled and stepped out of Alec’s trailer.

“Ok. I’ll be right out with you in 5 minutes”, Alec pursed his lips without making at eye contact with the Herondale Alpha. Alec dropped his fists on the table and closed his eyes once he heard the door clicking shut. He had wanted to do this for so long. Just stand right in front of Jace and call his hypocrisy out. Tell him that he wasn’t the friendly Alec to him anymore. Besides, it was a 45-day project and he had to work with Jace without their personal issues getting in the way. That also meant talking and setting rules about everything. Taking a relaxed breath, he removed his jacket and dropped it on the backrest of his chair. Slipping on his most comfortable t-shirt and lose jeans, he walked out of the trailer holding his coffee mug in his hand. They were doing suburban New York theme for their first shoot with Miles. The model was a striking 6’2” tall, an inch shorter than Alec though and was dating Star Trek star Zachary Quinto. Miles stepped forward and shook Alec’s hand.

“Miles McMillan...pleasure to meet you”, he smiled. Alec noticed that Miles was indeed a stunning man.

“Alec Lightwood”, Alec firmly squeezed Miles’ hand and nodded.

“I’ve been told that you’re one of New York’s finest photographers”, he raised a brow. Alec scoffed slightly. He had never been able to take complements that well. “If that is the case, I cannot wait to work with you...”, he added with a wink.

“I do decent work”, he pursed his lips. “Should we begin?”, the Alpha asked, looking over the model’s shoulder to see that the set was almost ready.
“Yeah...yeah... let’s do it. Let me go over everything with my DOP and we’ll be on for the shoot in no time.”, Miles’ nodded, proceeding to the other side of the camera and taking the chair that was meant for him. Jace walked over to him and explained his basic thought process behind the shoot. Alec pressed his thumb and index finger on his chin and carefully listening, picturing everything in his mind. Following that he returned to his place behind his camera and sat on the highchair attached to his camera system and adjusted the lenses to suit his eye level. He looked through the objective and scanned the area around. It was surreal. He had missed this feeling. The lenses zoomed in and out on people, focusing and refocusing and Alec was filled with zeal and excitement. Jace was speaking to Miles and instructing the spot boys around. The situation made Alec fall into a nostalgia – he and Jace have always been known to work together very well. When he had started working in New York, he and Jace had a certain way they did things... and no matter what, their partnership was solid and unbreakable. Until.

“OK... Jace, can we get to it now? Let’s see if your plan is working...”, Alec adjusted his hands on his instrument and then called out to the DOP.

“We’re aiming for a walk-to-work moment... here with me Alec?” Jace adjusted the props and other essentials around with the help of the camera crew. Alec hummed a loud approval and dug his eyes on the camera. Jace and Alec understood each other’s way of work perfectly. That was always there. While he instructed Miles on how he wanted the look to be, Jace raised his hand up in the air, fingers split apart from each other. That was Alec’s cue. He looked through the lens and waiting until Jace jerked his hand forward in the air. The first shot flashed on the computer and Jace was behind the monitor in no-time looking at what Alec had captured.

“This shot is great, Alec. But, we need a little more normalcy and naturality in it... can we?”, Jace informed Alec. Alec tweaked his brows, thinking about what could be changed. That’s the way they worked. The first shot that Alec took was never the final one. They’d shoot it to tweak it before finalizing it.

“Miles...you’re late...for work. Look straight at Jace and then wave your head as if you’re about to look at your watch...”, Alec took a burst shot.

“This is good. So much better”, Jace took a step back and allowed Alec to take a few shots of his own liking, instructing Miles. He quietly observed the monitor. Alec was so good at this. Jace let Alec take the lead and instruct Miles while he carefully observed the monitor. Alec took some really nice moments on his camera. They sorted the shots into the ones that had to be discarded and the ones that looked good to go for Round 2. The setting changed after that and Miles had to go for a costume change as well.

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Magnus was hustling through the corridors of the Hotel, towards his office. It had been a typical busy day at the Hotel and Magnus was waiting to get some time to breathe. To add to that, it was lunchtime and his hunger were driving him insane. He hadn’t had the privilege of eating anything since the French toast that Alec had made him in the morning. Magnus’ mouth salivated as he recalled the taste of the toast melting in his mouth. As he pushed the glass door of his office open, he found Raphael and Catarina sitting and waiting for him.

“Did I miss a memo?”, he quirked, removing his blazer and hanging it on the backrest of his chair. “Even if I did, I don’t care. Nothing is going to stop me from having food. Not even an official meeting. Not even my dismissal from the hotel” Catarina shot her head up at him and rolled her eyes at the overreaction.

“Oh my God. Catch a break. We’re all starving here, Magnus. You’re not the only one suffering.
Besides, you’ve not had food kept right in front of you and a desire to eat it. At least thank us for waiting for you?”, she complained, looking at the food box in front of her. Magnus chuckled and took his seat.

“Forgive me! I’ve been a little busy – but that would be an understatement”, he added, licking his lips as his mouth watered at the sight of food. “Thank you...for the food and waiting for me. Really, I appreciate it. Raphael here might not appreciate the hardwork you and I do for the Hotel but I do appreciate you guys for having my back”, he added, winking at Raphael who narrowed his brows and frowned at Magnus. They dug their knives and forks in as soon as Magnus opened his own box. Good old Chinese food, never goes wrong. Catarina hummed and relished the meal, sipping soda with it.

“So... you do know that I could fire the both of you and Luke would trust my judgement without question?”, Raphael chewed, arching a brow at Magnus. “The reason I don’t is because unlike your judgement...I am a kind-hearted individual who loves people and can’t see them unemployed.”, Raphael taunted, faking a stern face. Magnus scoffed, not looking at Raphael. “Also, you both do a lot of work for me...so there’s that”, Raphael added.

“There goes the kind-heart, Mr Santiago”, Catarina chuckled, sipping her soda. Magnus joined her as they both laughed. “Careful with what you claim, Sir!”, she tilted her head sporting a smug look on her face.

“Maybe you two could do with a little suspension after all. You’re getting out of my hand with every passing day. Maybe...I might rather talk to Luke and have you reassigned in separate departments so that we don’t have a conspiracy rising amongst ourselves.”, Raphael smiled cheekily. “I’ll keep all this in mind the next time I am hiring. Until then, I am warning you two. Fall back in line before...”, he clicked his tongue. “Anyway, who is your plus one for the Staff Event?”, he asked, arching a brow at Magnus.

Magnus narrowed his brows, “Alec...who else would it be? He is my fiancé and I don’t know a lot of people in New York other than my bosses and Catarina Loss...”, he scoffed, hiding a blush that was creeping on his cheeks.

“Did you ask him already?”, Catarina jumped, unable to hold down her excitement.

“I did... he said he would be there...”, Magnus was grinning now. “By the way, if anything...he’s my fiancé. And hella gay at that... So, why are you excited...?”, he arched a brow at his colleague.

“Would you look at that grin... oh my God.”, Catarina winked. Magnus dropped his head and looked away. Cat slowly rose from her chair and smacked Magnus’ shoulder. “I am excited for you... have you seen the way Alec looks at you. Man, I would pay anything to have a guy stare at me as if I was the center of his world”

“There’s nothing between Alexander and I... stop exaggerating, Cat. Alec doesn’t look at me like you claim he does...”, Magnus pouted, only making Catarina laugh harder. “You’re simply imagining things”

“Yeah... yeah, nothing at all, Magnus... Of course, I am imagining things even though I’ve seen the two of you live in action.”, she nodded, faking agreement with the Omega. “Charlie from Laundry was telling me a different story. You were blushing while texting someone on the phone earlier this morning... and I don’t think it could be anyone but Alec that you were talking to. Your face literally lights up whenever he is mentioned”

“Oh really? I might need to have a word with Charlie then”, Magnus winked. “He better tells me the
same story...or I –”

Magnus was startled when his phone started vibrating on the table in front of him.

Isabelle Lightwood.

Magnus narrowed his brows and pressed the accept call button, pressing the phone to his ears. He excused himself and stepped out of his office to get some privacy.

“Magnus. I am sorry...am I disturbing you? You’re probably at work...but...”

“Uh...no, not at all. It’s lunch break and anyway, I can spare time to talk to Alec’s sister! Everything ok, my dear?”, Magnus took a deep breath, anticipating Izzy’s answer.

“I hope everything is ok and I am just being a protective sister. I was calling Alec on his phone, but he is not picking up. It has been over three hours now. Do you happen to know where he is or if he is doing ok?”

“I haven’t checked on him since morning. We exchanged a few texts and he seemed ok at the time. He is on-set shooting for a magazine cover. I thought he told you about that. The assignment with Vogue?”, Magnus narrowed his brows.

“Yes...he did tell me about it and I know it is the first day of work, so he could just be very busy with everything. I just thought I would check-in on him because...because Alec hasn’t been on a set in about a year...and then with everything else...”

“I understand”, Magnus sighed.

“You do? Alec...told you about...?”, he could hear the surprise in Izzy’s voice.

“Yes...he did. He told me whatever I needed to know about Jace and Sebastian...”

“Oh...good...that’s good. I am glad you know. Makes it a whole lot easier for Alec to ask for help. Do you mind if I ask you for a favor?”

“Not at all. You’re Alec’s sister and we have something in common...”

“And that is...?”

“We both care about him. And he’s worth it... So, tell me... what can I do for you?”

“Can you check-in on Alec and let me know if he is alright?”

“I can do that. Give me some time and I’ll let you know as soon as I have something...”, he assured her and hung up the call. Magnus recalled that Alec had given him Jem’s number a few days ago, right after he accepted the assignment and signed the official contract. Magnus found his contact in his phone and dialed him.

“Jem Carstairs?”, Magnus responded as soon as Jem received the call.

“Yes, that would be me...who am I talking to?”

“Hi... this is Magnus Bane. I am Alec’s fiancé. We met the day of your meeting at the Plaza Hotel...remember?”, Magnus was walking to and fro in the bullpen.

“Yeah... yeah, Mr Bane. It’s unusual to get a call from you. How may I help you?”
“Sorry for the bother but I have been trying to reach Alec for the last few hours... but he is not picking up. He must be very busy with work but his sister is worried sick. Now, before his family decides to file a missing person’s report with the NYPD, can you ask Alec to give me a call whenever he can?”, Magnus scoffed.

“Oh my God. Yeah...yeah, wait I’ll give him the phone”, Jem chuckled. Magnus heard him call Alec’s name amidst a hustle of voices in the background and then a voice responded to the name. A voice that Magnus very well recognized and the baritone of which ran a shiver down his spine every damn time.

“Magnus?”, Alec asked, quizzically, pressing Jem’s phone to his ears. “Hey whatsup!”

“Alexander...where are you and what have you done with your phone? Are you fine...?”

“Yeah... why wouldn’t I be? I am not so fragile Magnus. I wouldn’t break so easily. Jace and Sebastian can’t break me!”

“I know they can’t. They don’t know who they’ve lost. And I hope they never realize it... because they don’t deserve to. But that’s not why I am calling you! Where’s your phone? Isabelle’s been trying to call Homeland Security if you don’t call her back soon.”, Magnus chuckled.

“Oh shit. My phone is in my trailer... I forgot about it because... ah man! I was so busy with the shoot and it completely slipped off my mind. She must be so annoyed.”, Alec hissed. “Thank you, Magnus... I’ll call her as soon as I cut this call”

“Anytime, Alexander”

“Before you hang up though... I could be late tonight. We’re taking quite a few shots with the model today. Don’t wait up for me, ok?”

“Is he hot? The model I mean...?”, Magnus wiggled his brows.

“So hot, Magnus”, Alec chuckled.

“Click a picture for me?”, Magnus winked.

“I will. Talk to you later now”

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Magnus walked inside a huge warehouse on a Saturday evening with two mugs of coffee in his hands. He showed his ID card at the gate and the security let him in. He had just wrapped up his shift at Plaza and was headed home when he recalled that it was a shoot night for Alec and the Alpha wouldn’t be back before Sunday afternoon. Ever since the work on the Vogue Project began, Magnus had barely seen Alec. Alec had had long hours of work scheduled for day and night on alternating days and they didn’t have the privilege of Sundays during the first two weeks. The models lined up during these two weeks had been flooded with other commitments and if Vogue were to put their story in, they had to make do with whatever free time the models could afford. This was the second Sunday in a row that Alec was going to be working all night and Magnus was just done with his absence in their apartment. He couldn’t bear to unlock his lonely apartment after a whole day of work and not find Alec scuttling around the living room. The last time he had really spent a night with Alec was at the Annual Staff party at the Plaza last Tuesday, where Alec accompanied him, just like he had promised. It was the first instance since the Interview that Alec and Luke met and to Magnus’ surprise, this meeting was far from violent. They really bonded
together, sharing stories of their first transformations and what not.

Magnus had visited Alec on set before and so he knew where to go as soon as he entered the warehouse. Alec’s trailer was parked in one corner and was lit, suggesting that he was inside, either working or taking rest. Magnus moved his eyes around and saw the crew setting up the shot. Jace and Jem were in the center of the stage, talking animatedly. Magnus’ nose flared in rage and he looked away. Today wasn’t the day to start a fight with Jace Herondale.

He reached Alec’s trailer and knocked.

“Come in”, Alec called from inside and Magnus twisted the door knob opening the door. As he climbed the steps in the trailer, Alec came into view. The boy wore a lose grey t-shirt and black jeans. He was sitting on his table and his laptop was open in front of him. He had his headphones fixed on his ears and a soft music blaring out of them.

“Magnus!”, his eyes lit up with joy as he saw his Omega entering his trailer.

“Hi...”, Magnus smiled.

“What brings you here... did I miss something important? Did you call...?”, Alec slipped his headphones out of his ears and let them fall on his neck.

“I was bored...”, Magnus admitted, placing a brown packet and two mugs in the kitchen area. He turned around and reached Alec. Bending down, he placed a kiss on his cheek and brushed past him to settle on the couch. “It’s the second weekend that you’re working, and I have nothing to do in that huge apartment without you... So I thought we could have dinner together at your workplace... It is not like I know a lot of people here...”

“Yeah... I know. I am sorry. This is hopefully the last time I am missing a weekend at home”, Alec’s finger tips hovered around the cheekbone where Magnus had just pecked him. “I am so happy that you brought dinner. I am so done eating alone...”

“If it is alright with you... I am gonna spend the night watching you work. I really don’t want to go back alone.”, Magnus announced, stretching himself on the backrest of the couch. Alec widened his eyes at Magnus and his cheeks flushed.

“It is more than alright for me... I am glad you’re here because I wouldn’t be bored now. I was planning on calling you up anyways. There are couple of DVDs Jem brought me yesterday and we could watch some of the shows during the breaks...”, Alec stood up and joined Magnus on the couch. Magnus lifted his legs up and placed them on Alec’s lap habitually. Gradually spending time together and living together had made Magnus and Alec comfortable with each other. They used to watch movies and shows sitting on the same couch and sometimes, even sharing the same blanket. The pillow wall separating their two sides of the bed was gone and even though they maintained their distance, the awkwardness was not there anymore. Magnus turned to face Alec and tilted his head to one side, resting it on the backrest.

“I have missed spending time with you, the way we used to.”, Alec mumbled, stealing a glance at Magnus.

“I have missed you too, Alexander”, Magnus hummed. Alec got up momentarily and coffee and hotdogs that Magnus had brought with him. They put on the latest episode of “Designated Survivor” on the TV in front of them and cuddled together.

Five minutes into the second episode, someone knocked at the door again. Alec’s head was resting
on Magnus’ chest while he himself was spread between the Omega’s legs. He looked up from his position and uttered a come in.

“Can’t catch a break for 5 minutes... can I?”, Alec complained, getting up from the couch with Magnus’ help. He heard a little scoff from the Omega’s mouth as he darted his eyes to the gate where he could now see someone standing. His breath got caught in the throat as he looked at the person in front of him. He fell weak in his knees as he attempted to stand up on his feet.

In all his beauty and glory stood Sebastian Verlac. His blue eyes, the silky blonde hair that fell all over his forehead and a soft smile tugging on his lips. Everything pierced Alec right through his heart. Magnus’ heart raced up and down as he straightened himself and recognized the model from the photos that he had seen on Instagram.

“Alec...”, he breathed out the Alpha’s name.

“Sebastian”, Alec gritted his teeth together. His eyelids flickered as he attempted to keep the tears at Bay.

“Hi...”, Sebastian smiled, albeit very softly, clenching his hands together in a fist. He was rubbing his knuckles with his thumb nervously.

“What are you doing here in my trailer? Did you just lose your way...? Your boyfriend’s trailer is on the other side...”, Alec closed his eyes and took a deep breath. His voice reeked of hostility and rage. He crossed his hands on his chest. Magnus nervously cleared his throat indicating that he was still in the room. He stood up and brushed his pants. This wasn’t his place to be. If Alec and Sebastian needed to talk, it had to be without Magnus being around.

“I’ll be outside, Alexander... let me know when you’re done talking with him...”, he whispered and stepped forward to exit the trailer when Alec’s hand pulled him back gently.

“No... this is your place too. You don’t have to leave it. I’ll take this conversation outside. You stay here, Magnus. I’ll be right back with you. Don’t resume the show without me...”, Alec’s loving and caring voice returned as he smiled to Magnus. Magnus gulped and nodded. Alec kissed his forehead and stepped out of the trailer, taking Sebastian along with him. Magnus let out a huge sigh and dropped back on the couch. He nervously stood up a few seconds later to clean the table and couch of food packets and coffee mugs.

Alec and Sebastian were visible from the windows from one angle and as much as Magnus didn’t want to intrude, he couldn’t help but notice them talk.

“Why are you here now?”, Alec hissed. “Where is your boyfriend? He must be here somewhere... go bother him, alright? I don’t have the time to indulge in any conversation outside work with you or him...”, he added.

“Alec... I’ve been wanting to talk to you ever since Jonathan told me about you being back in the Boroughs”, Sebastian explained.

“Why exactly do you want to talk to me? Because... I don’t recall the same enthusiasm from my end... the feeling isn’t mutual at all...”, Alec crossed his hands on his chest and looked away. Truth be told, looking at Sebastian still brought pain and suffering to Alec.

“I wanted to apologize...”

Alec’s eyes widened in disgusted surprise. “Oh really?”, he taunted. “Apologize for what? I don’t remember anything that you might want to apologize for. Oh are you referring to breaking my
heart... cheating on me with my best friend on my couch in my apartment?...ruining my career? Being an opportunistic asshole... or maybe... just existing...”, Alec spat.

“I am sorry for whatever and all the hurt I have caused you. You didn’t deserve this”, Sebastian’s head dropped down and his gaze fell on the floor. Alec wanted to believe him. Even after everything, he wanted to believe him and everything that Sebastian was claiming. “I am sorry that Jonathan treated you like so badly when you first met a couple of days ago. We wronged you Alec... you didn’t do anything...”

“You got that right... good!”, Alec scoffed, rolling his eyes.

“I am so sorry... please, Alec. You have to believe me. There hasn’t been a day in the past year that I haven’t wanted to apologize to you... I was naive and stupid and wasn't thinking properly when I decided to hurt you...”, Sebastian stepped forward and cupped both of Alec’s cheeks in his hands. Alec was taken aback by the gesture. He froze in his spot. Sebastian’s touch was still so familiar to him. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

“If Jace sees you with me, it wouldn’t end well for him”, Alec gritted his teeth with his eyes still closed. “If he comes after me... I’ll rip him apart...”, he mumbled. He didn’t want to address Sebastian’s apology.

“Alec look at me...”, Sebastian pleaded. Alec softly nodded and opened his eyes. Sebastian was standing so close to him. But he suddenly didn’t feel the urge to rekindle anything between him and his former lover. “I am sorry for everything I did to wrong you and our relationship. I fell in love with Jonathan unknowingly and it wasn’t fair to you. If I could do things differently... I would. I would be honest with you... please, please forgive me...”

“I can’t do what you ask of me. I can forget what you did, Sebastian...”, Alec breathed out, stepping away from Sebastian’s touch because he felt a sudden discomfort in his chest. “I can’t forgive you or Jace... ever! And that is because you forgive people who you expect or want to have in your life. And I don’t want you in my life. I don’t want your boyfriend in my life. I am much better without the two of you”, he said, matter-of-factly. “Go and find your boyfriend. You don’t have a place with me anymore. You don’t mean anything to me. My fiancé is waiting for me inside... I need to be with him”, he whispered, turning to gaze at the trailer.

“Your fiancé?”, Sebastian choked on his spit. “Are you engaged...Alec?”, he gasped.

“Of all the things about my return to New York Jace could have left out...he forgot to tell you that I am engaged...?”, Alec taunted, chuckling softly. He lifted his hand to show his ring. “Never mind... I am... Sebastian. Magnus, the man you saw inside the trailer, is my fiancé...”, he said, proudly.

Sebastian bit his lip and smiled, “Congratulations... I am happy for you...”

“I don’t care, Sebastian. Goodbye...”, he went back in the trailer and locked it from the inside. The discomfort in his chest rising every second. He looked towards the couch and Magnus was not there. He called out to him and heard a small mumble from the area where his bed was. Magnus was curled up on his side in a foetal position and there was tension in the air.

Are you okay? Alec thought.

Magnus didn’t respond but shifted nervously in his position.

“Magnus?”, Alec whispered, sitting on the bed next to his Omega. He placed his hand on Magnus’ arm, but Magnus slipped it away. “Hey?”, Alec was taken aback. He couldn’t understand what was
How could you let Sebastian touch you again...? You know what he did to you right... you understand that, and all of a sudden, Magnus’ voice rang in Alec’s head. Sebastian. So that is what was bothering Magnus. He must have noticed Sebastian touching him... from the windows, Alec was a little surprised, but this reaction explained the discomfort that he was feeling. It wasn’t his own, it was Magnus’ feeling that were radiating to his mate. He never thought they would become that couple who got possessive about each other. They weren’t even dating, as of now. The very next second, Alec found himself snuggling next to Magnus in the little space that they had on the single bed. He curled his arm around Magnus’ chest and pressed his cheek against Magnus feeling his mate’s warmth. Pressing Magnus closer, he squeezed the Omega on his chest and adjusting his feet to curl their legs together. It was the most intimate that they had ever been in over a month of living together in New York.

“I am sorry...”, Magnus softly mumbled. ”I shouldn't have said anything...”

“...anything about what”, Alec breathed out warm air near Magnus’ ear.

“It is none of my business... and”, Magnus was shaking as he spoke. Alec could feel his fragility under his touch

“What isn’t?”, Alec teased, licking his lips and nuzzling closer.

“We’re not dating...you and I. And you’re not my boyfriend. Sebastian is your past... and it is up to you... but I couldn’t... I didn’t know what got into me. Sebastian cupped your face...and I just flipped out...”, Magnus moaned, admitting the reason why this was all so difficult for him.

“You’re my mate... you are protective of me, Magnus. There’s nothing unusual in the way you feel right now. I understand your reaction.”, Alec explained, rubbing their cheeks together. Magnus dig his head deeper in the pillow, out of guilt.

“I am not jealous... I swear. I don’t why but Sebastian bothered me so much. He touched you and I just... I don’t know what happened... I wanted to punch him...”, his voice wasn’t clear because he spoke to the pillow, but Alec could hear him perfectly.

“It’s ok... Magnus... do you hear me? I know you’re not jealous. Far from it. You’re looking out for me... C’mere, turn around for me.”, Alec left some space between them and Magnus twisted himself around so that he now faced Alec. Alec lifted his chin and Magnus looked straight in Alec’s eyes. They were messy with kohl spreading all around his eyelids and his cheekbone. “You’re doing fine... there’s nothing to be ashamed of...”, he assured his Omega and pressed a kiss on his forehead. “Except for your eyes...you look so scary, oh my God”, Alec widened his eyes and chuckled, trying to lighten Magnus’ mood. Magnus frowned and smacked him lightly and in that moment, Alec knew that they would be ok.

“Can I...”, Magnus shifted closer a while later and buried his head in Alec’s neck and squeezed himself on Alec’s chest. Alec let out a deep breath and hummed a reply.
“Mom?”, Magnus asked as the phone call was received on the other end. It was a quiet evening in Magnus and Alec’s apartment. Magnus had just returned from work and Alec was probably going to pull an all-nighter again. As much as Magnus wanted to see Alec, he couldn’t make it a habit to barge in Alec’s work place and spend the day and night curled up in his trailer. Kaya’s eyes widened as she saw her son’s face on the other side.

“My baby...”, she chimed making Magnus roll his eyes. Always the flair for dramatics. Magnus had taken after his mother in this department.

“No matter what we become, we’ll always be her babies, big brother!”, Magnus heard his sister’s voice as she sat next to Kaya and pressed a lingering kiss on her mother’s cheek. “Right, Mama?”, she asked. Kaya wrapped her arm around her daughter and hummed an affirmative.

“I miss you guys...”, Magnus grinned, his eyes moistening a little. He wanted to wrap his sister and mother in his embrace and smother them with kisses.

“We miss you too...when are you two coming back Magnus? We all miss you here. The parties and this house is so dull without my boy”, she complained, pouting softly.

“Yes... I need you here big brother. Izzy has been showing me some really wonderful places around town and I can’t wait to explore them with you. Please... please come back for a weekend or so. It would be so much fun here with you, Alec and Izzy...”, Clary joined her mother and both of them looked at Magnus with their most adorable pleading eyes.

“Stop it, you two. You know I am here for work and it’s what I dreamed of half my life. I do miss you guys and we’ll be back in Idris sometime after Alexander is done with his work. He is working really hard on this new Vogue assignment and we can’t really leave it midway. New York has been great so far, but I have to agree, no place will ever feel like home other than Idris... but we do what we got to do...”, he admitted, rubbing his forehead.

“Well...come soon, Magnus. I understand how important that job is for you, but you need to look after a mother’s heart. She misses you. It has been too long”, Kaya huffed, eliciting a chuckle from Clary and Magnus in unison. Clary took her leave, bidding her brother goodbye. She was going out for a movie with Isabelle. Magnus cleared his throat once he and his mother were alone and looked around to ensure that he was alone.

“I actually wanted to talk to you about something... if you’re not too busy that is?”, he whispered. Kaya raised her brows and found a quiet place for herself in her home.

“Anything...Mags...”, she smiled. “I always have time for you... so just, tell me. Is something bothering you?”

“A couple of days ago... I was on-set with Alexander. Watching him work...you know. Plus, I hadn’t seen him in a few days and I just was bored at home... I visit him quite often. It is a new experience for me and it prevents me from going crazy in this big house all by myself.”, Magnus tried to give an explanation. “So, anyway... I went to his set with dinner and there, Alec met his ex-boyfriend...”, Magnus sighed. Kaya’s eyes widened.

“It was the first time Alec was meeting him after... after their breakup and they stepped out of Alec’s
trailer to talk... This boyfriend that I am talking about is... Alec was really in love with this guy and it didn’t end well and Alec didn’t recover from it for a very long time... So, I was a little scared as to what might be the outcome of this meeting...”, Magnus continued, aware of the lump that was forming in his throat.

“But, Alec and I... we’re not really with each other, right...? He’s just my mate...and we’re friends at best... nothing more... but watching Alec with that boy... I felt... odd for lack of a better word.”, Magnus admitted. “I am not used to feeling this way... and I couldn’t tolerate the boy coming so close to him...or touching him at one point in time, for that matter... and this is the first time I am feeling this way, so I thought I’ll ask you about it because its eating me alive...”

“Did you talk to Alec about this?”, Kaya cleared her throat.

“I did... I was so vulnerable at the time that Alec sensed it... right through me... and then I had to tell it to him that I was fucking jealous. That sounds so ridiculous of me... I don’t even know how to begin explaining all of this to him... We haven’t talked about it after that. It’s just that I need to know what’s happening to me...”

“You don’t have to explain anything to Alec, Mag...”, Kaya interrupted her son. “If he didn’t bring it up after that, I am sure he does not find it unsettling or unusual...”

“Alec would never bring anything up that could embarrass me. I know him. He’s too good for that. But, what is happening to me? Is this an Omega thing... I mean did something like this happen to you when Dad was... I don’t know... talking to some other female...?”, Magnus narrowed his brows lowering his voice because it wasn’t a type of conversation you’d have with your mother of all people. He dropped his head and sighed.

“It did... as a matter of fact...”, Kaya replied, making Magnus shoot his head up. “But that was insecurity and mundane jealousy and I didn’t like other women talking to your father because I was so in love with him... I still am...”, she admitted, making Magnus smile. She took a deep breath and looked back at her son. “I don’t say that this can’t happen without having feelings for your mate because each pair of wolves have a different level of emotional and physical bonding... but maybe...?”

“Don’t finish that sentence, Maa”, Magnus gasped.

No.

Kaya had it all wrong.

There couldn’t be feelings involved.

Magnus couldn’t have had feelings for Alec. It had been a little close to two months that they’d moved to New York since and no. Just no. Magnus’ mind was racing up and down a chain of thoughts as he tried to ignore and rebut the possibility of him having any feelings for Alec. This is not the way Magnus pictured New York going. Definitively not.

“You can’t run from it, Magnus. You can only fight it for so long. I am not trying to put thoughts in your head, but I am just...”, she looked at Magnus who was clearing struggling with this and she decided that it wasn’t her place to say something so soon. If anything, it could mess up Magnus’ head and create problems in his friendship with Alec. “Magnus... look at me?”, she stopped and requested, hoping her son would pay attention to her. Magnus took a deep breath and looked at her.

“You’re a wise boy and I trust you, Magnus. But I also know that you’re stubborn sometimes and
you run away from truth... that has to stop, son. You have to promise me that you won’t run away from what you feel. Not this time. You’ll let yourself feel...”

“What does that mean?”

“You will know it when it is the right time. For now, I need you to believe in yourself and in the friendship that you and Alec have. You are each other’s support systems in that city and never forget that.”

“Yeah. I understand. I promise you. I’ll be better”, Magnus flashed a smile, albeit confused of what exactly he had just vowed his mother to do. For as far as he knew, he had never run away from his feelings or the truth and embraced it with everything he had. But his mother was a wiser person than he could ever be, and he trusted her to do the right thing by her children.

“That is like the Magnus I know and love...”, she smiled. Magnus took the laptop with him to the kitchen counter and started making dinner for himself. There was no sign of Alec and the Omega was starving.

“I am out of habit when it comes to cooking these days. Alexander makes it so easy for me and frankly, by the time I come back to Idris, I might not be able to differentiate between different stirring instruments...”, he rolled his eyes, finding it endearing to talk about Alec. “He finds the time, amidst all the work that he is doing... and that is a lot of work Maa...”, Magnus elaborated. “...to make me something new and delectable every day...”

“He’s a talented boy”, Kaya remarked, observing how happy Magnus’ eyes seemed, when he spoke of Alec. She knew exactly what was going on with her son, but this was a puzzle whose pieces Magnus had to put together himself.

“He is...”, Magnus admitted, tiptoeing to the top shelf to take out flour. The door clicked open and Magnus didn’t seem to notice it. “I feel like I want to cook for him sometimes... but he always beats me to it... such a competitive fellow. I really don’t think I could have asked for a better roommate”, Magnus chuckled. He heard his mother hum a reply as she herself chopped vegetables for dinner. She noticed Alec standing right behind Magnus and fell silent when she understood that he was trying to catch Magnus by surprise.

“I agree with you. I am the best roommate ever, Magnus.”, Alec shrieked behind Magnus which made the Omega jump. He turned around defensively and saw Alec standing behind him with the most honest grin plastered on his face.

“Alexander...”, Magnus let out, still catching his breath. He held his palm flat on his chest and smiled. “I wasn’t expecting you...”, he looked at the wall-clock, “...until much later...”, Magnus finished. Alec moved forward and pressed a gently and friendly kiss on Magnus’ temple and that’s when Magnus recalled that his mother was still watching all this on webcam. He pulled away from his fiancé and turned Alec around to face the camera.

“Mom...”, he whispered. Alec’s pupils widened, and he smiled awkwardly.

“Mrs Bane”, he breathed out. Kaya gave him a cheeky grin and waved at her son-in-law. Alec stepped away to make some distance between him and his fiancé.

“How are you, Alec?”, she asked, trying to ease the situation.

“Very well... how about you and Mr Bane... and little Clary?”, Alec replied, rubbing the back of his head. He opened the refrigerator and took out a bottle of water. Pouring himself a glass of it, he
drank it down in one draught.

“Everyone is great. I hope your photography assignment is going well. We didn’t know that we had such a talented one in the family. Be rest assured Alec, you’re going to be put to good use whenever there’s a family gettogether.”, Kaya replied.

“The work is good. I am happy to be back to doing what I so passionately love. And of course. You just have to order. I’ll be right there with my lens. You can count on that”, he faked a salute making Kaya scoff lovingly. “Anyway, I’ll leave you and Magnus to talk without my interference. It was really nice talking to you Mrs Bane... Give my regards to Magnus’ father and love to that redhead...”, Alec waved and excused himself. He gestured Magnus that he was going for a shower. Magnus nodded and smiled back his mother.

This was embarrassing.

“I am sorry I didn’t realize that your mother was online. It must have become so awkward for you... didn’t it?”, Alec crinkled his nose, rubbing his wet hair with a towel, as he joined Magnus on the kitchen counter for dinner. He dropped the wet towel on the backrest of the high chair and watched Magnus pour soup in two bowls.

“She knows that you and I are friends and we live together. Don’t worry about anything, Alec. My mother wouldn’t interfere in anything that isn’t her business. She is chilled out...like that. And it didn’t become awkward at all...”, he added.

“That’s good...the last thing I want is to create a misimpression of anything that is not real...right? Anyway, how was your day?”, Alec smiled, pulling the soup bowl to himself. “Mm... this is tasty...”, he hummed and closed his eyes taking a spoonful of soup in his mouth. “So tasty...”, he reiterated, making Magnus’ heart flutter.

“I am glad you like it. It’s a readymade recipe so I didn’t do much, but it turned out good... so brownie points to me! I had a usual day at work. Some annoying guests, some really good ones...and Rafael and Luke over my head to throw that rookie dinner that I am supposed to throw”, Magnus rolled his eyes, taking his seat next to Alec. “How was yours...? Did it go well... the shoot I mean?”, Magnus cleared his throat and looked away embarrassingly.

“Don’t worry, Sebastian wasn’t around today. It was just Jace and I and the other Vogue crew. The shoot went smoothly. I am not so sure about next week though. There’s a beach theme planned with him and there’s one thing to avoid Sebastian while he is on-set and an entirely different thing to look away when I am supposed to shoot him...”, Alec closed his eyes and dropped his spoon in the bowl. Magnus placed his hand on Alec’s back and rubbed it gently.

“You’ll do great... trust me... I have seen you with him. You are strong and you can hold your ground if need be. If anyone needs to be worried, it should be Jace. I can actually imagine the poor boy’s plight when he sees you around... because, hello! Have you see you?”, Magnus assured his fiancé and winked at him. Alec narrowed his brows and bit his lips. “He is justified to be insecure. It’s hard for anyone to resist someone who looks like... you”, Magnus sighed. “...and Sebastian...”, he chuckled, nervously fiddling with his rings now. “Sebastian has already been in love with you once... and he could any day... not that I want him to...”. Magnus raised his palm in the air to defend
“Because you’re engaged...and and I am your fiancé... so... it is not like Sebastian has a chance now...”, he sighed at his stuttering at looked at Alec whose fingers were curled on his lips and he was trying to hide his giggle. “All I am saying is... you’ll be fine. I know that”, he tried to redeem himself. Alec scoffed gently and nodded.

Magnus was so nervous about this whole thing and he just let Alec become aware of it. The idea that Alec was going to stare at Sebastian all day and take pictures of him was driving him nuts. “If you don’t mind me asking, what... what day would that particular shoot be?”, Magnus arched a brow.

“Next Friday...”, Alec mumbled, absent-mindedly, still amused at Magnus’ behavior.

“I... I could join you...for the shoot”, Magnus cleared his throat. “...that is if...if you like...”

“Don’t you have work that day, Magnus?”, Alec quizzed.

“I took the weekend off to work on the rookie dinner... and the leave just got sanctioned today so... I didn’t get a chance to inform you...”, he explained stuttering with his words. “It’s really boring here, spending the entire day by myself... and then your shoots are so intriguing...”, Magnus’ eyes gleamed as he spoke of his visits to Alec’s workplace.

“Oh... I’d like you there...”, Alec said, narrowing his brows and looking away.

“Really?”, the Omega’s eyes brightened.

“Yeah... yeah... it would be better... I swear... and why are you so surprised. I thought you wanted to come?”, he chuckled and grabbed his spoon again. Magnus bit his lip and continued his own meal.

“Yeah... yeah, I did. But I thought you’d refuse. I mean I didn’t want to be a burden to you while you’re working... But if you’re ok with it... I’d love to be there...”, Magnus heaved a sigh of relief, distracted by the beeping of the microwave. “I made Pizza for dinner... up for it...?”

“Who isn’t up for Pizza?”, Alec raised a brow dramatically. “At least this guy is always up for one...”, He pointed his index finger at himself making Magnus break into a giggle.

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“Your boss Luke invited us here...?”, Alec pointed at the empty warehouse in front of them. It was a huge one by the dockyard and Alec could smell the scent of water closeby. “Magnus, I don’t think it’s a good idea... we know nothing about these people and...it is just... I am not...”

“This is where the Brooklyn pack of wolves resides, Alec. Trust me. If Luke invited us... it would be good... He is not a bad person. I work with him and I know you’re being protective... but Luke is not a danger to us...”, Magnus hooked his hands around Alec’s arm and pulled him further towards the main door. It was a particularly cold Saturday night and Luke had invited Magnus and Alec for drinks with his family. Alec was unsure with this whole thing because he was an Alpha and being together in the same room with other Alphas in an alien pack was never something a wolf could be comfortable with. Plus, all he knew about Luke and his mystery pack was what Luke had told Magnus and until Alec saw the truth for himself, he wouldn’t risk his or Magnus’ safety.
With his senses alert and ready to take on a fight, Alec let himself be dragged to the door where a shadow was leaning on the wall. Alec straightened himself and took a whiff. It was a wolf. An Alpha. He took a deep breath and became a lot more alert as Luke came into the light of the streetlamp and flashed a smile to Magnus.

“I didn’t think you could actually convince your fiancé for this gettogether”, he chuckled. Magnus let go off Alec and moved forward to shake Luke’s hands.

“I insisted that he should get to know the pack which you so highly speak of and lead. Plus, I know you Lucian... and it’s about time Alec got to know you as well...”, he tilted his head and smirked. Turning back to Alec, he gestured him to come forward and meet Luke. Alec rolled his eyes and stepped forward.

“I wouldn’t let Magnus come and meet a pack of wolves alone...”, Alec grumbled, coming forward to shake Luke’s hand. “I have nothing against you...”, he sighed. “It is just...”

“...who you are!”, Luke completed his sentence for him. “Don’t worry, Alec. I’ve been an Alpha for a very long time now and I understand how our Alpha instincts work. Especially if it concerns the people we’re mated with. Which is why, I never pressured your fiancé for a meeting before. But it has been nearly two months and Magnus was insistent on us meeting face-to-face after the first misunderstanding we had. I am sure your hostility will mellow down soon enough... but I’d hope you give us a chance. For Magnus’ sake”, he offered his hand towards Alec. Alec contemplated for a few seconds and then looked between Luke’s hand and his face, before giving his own hand in for a shake. He asked them to follow him inside in the warehouse.

The door creaked open and Alec could smell wet mud and leaves... he could also hear leaves rustling and water running nearby. It was a very familiar feeling and gave him the impression that they were back in the rainforests of Idris.

“When the Brooklyn pack first relocated to this Borough, they were presented with the problem of the absence of our natural habitat – the wilderness”, Luke explained as he took them inside the warehouse. Alec could see the moon and stars above. It was an open-roof warehouse. “The first Alpha of our pack bought 3 warehouses in the vicinity and had them transformed into what we call Silva Haven. Whenever one of us feels the need to go out and breathe the forests, we come here. It’s small but it works.

“It’s beautiful... can’t believe it’s actually artificial...”, Alec gasped, taking in the smell of wet grass and mud and the rustling of the leaves.

“It is. And I invited you and Magnus here... because Magnus mentioned how much you love running in the forests of the town you come from... I thought it would be a good start for the two of us...”, Luke continued. Alec’s eyes twinkled as he looked at Magnus. “I don’t mean to recruit you... or make you submit to my pack... if that is what you’re thinking”, Luke raised his palms in the air to defend himself.

“I hope not. It wouldn’t end well...”, Magnus winked at Luke, making the latter chortle.

“Then why did you invite us...”, Alec crossed his hands on his chest and looked at Luke.

“Because it’s been a while since we saw wolves coming in from a place other than one of the Boroughs of New York. And it is always good to know people who are like you... in a world full of humans...”, Luke rolled his eyes.

“Thank you, Lucian...”, Magnus intervened, making Alec break his stare with Luke. “We appreciate
“Yeah... thank you...”, Alec plastered a smile. “I have to admit that I’ve been dying to spread my claws flat on a forest floor for a while now...”, he admitted.

“I’ll leave you guys to it then... I hope you enjoy your time here. There’s a diner nearby – Jade Wolf. If you’re hungry... drop by for dinner. One of my pack members owns the place and she’d love to have friends over...”, Luke smiled and excused himself.

“Of course”, Magnus hummed and waved as Luke left them the warehouse for themselves. Alec removed his shoes and stepped forward into the mud. His sole dug inside slightly, and he took a deep whiff before stretching his arms. The bones creaked as vapor radiated out of his body and within seconds, his place was taken by a snow-fur large wolf with peculiar golden-brown eyes. Magnus gasped after Alec steadied himself on all his fours. He had forgotten how majestic his Alpha was. Alec was a huge and very stunning Alpha.

The wolf bent his head down and licked his forelimbs. What are you waiting for? His thoughts ran in Magnus’ mind, almost startling him.

I didn’t remember you being this huge. Guess we haven’t transformed in an awfully long time... Magnus admitted, cheekily. Alec’s wolf turned and looked at Magnus with an intense expression in his golden-brown eyes. They were soft and kind with a sense of protection was oozing out of them. Magnus bit his lip and took off his own shoes. His eyes glowed emerald and he emerged as his brown-furred wolf counterpart.

Ready for another run, Alexander. The brown wolf whiffed and took its position next to the Alpha.

First one to touch back down after one round of the place wins. Alec announced, displacing the mud beneath his claws and inspecting the grip his claws had.

Prepare to lose again. Magnus sniffed and stole a glance at Alec.

We’ll see about that, Magnus. Alec flexed his muscles and took his position.

On the count of three, Alexander. Magnus looked around and readied himself. Three...two...ONE. He thought, and both the wolves dashed into the artificial woods. As they passed through the trees and the creeks, Alec admired how beautiful everything in this warehouse was.

Magnus was an agile wolf and despite the subtle differences in their size, Alec was finding it more than challenging to keep up with his Omega’s speed. From a few hundred meters away, they noticed that the warehouse was flanked by a wide canal that must probably be fed by the East River and in order to cross it, they would have had to jump across. Nostalgia flooded both their minds as they recalled their first run together in Idris. Looking at each other right before they approached the canal, the wolves took a huge leap to cross it. Magnus was a little wiser and he used a nearby tree to support his jump. As a result, he landed quite a few feet ahead of Alec, much to the latter’s dismay.

They took a turn as soon as they approached the end of the warehouse and continued to outrun each other at every chance they got.
“I told you Magnus. I would not let you win this time”, Alec chuckled as they made their way out of the warehouse.

“We’re even. Talk to me when you win a second time because I wouldn’t let that happen either…”, Magnus rolled his eyes, pushing his way into the Jade Wolf diner that Luke had suggested for dinner. A particularly chirpy dark-skinned girl was standing by the entrance, talking to someone over the phone. She noticed two unusual werewolves entering the diner and stopped talking at once, making Magnus and Alec divert their attention to her.

“I’ll speak to you later… hi?”, she hung the call up and plastered a smile towards Magnus and Alec. “May I help you two gentlemen with a table…?”

“Luke told us that you guys serve amazing Chinese food. We’re…”, Magnus stepped forward to introduce himself.

“You two are the two new wolves from out of town that Luke keeps talking about”, the girl completed Magnus’ sentence, catching him by surprise.

“Oh… yeah…”, Magnus mumbled. “I am Magnus and that’s my fiancé Alec. I was not sure Luke told you about us…”, Magnus smile.

“I am Maia… Maia Roberts. I own this diner and yeah, I am a Beta wolf from Luke’s pack. He told us about the two of you and we’ve been eager to meet you two ever since. It’s not every day we encounter someone from our kind…”, she shrugged. “Would you like a corner table for yourselves?”, she asked, pointing at the diner.

“Yeah… sure, corner table is good…”, Alec responded, stuffing his hands in his pockets. “Ms Roberts… I have to ask. There must be other wolves from Luke’s pack? Are you sure that us being there wouldn’t…? I mean it would be ok?”

“Yeah… don’t worry about it. Nobody is going to question your presence here. That’s not how we work here. You’re free to come as many times as you want... as long as you’re not a trouble for us... Other mundanes who know about this diner come here often and this place is open for anyone who relishes a good Chinese meal…”, Maia winked, gesturing them to come inside.

“Thank you... we’re starving actually”, Alec smiled and walked inside to the table Maia had pointed to.

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A few days later, on a particularly stormy night, Alec was fast asleep on the bed after an exhausting day of work. The boy had been thankful for the storm that halted the outdoor shoot at the bridge and they packed up sooner than usual giving him a chance to have a good night’s sleep after what had seemed like a century. It was the middle of the night when he was woken up by a peal of thunder that was strong enough to shake the window panes in their living room. Alec felt his mouth dry and itchy and he got up to drink water. When the thundering stopped outside, another sound brought Alec’s attention to the other side of the bed. Magnus’ teeth were clattering, and his hands were clawing the duvet tightly to his body. There were creases on his forehead and his eyelids were shivering, in addition to his entire body. He looked like he was fast asleep but wasn’t comfortable per se. The Alpha looked at the temperature monitor, the heating in the apartment was working but
Magnus looked like he was freezing.

Scared for his fiancé’s well-being, Alec sat up on the bed next to Magnus and gently nudged his shoulder calling out his name to wake him up. Magnus moaned but didn’t open his eyes. Alec took a deep breath and nudged him harder this time. The Omega’s eyes fluttered open and he looked at Alec in confusion.

“Are you feeling cold?”, Alec whispered, narrowing his brows. Magnus swallowed in discomfort and nodded. He shifted in his position and groaned in pain.

“It’s the preheat symptoms, Alexander…”, Magnus closed his eyes in discomfort, still unable to talk clearly because of his shivering body. “My heat is due any day now… I can feel it coming… and”, he looked away shyly. “You needn’t worry… it’ll go away…”, the man moaned. “Go back to sleep, you had a long day at work…”, he insisted.

“I don’t think so. You’ve been shivering for quite a few minutes now. Tell me what can I do to help…”, Alec protested and turned his table lamp on. He picked up his own hoodie lying on the backrest of a chair and gave it to Magnus to put it on.

“Alexander…”, Magnus rasped. “These symptoms will come and go until my cycle hits… it’s not like one day’s comfort would do anything…”

“Wear it, Magnus… I am not letting you fall sick right now especially when your heat is due any day. You’ll be needing your strength.”, Alec was adamant and therefore, the Omega had to give in. Magnus put on the hoodie as instructed and sniffed it softly, inhaling Alec’s alpha scent which was surprisingly making his symptoms fainter. Next, he made Magnus drink a little water. Meanwhile, Alec spread out his own duvet and gestured Magnus to get in the bed with him.

Magnus’ eyes widened as he saw his duvet lying aside on the couch.

“Are you sure?”, he gasped.

“Do you trust me, Magnus?”, Alec asked.

“I do…”

“Then, I am sure”, Alec affirmed.

Admitting defeat, Magnus sat back on the bed and pulled Alec’s duvet over him. He clutched it close to his chest while Alec turned the lights off again. Whispering a soft goodnight, Alec and Magnus went back to sleep.

Alec woke up to the sound of his alarm going off. He yawned and opened his eyes to find Magnus snoring on his neck. Gulping the lump in his throat, he looked down and saw Magnus’ arms wrapped tightly around his waist and his head snuggled into his neck as warm breaths brushed his Adam’s apple. This is when Alec noticed that there had been a change in Magnus’ scent since the last time he could remember. It was intensifying to a more intoxicating version like the one he emanated when he was in his heat. Magnus was right. His heat was due any day now. When they’d moved to New York, they hadn’t really paid attention to or remembered the fact that Magnus had
periodic heat cycles to manage. The last time it had happened, both Alec and Magnus’ families were there with them to manage it better. But now, Alec was all alone with him and to resist his mate during those days would be particularly Herculean task for him, especially when he knew that Magnus would need his help at every stage. He’d be awkward and scared because this is the first time he wouldn’t have his parents or sister around to help him through with it. It was inevitable for Alec to feel attracted to Magnus during those days, but he had to control himself and yet be there for Magnus whenever the Omega needed him.

Alec took a deep breath, making a mental note to talk about this with Magnus after his shoot. He had to know what Magnus wanted when his heat approached. He gently pulled himself out from beneath Magnus and replaced his own self with pillows to prevent Magnus from waking up. It was his day-off at work and the man deserved his sleep. Tiptoeing to the washroom, Alec quietly got ready and walked out to the kitchen to make breakfast. He made a fruit salad for himself and saved some sliced fruits for Magnus to eat when he got up. Leaving a note in the kitchen, he packed his back and proceeded to the door before he realized that he should probably let Magnus know instead of leaving a note that he is going to work. In the condition that Magnus was in, no one knew what could trigger Magnus’ emotional side and bring his spirits down.

Magnus was sleeping holding Alec’s pillow in his hand when Alec sat on the bed next to him. He gently patted his cheek and called out his name. Magnus was indeed very beautiful when he slept like that. No frown lines, no worries. Just a small smile tugging his lips. Alec was ogling the man as he waited for Magnus to open his eyes.

“Mm?”, Magnus sleepily opened his eyes.

“I am going to the set... ok?”, Alec whispered, running his fingers up and down Magnus’ cheek, caressing his caramel skin as he spoke to him. “Take care of yourself and text me if you need anything? Promise me, Magnus... you have to let me know if something changes...”, he added. Magnus swallowed and nodded, uttering a ruffled promise and fluttering his eyelids to clear his vision. “Oh... and there are fruits for you in the fridge. Eat them without forgetting. You need your energy...”

“I will... I promise...”, Magnus said, in a confused tone. “Have a good day, Alexander...”, he whispered in his shaky voice.

“Thank you. Now go back to sleep.”, Alec smiled and pressed a kiss on Magnus’ forehead before heading out of the door for his day.

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“I love you Tes, but pineapple on pizza isn’t something a friendship can look over”, Alec clicked his tongue as he walked towards the location. His arm was wrapped around the makeup artist for Vogue – Tessa Gray. In a short span of 10 days, Alec and Tessa had gotten really close to each other. Tessa was dating Jem at the moment and also worked as the chief make-up artist for the project.

“Well, you don’t have regards for adventure and new experiences, Lightwood”, she chided the boy, elbowing him on his chest. They approached Alec’s workplace – his camera attached to the seating arrangement.

“Adventure... and recklessness – a very fine line, my dear”, Alec winked, placing his coffee cup in
the holder attached to his chair.

“Alec, my boy... be glad that you have a lot of years ahead of you to try and be reckless. Otherwise, what’s the point in even living a life...”, she rolled her eyes, patting Alec’s cheek to offend him with his age, as she very often did because it irritated the hell out of the boy.

“Tess!”, Alec raised his brows and his volume.

“Morning...”, Alec and Tessa’s heads shot up as they heard Jace walk in on the location greeting the crew. Alec took a deep breath when he saw Sebastian standing behind Alec’s former best friend. This was going to be a good day at work. Sebastian’s eyes moved around until it fell on Alec who was unfortunately, already staring at him. He plastered a small smile on his face, hoping for a positive reply from Alec but Alec looked away rolling his eyes.

The model they were shooting with walked in moments later and Alec was glad to resume work finally. Jace approached Alec as they chalked out a plan for the shoot. Alec turned on his work-mode and together, they began clicking the best pictures they possibly could. Alec received a text from Magnus during the shoot hours. The man was feeling a lot better and had decided to go out with Raphael and Catarina for dinner later that evening. Alec was more than glad that Magnus was at his full energy because he didn’t like seeing Magnus helpless because of who he was.

It was lunch-time soon and Alec was reviewing the shots he had taken on his camera, while still being seated on his chair when a very familiar touch grazed his shoulder.


“I would really appreciate if you could get your hands off me, Mr Verlac”, he gritted his teeth while maintaining his calm. Sebastian gulped and retracted his hand. He waited for Alec to ask him about the reason he approached the Alpha, but Alec was silent, uninterested in starting any conversation with his ex-boyfriend.

“Do you mind if I ask you something?”, Sebastian cleared his throat.

“Depends on what you’re asking...”, Alec replied, bluntly. “On second thoughts... I do mind you asking me anything”, he turned to face Sebastian and crossed his hands on his chest. “But I know you’ll ask anyway... so spill and be done with it...”

“Jonathan and I were taking everyone out for drinks tonight. After work. Would you and your fiancé like to join us?”, Sebastian licked his lips and asked in a very soft voice.

“Would I like to? No. Honestly, Sebastian... you’ve got some nerve to come ask me that after everything that you and your boyfriend put me through. It’s like you don’t even realize that the world doesn’t revolve around the two of you...”, Alec deadpanned. Sebastian took a deep breath and nodded, understanding Alec’s answer. He smiled and turned around to leave when he was caught by Tessa.

“Why aren’t you coming?”, Tessa complained, pouting. “This is the first time we’re all going out as a Team. I want you there, Lightwood. Plus, I haven’t seen Magnus in so long... it would be so good to catch up outside of word”, she pouted, pleadingly.

“Tess”, Alec dropped his head. “Even if I could come... Magnus can’t. He’s going out for drinks with his work friends. They’ve got a day-off after weeks...”, Alec added. “And to be honest... I really want Magnus to go and have fun. He’s been so exhausted mentally...”

“Ok... well, some other time then. But, what would you do at your home without him!”, she made a
baby-face. “Come with us... have fun... please”, she folded her hands in front of him. Alec was trapped. Tessa didn’t know why he didn’t want to spend time with Jace and Sebastian and as a professional, he couldn’t make it evident. He softly nodded his attendance and Sebastian smiled, genuinely making Alec all the more confused about the man.

“YAY”, Tessa screeched in joy and wrapped her arms around Alec.
As Alec stood watching his crew members and the models drink and dance on the floor in front of him, it suddenly hit him – he was missing Magnus. His chilled beer was getting warmer in his hands, but he didn’t feel like having it. The day at work had been surprisingly peaceful and smooth and despite insisting on not coming to this drinks’ night, he had to… because of Tessa and Jem who were significantly persuasive. Speaking of the couple, they were curled into each other on the dance floor, celebrating another peaceful day at work. Alec smiled at how Jem’s palms were flat on Tessa’s butt as she was squeezing close to him. An unnoticeable scoff left Alec’s lips as he witnessed their affection for each other. He rolled his eyes and moved his gaze away from the couple to return their privacy to him and unfortunately, his eyes landed on Sebastian who was indulged in a rather serious conversation with the editors from the magazine who were very close to Jace – or so the photographer had heard. Jace Herondale’s arm was wrapped around his boyfriend’s waist and his head was dropped on the Irish boy’s shoulder. Swallowing the lump in his throat, Alec turned around to discard his now-warm beer and ordered two double shots of tequila.

The pain of breakup wasn’t so bad now. In fact, he had been recovering quite well since he came back to New York which was rather ironic considering the city could have become a trigger for his feelings. But, Alec had been faring quite well, considering everything. However, that didn’t imply that Alec was ok with watching his two former friends be happy and in love when his was snatched away from him very brutally. Surprisingly, he didn’t wish ill for either Jace or Sebastian. In fact, he didn’t wish anything for them at all. There were times where he was reminded of their wrongdoings and those were the moments where Alec recalled his heartbreak but there were also times where he just didn’t give them any regard at all. It was as if they didn’t exist in his life. Those were the moments where Alec found himself happy and content.

He had downed one double shot when his phone vibrated in front of him. The phone screen lit right in front of Alec’s eyes making them squint defensively. It was Magnus’ caller ID flashing on the screen with his photograph behind it.

“Hey… what’s up? Please tell me you want me to pick you up from the restaurant because I can’t stand this party anymore”, Alec rolled his eyes, feeling a little tipsy now. “It’s just way too much social interaction for 24 hours and I am dying inside, Magnus”. To be really honest, Alec was actually just dying to hear his fiancé’s deep and husky voice again.

“Alec Lightwood?”, it was a girl’s voice on the other end which alerted Alec. He checked the caller ID and it still said Magnus.

“Who is that?”, he raised his brows. “Why do you have Magnus’ phone?”, he growled, getting anxious with every passing second.

“I am Catarina…Magnus’ colleague”, the girl panicked. “You and Magnus dropped me to the train station a few weeks ago…?”, she reminded him. Oh right, Catarina. The work friend who Magnus had specifically gotten close to in the last few weeks and Alec was glad that his fiancé was living his life to his full satisfaction.

“Right… right. Hi… where’s Magnus… is he alright?”, Alec rubbed his temple, pushing the other shot of tequila away from him. His mind was picturing all sorts of things that could have gone wrong with his fiancé. There was this thought in the back of his mind that Magnus needed him. He could feel it
through their mating bond that Magnus wanted his help, but he had pushed the thought away thinking that this was his defense mechanism to leave this party early.

“He was fine... until a few minutes ago. We were having shrimps and beer and then I don’t know what happened. One minute he was laughing and cracking jokes with us and the other minute...”, Catarina was panicking as she spoke. “Suddenly, he just... just started flushing and shivering. His face started getting paler, Alec and his breathing is also erratic. Right now, he has a slight fever. Raphael and I insisted that we’d take him to the nearby hospital, but he doesn’t want to. And he also wouldn’t let us call 911. He is very adamant, and we don’t know what to do. Both of us thinks that Magnus needs an ER... but we cannot go against Magnus’ wishes”, she sighed. The floor slipped beneath Alec’s feet – it must be Magnus’ heat. It had to be. There was no other possible explanation. Magnus had had no allergic responses to shrimps or beer before. His heart ached imagining Magnus struggling to hide his vulnerability from the mundanes. “We really don’t know what to do...”

“No... uhm, don’t call 911. I am in a club nearby... and I’ll be there in 10. Just keep an eye on him... don’t let him faint... or lose his consciousness.”

“Are you sure, Alec? Magnus looks like he could use paramedics...?”

“Yeah... yeah, I am sure. He won’t be comfortable around syringes and needles until he has me or his family around so just wait up... I’ll not be long. If there’s a need, I’ll drive him to the hospital myself. Just keep insisting that he drinks cold water. I am on my way...”, Alec instructing, grabbing his jacket. He looked around to see if he could spot Tessa or Jem. He did find them eventually, but they were so engrossed in each other that Alec didn’t feel like disturbing them. He struggled his way through the crowd, the sweaty arms and sticky backs until the cold gush of air brushed his face. He practically ran out of the door towards the parking.

Raphael and Catarina directed Alec to come to the parking lot behind the restaurant where Magnus was holed up against the wall. The friends had tried to make a last attempt to take him to a doctor, but Magnus had stubbornly refused knowing that no mundane doctor could ever explain or understand what was happening to him. Alec was panting for breath by the time he reached Magnus who was hugging his knees and curled up in one corner. At first, he wasn’t visible to the Alpha, hiding from plain sight because of a pillar. But for Alec, his strong Omega scent was enough to track Magnus down. He could feel his own body was reacting wildly to his mate being on heat but that was something Alec knew he had to control. He couldn’t afford to mess this up for Magnus. This wasn’t the time for letting your disability overpower you.

Alec’s heart ached when he finally noticed Magnus and the condition his fiancé was in.

The Omega’s blue silk shirt was sticking to his body because of the sweat. Alec could see his chest go and up down very rapidly. His eyes were blood shot and swollen red with tears oozing out of them, rather incessantly. Alec slipped on the ground next to Magnus as soon as he approached him and shook his shoulder, jolting the Omega out of his trance. Magnus swallowed the lump in his throat and his lips trembled, finally feeling and inhaling his Alpha around him. His palpitating heart slowly came to a gentle rhythm as he opened his eyes and looked straight into Alec’s hazels. Alec could see relief spreading over his mate’s face.

Alec was here.

Magnus gasped for breath and sighed in relief. But only seconds later, he realized that he was on his heat and his mate was in front of him. His Alpha. Alec must have been struggling to keep himself together knowing and feeling Magnus’ erratic scent around him. The fear and guilt engulfed Magnus
once again and he cursed himself.

“I am so sorry”, Magnus mouthed, and tears streamed down his face. He looked away from Alec, although his fingers tightly clasped Alec’s shirt on his chest.

What for? You saved me from that God awful gettogether. And don’t worry about this. This is all normal and fine and we’ll get through this… Let’s get you home first… in your comfy pajamas so that you can rest and I can rant about how utterly boring everything was… Alec thought and slipped one hand behind Magnus’ back. The other one was supposed to go below his thighs so that Alec got a good grip to lift his fiancé.

“Will Magnus be alright Alec? Do you want us to start the car? We can come with you, just in case he needs another hand…”, Raphael stepped forward, offering to help. Alec took a deep breath and plastered a smile on his face.

“No… no… he’s fine. It’s just his anxiety and adrenaline problem. I’ve seen it before. I will take care of him. You don’t have to worry.”, Alec made an excuse hoping it would stand. “I just need to take him home and give him his medicines. He’ll be fine. Thank you for offering though. I am sure Magnus will appreciate you both being by his side”, he smiled, turning to look back at Magnus. Magnus’ eyes were widened at him and he was looking at his partner in horror.

You can’t pick me up... he thought as Alec was about insert his other hand beneath his thighs. Please stop, Alexander...

Why not? Alec narrowed his brows.

Magnus gulped and dropped his head down. Alec shook his head and inserted his hand anyway. Seconds later, he realized what Magnus was talking about. Magnus’ thighs were wet and warm below and that wasn’t sweat. It was Magnus’ slick – the source of his symptoms as well as the source of the strong scent that he was giving out. Alec guzzled a little because feeling the slick in his fingers ran a shiver down his spine. He shook his head and calmed himself down. No. He had to do this. For the both of them.

Don’t worry... it’s nothing we can’t manage... Alec flashed a soft smile at Magnus and lifted the man off the ground. Trust me, Magnus. Magnus was so scared, but he heard Alec and nodded, knowing that he did trust his fiancé. He lifted himself up in Alec’s arm and wrapped his arms around Alec’s neck and hid his face in it, sobbing softly.

You’re doing amazing, Magnus... calm down. Trust me, I’ll get you home as soon as I can. And then you can get some rest. Alec assured. Raphael and Catarina quietly followed Alec to his Volvo and helped him open the door. The Alpha deposited a rather despondent Magnus and fastened his seatbelt around him. He went to the back of the car and pulled out a warmer for him. Wrapping it around Magnus’ chest and legs, Alec closed the door and proceeded to the driver’s seat.

“Thank you for looking out for him. He’ll be alright. You don’t have to worry. I’ll make him call you two once he feels better”, Alec licked his lips and pulled the door open. Catarina smiled and nodded. She stole a glance at Magnus whose head was dropped to one side and his eyes were squeezed shut.

“Take care of him”, Raphael added.

“I will. Thank you, again”, Alec hurriedly got inside the car and turned the ignition on. Magnus flinched and hugged his warmer tightly, tilting his head away from Alec. He was so ashamed and guilty about everything that he dared not speak a word in the car, which only worried Alec more.
“Magnus?”, he called out, as the car took to the streets. Magnus took a deep breath and hummed softly, breaking Alec’s heart.

“Do you feel alright? Should I stop the car?”, he asked, slowing the Volvo down.

“No...”, he moaned. “Keep driving... I am fine...”, he added, shifting in his position and groaning in the process. “It’s not like stopping the car would relieve me or anything. Nobody needs to stop their work for me...”, he cringed.

Alec licked his lips and then held out his right hand. “Hold my hand...”, he offered. Magnus narrowed his brows and shook his head, looking away. “Magnus...?”, Alec protested.

“Alec... I...”, the Omega protested.

“Magnus... hold my hand”, Alec raised his voice and breathing instructed.

“Are you ordering me, Alpha?”, Magnus chuckled, heavily. His disdain and helpless was oozing from his words. He was taken aback when the car stopped with a jerk. Alec had pressed the brakes. Magnus opened his eyes and looked at Alec who was staring right back at him.

“Don’t ever do that to me again”, Alec breathed out, keeping his calm and temper in check. “Don’t ever call me an Alpha. You know how I feel about all that...”, Magnus could feel the hurt in Alec’s voice and it made him all the more guilty. His fiancé had just been trying to help him and all he had done was put him under pressure and trouble.

“I am sorry...”, Magnus dropped his head and closed his eyes.

“You shouldn’t be sorry either...”, Alec sighed and lifted Magnus’ chin up with his fingers. “I know you think I don’t understand what you’re going through. And maybe, you’re right. I might not understand the full extent of your condition, but I am willing to... if you give me a chance. I am willing to help you... offer you everything I can. But you need to allow me to help you feel better and make this easier. Your mother isn’t here...Clary isn’t here... but I am... and I know that this isn’t how you wanted it to happen. You didn’t want me, and I am aware of it but please... please let me help you... For your family’s sake, allow me to take care of you...”, he said, cupping Magnus’ cheek. Magnus closed his eyes as they watered, recalling his mother and Clary.

“It must be hard... feeling everything that you are right now but you need to trust someone to help. On second thoughts, I am fine even if it isn’t me”, he closed his eyes. “Do you want me to call Catarina... or Rafael... do you want me to put Mrs Bane on speaker, Magnus? Anyone you’d like to talk to... or accept help from. My priority is your well-being, and this isn’t because I am your Alpha. It’s because you’re the one person who I am going to spend the rest of my life with and therefore, you’re important to me”, he groped for his phone and turned it on to make a call when Magnus stopped him and pulled his phone.

Magnus couldn’t believe that he’d heard Alec say all that.

“No... I don’t want anyone else I swear...”, he whispered and clasped Alec’s hand tightly. “I am so sorry...”, he choked. “I am scared, Alexander. I don’t know if I can do this...”, he cried incessantly which made Alec’s heart twist inside him.

“Then let me help you...”, Alec leaned forward to rub Magnus’ cheeks with his thumbs.

“Alexander, I know how hard this is for you... to be so close to me...and I don’t want to be the reason for it...”, Magnus pulled himself away from his fiancé and made distance between them. Alec stopped breathing and looked away, suddenly realizing that his own body was fighting to keep the
emotions at bay.

“It doesn’t matter”, he spoke a few seconds later. “You don’t need to worry about me... not now, especially...”, he added. Magnus wasn’t understanding anything that Alec was trying to explain him. The Alpha sighed in defeat and bit his lip. “Magnus...you really need to listen to me now...”, he spoke a few minutes later.

Magnus looked up with his tear-stained eyes.

“This”, he pointed towards Magnus. “...is a part of you. You cannot do anything to change it... right?”, he raised his brows.

“I can’t...but why me, Alexander!”, Magnus moaned.

“Because you’re strong enough to get through it. Not everybody is. I can’t take an infinitesimal amount of pain if you ask me...”, Alec said, defensively. “But you’re strong enough and you can do this...”

“I don’t want to feel so powerless...”, Magnus admitted.

“You’re not powerless. You’re strong and brave. You are confident and empathetic...”, Alec replied, making Magnus flutter his eyes. “You’re an amazing person...”, the Alpha smiled and wiped off Magnus’ tears.

“You don’t have to say these things to make me feel better...”, Magnus sniffed.

“I am not. I mean what I say”, Alec protested. “Let’s... let’s go home and then we’ll talk... ok, Magnus? Now, hold my hand and let me drive us back home”, Alec offered his hand one more time and this time round, Magnus took, clasping it tightly. He kept it on his lap and leaned back on the seat to close his eyes as Alec drove them home.

“Yeah? Thank you so much, Luke...”, Alec rubbed his temple as he walked to and fro in the living room. Magnus was taking a shower in the washroom. Alec had cleaned their bed and put on a different mattress to help Magnus sleep. There was an absorbent use-and-throw bedsheet and blanket set on top of the mattress, quite apt to the Omega’s requirement. “Will you thank Mr Abbott for all the advice. I’ll follow up soon...”, he said and cut the call.

While Magnus bathed, Alec had used the time to make a call to Luke to ask if there was a werewolf doctor in Brooklyn that Alec could consult on Magnus’ unusual symptoms during his heat cycles. He had seen Omegas in heat experiencing restlessness and spasms, but never as much as Magnus and if there was something so unusual, he hoped that there was someone who could shed some light on why Magnus of all Omegas was a subject to this. And his intuition had been right. Luke made Alec talk to an old physician that Luke consulted, on all matters that concerned the pack. The physician was kind enough to tell Alec that simple concoctions of peppermint and chamomile tea could calm Magnus’ nerves down if there was no other physiological problem with him.

Alec thanked the doctor and proceeded to the kitchen to find a packet of chamomile tea that he had bought a couple of weeks ago for himself. He would get the peppermint and chamomile version tomorrow but for the night, this should have worked.

Magnus came out wearing a very lose pair of gray woolen pajamas and a black sweater. He had no makeup on and his hair was dripping water. There were bags under his eyes because of the incessant crying. Alec kept his phone on the counter as soon as he saw Magnus and approached his partner to
help him dry his hair. Magnus was too visibly exhausted to stop Alec and he let him be cared for by the Alpha. Magnus instinctively moved forward and wrapped his arms around Alec’s chest, startling the boy. Hugging Alec evened the man’s reckless breathing and shivering. Alec continued to rub his hair with a soft towel.

Alec helped Magnus dry his hair and then settled him on the bed with his back rested on the headboard. He walked back into the kitchen and made a cup of chamomile tea for Magnus while the man waited.

“Luke told me that this could help you... with your pain”, he said while walking back into the room with a tray in his hand. There was a cup of hot chamomile tea and some biscuits for the Omega. Magnus was staring at his lap and fiddling with his ringless fingers when he looked up hearing Alec’s voice approach him.

“You spoke to Luke?”, he gasped.

“Yeah...?”, Alec teased, raising a brow. He sat on the bed next to Magnus and the man flinched away instinctively, only to feel awkward later. He hated himself for the way his body was reacting around Alec.

“But, you hate him?”, Magnus asked, taking the tea from Alec’s hand and putting up a calm front to not startle his fiancé.

“I don’t hate him...”, Alec rolled his eyes and sighed. “I just don’t worship him... like my fiancé does”, Alec waited for Magnus to react to this bogus accusation and when Magnus did, Alec shot a wink at him which irritated the Omega even further. He received a smack on his shoulder from Magnus and a series of snide remarks.

“You spoke to Luke Garroway for me...don’t deny that Alexander Lightwood”, Magnus teased Alec back making the made hide his smile. He rubbed the back of his head and looked away.

“Now, why would I do that? It is not like I like my fiancé anyway... he’s just... so...ungrateful sometimes”, Alec faked another eye-roll.

“And his fiancé is so mean sometimes”, Magnus looked, taking a sip of the tea. He wasn’t sure if the tea was working or it was Alec caressing his thighs that brought comfort to him. The end result was, Magnus wasn’t in a lot of pain.

“...and you’re always so adorable that I hate you...”, Alec taunted back, receiving another smack from his partner.

“Tessa was so eager to see you for the party tonight”, Alec chuckled. “I really had a tough time explaining her that you had your own friends to meet and hangout with...”, he added, rolling his eyes. They were now lying on their bed. Magnus was tugged cozily under a warm duvet while Alec chose to lie on top of it, to give Magnus his space and comfort. He was resting his head on his upper arm while his forearm was lifted up in the air and his fingers gently caressed Magnus’ forehead.

“Tessa is a really nice person. I am surprised she remembered me at all!”, Magnus smiled wearily. His eyes were drooping close. The tea had done its magic and Magnus’ symptoms had subsided for now, much to their relief. “We only met... what like once? Or twice... I don’t know...? I really didn’t think she would remember me...of all the people who visit your set...” Magnus narrowed his brows, leaning closer to Alec.
“Why wouldn’t she? You make quite an impression on other people, Magnus Bane”, Alec whispered in a hoarse voice.

“Yeah? Do I now?”, Magnus raised a brow and turned to face Alec. Alec blushed and looked away to hide his expressions from his fiancé. “So...”, Magnus cleared his throat. “How was the party? Did you have fun?”, he asked.

“Boring, annoying, mundane... I had the opposite of fun...”, Alec blurted out. Magnus chuckled again and snuggled closer in his pillow.

“I am sorry I wasn’t there with you...”, he said.

“It’s ok. Don’t bother. You not being there was a good excuse to leave the party early anyways... so it was all good in the end.”, Alec shook Magnus’ thoughts away. Magnus smiled and took a deep breath. His eyes drooped close as he struggled to keep himself awake. Alec noticed the struggle and looked at him.

“Go to sleep, Magnus... we’ll talk tomorrow. You need to rest now...”, he whispered and craned his neck to reach Magnus’ forehead. An aftereffect of his onset of heat, Magnus’ forehead was cold and pale. Alec rubbed his forehead and placed a soft kiss in his hair. Magnus hummed in reply and dig his head deeper in the pillow.

“Goodnight, Alexander...”, he mumbled.

“Goodnight, Magnus... sleep tight...”, Alec smiled and stroked Magnus’ cheek until he was certain that the man had fallen asleep. He stayed there for some time, observing Magnus’ chest go up and down with his breathing. He was clasping hard at the edge of his blanket but very comfortable, making Alec sigh in relief.

A while later, Alec stood up grabbing his own pillows. He adjusted the temperature of the room so that it was a litter warmer than usual and walked down into the living room. Throwing his pillows on the couch, he pulled over his blanket on himself and snuggled in the restricted sleeping space that he had. Once the lights were out, he relaxed and placed his head on his upper arm. His free hand instinctively reached inside his pants and gently started stroking his member.

Magnus was snoring on their bed whilst being in the peak of his heat. The scent and the feel that he was emanating had driven Alec nuts the whole evening, only he didn’t have the luxury to show it out loud to his partner. The man was suffering enough to also carry the guilt of troubling another person. He gently rubbed his crotch until he felt better and closed his eyes in exhaustion as sleep took over him.

A***

Magnus stretched himself out on the bed next morning. His hands reached Alec’s side of the bed only to find it cold and unslept on. He blinked open his eyes and saw that Alec and his pillows were both missing from the bed. His back was mildly sore, and he groaned as he sat up on the bed rubbing his eyes.

“Alexander?”, he called out in his hoarse morning voice. There was no response from the Lightwood boy. Magnus sighed and got up from the bed and found his slippers. He could smell Alec around in the house and he assumed that the boy must be either making breakfast or having coffee in the balcony. He stepped down into the living room when Alec’s thick curls came into his view from the couch. He approached the couch and saw Alec’s head falling off of it slightly. One of his arms hung down the couch slightly brushing the carpeted floor and the other was holding his blanket wrapped
around him. His mouth was slightly open, and he was snoring. Magnus sat down on the floor next to
Alec and gently pushed his head back on the couch resting it on the pillow. He lifted his hand up and
placed it next to him.

“Good morning…”, Alec mumbled, licking his dry lips. Magnus’ head shot up to see if Alec’s eyes
were open, but they were not. He was blindly talking in his sleep.

“Did I wake you up…?”, Magnus gasped. “Oh God, I am so sorry…”

Alec shook his head in a no and pushed himself back wearily to make space without opening his
eyes in the process.

“Stop apologizing, Magnus! How do you feel…?”, he whispered, lazily pushing his head inside the
pillow. Magnus pulled himself up and sat on the couch in the space Alec had just created. “C’mere...
it’s warm inside… Your hand is still so cold to touch… are you sure you’re doing ok?”, he whispered
and pulled Magnus in the blanket with him, wrapping his arm around his waist. Magnus squeezed
himself against Alec’s chest and nuzzled his head in the Alpha’s neck. Alec was right. It was indeed
warm and cozy in the blanket with him.

“I am fine…I swear. This pallor will take some time to go. It is still only Day 1 of my cycle. Alec?
Thank you… for everything you did last night… but…”, Magnus replied, answering Alec’s question.
“Why did you not sleep on the bed?”, he asked.

“You were so tired…”, Alec took a deep breath. “I couldn’t disturb you…”

“Alexander…”, Magnus lifted his head up and blinked. Alec opened his eyes and looked at him, still
looking tired and exhausted. “…you are a good man…”, Magnus smiled and gently craned his head
up to place a kiss on Alec’s cheek. Alec smiled and closed his eyes again… trying to fall back asleep.
Magnus settled himself in Alec’s hold and dozed off in his arms again.

They woke up again when Alec’s alarm went off an hour later. Alec stretched his arm and found his
fiancé sleeping in the same blanket as him. He whispered out his name a few times until the Omega
woke up and yawned against Alec’s neck.

“You have work.”, Magnus mumbled, sounding a little disappointed at it. Alec narrowed his brows,
finding it hard to comprehend the reason behind Magnus’ reaction.

“Yeah?”, he pursed his lips.

Magnus heaved a huge sigh of disappointment and sat up, moving away from Alec. He stood up on
his feet and walked straight into the bathroom, shutting it from the inside. Alec was left utterly
perplexed and worried. When he came back out a few minutes, Alec was waiting for him on their
bed. Magnus understood Alec’s worry and wrapped his arms around himself protectively.

“What is wrong with you?”, he asked, clasping both his palms together. Magnus shook his head and
turned to walk away from Alec when the latter stood up and grabbed his arm. “Magnus?”, he
interrogated. “You know you can talk to me…”, he added.

“I know…”, Magnus looked away. There was a struggle in his eyes and a desire to say something.
That feeling was however overpowered by his struggle to put his thoughts in words without making
himself sound more desperate and needy. He just wished Alec would get what he was trying to say
even if he himself wasn’t able to comprehend the reason.
And then Alec spoke up, like a blessing in disguise.

“You know what... come with me”, he offered. Magnus looked up. That felt good. He felt his lips twitch in a smile.

“Yeah?”, he asked.

Alec smiled and nodded. “Yes... come with me. Luke has already told me to tell you to take a few days off... until your heat goes down... and I am shooting indoors today. It all fits... if you need to rest, do that in my trailer...”, he said.

“Ok”, Magnus smiled and mumbled. “I would really like that...”, he looked up at his fiancé and leaped forward to wrap his arms around his neck.

Chapter End Notes

I have a very important exam on Monday and Tuesday and might not be able to post a new one. So here I am with something I wrote in a hurry. If it looks like Magnus is weak and unable to fend for himself, that's not true. It's a phase that I am sure he'll cope up with, sooner or later. Because he's strongest Omega ever!
Alec’s Volvo slid right between Jem and Tessa’s cars as he reached the set accompanied by Magnus. The Omega, still in the peak of his heat, wore a dark purple hoodie and tight black track-pants. His hairs were upped in spikes, but his face was devoid of any makeup. Back in their apartment, Magnus had tried to apply kohl and blush, but his hands were still unsteady and shivered and he had to decide against going out with makeup. Magnus was nervous because he wasn’t used to being so bare and unprotected. Alec locked the car as they both got out holding their coffee cups in their hand. Magnus clasped it tightly, almost threatening the cup to break it.

“You’re looking fine...”, Alec assured after he noticed Magnus struggling with himself.

“I feel odd. I am just...not used to... being so bare in front of everyone... it’s difficult to explain...”, he stammered. Alec wrapped an arm around his shoulder and rubbed it. Magnus took a deep breath and plastered a smile on his face. He followed Alec inside the studios, straight to where the trailer compound was.

On the way, he was greeted by Tessa and Jem who understood that Magnus was not in the best of his health right now and they let him resume his way to Alec’s trailer. Alec settled his things on the table and opened his laptop to check the schedule for today while Magnus prepared his place on the couch in front of the TV.

“Weren’t you shooting with Sebastian over the coming weekend?”, Magnus couldn’t help but question Alec when he saw the boy looking at Sebastian’s profile.

“Uh... yeah, but I got an email this morning that Sebastian’s family in Ireland want him in Dublin in the coming weekend and he won’t be there to shoot on his scheduled days...”, Alec mumbled, setting up his camera as he spoke. “They exchanged the dates for his shoot and the model that was going to shoot today...”, he added with a loud sigh.

Magnus gulped, swallowing the lump in his throat.

“I am fine...”, Alec whispered, a moment later. “It’s actually a good thing that I get to be rid of him as soon as it’s possible”

“It is alright even if you’re not fine...”, Alec narrowed his brows and looked at Magnus who had a genuine smile on his face. “Nobody expects you to be ok after what those two did to you... and you shouldn’t expect yourself to do that either...”, he added, settling on the couch.

“Isn’t it stupid, though? I keep thinking about the betrayal...and all they do is be happy and in love with each other. On what earth is that fair?”, Alec sat down and dropped his chin on the edge of the backrest of the chair.

“It’s not stupid... it’s natural... and it says that you have a heart that feels...”, Magnus winked. “And feelings are important... so just continue feeling... alright? Don’t abandon that part of you that feels something for others...”, Alec took a moment to stare at the beauty that was his fiancé and reveled how lucky he had been to have been betrothed to a man who understood and related to him on such an organic level.

A knock at the door alerted both Magnus and Alec. It was Tessa.

“Can we take the first shot in 30 minutes?”, she huffed, catching her breath.
“Yeah... we can”, Alec chuckled, straightening up on his chair. “Are you ok, Tess? It looks like you’re being chased by Thanos...”, Alec chuckled, subtly dropping the Avengers reference. Tessa’s lips curved into a grin.

“No, my dear”, she winked, holding her hand against her chest. “My infinity stones are perfectly safe. I was actually running late for Sebastian’s hair and makeup and Jem is gonna kill me if he finds me...so I was actually running away from my boyfriend.”, she flicked her hair.

“Then, you better scuttle back Tessie Bear... coz I am in mood for some serious work.”, Alec stood up, offering a glass of water to the makeup artist. Tessa hurriedly gulped the liquid in one go, thanking Alec in return. She stepped out of the trailer again and shut it on her way back.

Alec rolled his eyes and turned around to find Magnus holding a remote control in his hand, scrolling through the different sections from Netflix. His head was thrown back on the pillow while he rested on the armrest of the couch. “Scooch”, Alec whispered, asking Magnus to make space for him. Magnus pulled himself up on his own weight and waited while Alec settled between the armrest and Magnus. He discarded the pillow and gestured Magnus to lie down in his lap. Magnus hummed and cuddled straight into Alec’s lap, as directed.

“I am still bitter that they killed of Alex Kirkman. I mean... the first lady... she was so beautiful... such a loss...”, Magnus cribbed pulling out the details for “Designated Survivor”. “If they were writing her out they could have...”

“Could have what...?”, Alec chortled, raising a brow. His fingers were running through Magnus’ hair. His forehead was still very cold to touch, and Alec felt bad for the Omega because he went through this almost four times a year. “She was a good person... the only other way would have been their sudden divorce and mind you Magnus... that’s a far worse way to go... you know... after a season and a half of being in love with each other... they couldn’t have shown Alex leaving Tom because of something so trivial as the bribe case...”

“I don’t know... done something else other than brutally killing her off... I am not a writer, I wouldn’t know the details but killing of the first-lady isn’t the way...”, he complained. “She was so pretty... and nice and good...”

“You’re so random, sometimes...”, Alec rubbed his eyes, laughing incessantly.

“I am not random... I am hormonal.”, Magnus pouted, making a puppy-dog face which amused Alec even further. Alec giggled at the man and then gently slapped his cheeks.

“Add unbelievable to the list...”, Alec commented, receiving a smack on his chin.

“We’re ready for you Alec...”, one of the crew members opened Alec’s trailer and informed the photographer. Alec tapped his knees and got up, leaving Magnus’ head to rest on the pillow again.

“I’ll see you in some time...”, he whispered, grabbing his cup. “Let someone in the crew know if you need more tea...?”

Magnus tilted his head and glanced at his fiancé. “Do you mind if I use your computer. Luke mentioned that I could coordinate some work from here...?”

“Yeah...? You could... that’s good...”, Alec ruffled his hair. “Go ahead, Magnus... this place is half as yours as it is mine... use my laptop but don’t search photos of hot women...”, he bent down to place a kiss on Magnus’ head. “Doesn’t suit my image...”, Alec narrowed his brows and gestured at his body and Magnus broke into a shriveled chuckle.
“You’re insufferably gay...”, Magnus rolled his eyes and Alec clicked his tongue in response, amusing the Omega even further.

“I’ll be outside. Let me know if you need me...”, he added. Magnus hummed a smile and focused his attention back to the television set in front of him.

“Babe...let yourself free...”, Jace instructed Sebastian who was lying on the rock with water dripping on him. His abs had been contoured and highlighted by makeup, bronzing it at all the right spots. Sebastian nodded and let out a breather. “You’re being too stiff. Is something the matter?”, he asked in a heavily laden British accent, lifting his leg up to step forward.

Jace wasn’t ready to accept but Sebastian was awkward being in the same room with Alec, especially when he was naked and vulnerable like that. He and Alec had always loved doing impromptu shoots together with Sebastian being Alec’s favorite muse. Now, he was back in front of Alec’s camera but the disgust in Alec’s eyes when they met his absolutely shattered Sebastian to his core. Somewhere down the line, Jace understood this and yet, he wasn’t ready to confront his boyfriend about it... and chose to ignore it, channeling his anger onto anyone he could find.

“Sebastian”, Alec cleared his throat and peeked out from the camera setup. He instantly felt Jace shoot a glare at him. “Pull your left leg up...”, Sebastian nodded and pulled his leg up. “Yeah... just... like that... perfect...”, Alec swallowed, “...taking another one... breathe in... relax, Sebastian. You’re doing amazing...”, Alec instructed and gave him finger signals before taking a shot. The shot looked ok but there was still something missing in it. Alec studied the image and then licked his lips.

He stood up from his chair and reached Sebastian who was now being sprayed with bronze powder and glitter. His heart was thudding in his chest as Sebastian’s naked body came close to him. He took a deep breath and grabbed Sebastian’s wrist. “Put this hand flat right here...”, Alec opened Sebastian’s curled fingers and placed it flat on his abs, right above his hip.

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“Alec”, Jace gritted his teeth under softly, only enough for Alec’s enhanced hearing to catch. Alec’s head snapped up and he glared at Jace. The glare was enough for Jace to look away from Alec and glance at his boyfriend instead.

“It’s ok, Jonathan...”, Sebastian smiled and looked back at Alec. “Tell me, Alec...how do you want me...? It’s better if you do that because you’re the one behind the lens.”, he asked, limping his hand in Alec’s to let the photographer have full control of his body.

“The other one...put it behind your head...”, Alec leaned forward and inserted his hand behind Sebastian’s head and jerked it up slightly so that he could insert the model’s other hand beneath it. His breathing shallowed as he took in Sebastian’s cologne. It was the same as he remembered, and Alec’s heart skipped a beat. He breathed out air and looked right in Sebastian’s blue eyes. “Perfect...”, Alec whispered and pulled away from the model, leaving him flicker his pupils and catch his breath hitching in his throat.

“You’re thinking too much about this...”, he shouted, on his way back to the camera. “Let yourself lose... as if the wind is going to sweep you away...”, he instructed. “Feel your heart flutter as the strong winds and water brush against your skin... close your eyes, Sebastian... feel the touch of water on your face... and the smell of moist grass... the smell of freshly melted snow in Dublin...”, Alec elaborated, taking the camera in his hand this time. Jace backed off when he realized that Alec was doing this just right.

“Feel the cold winds break your skin... breathe in for me, Seb”, Alec whispered and peeked into the
lens. The shutter closed and opened again... two rounds of flashes shone and then Alec pulled away from the lens, inspecting the image he had just captured.

“You’re so beautiful, babe”, Jace gasped as he saw the image flash on the monitor. Alec closed his eyes and stepped back. He knew this shot had been perfect. Sebastian had done it again. He placed the camera back on the stand and grabbed his coffee. There was something odd in all this. Alec was suddenly feeling empty and drained. He looked at Sebastian who was smiling at him, a genuinely soft smile.

Alec fought the urge to smile back at his former best friend and boyfriend and tore his glance away. This wasn’t what his heart was desiring. He had captured so many images of Sebastian and every time, his heart would leap in his chest whenever he went back to see the images but this time, it just felt useless to do that. He just wanted to get out of the place, away from all these people. Away from Sebastian and Jace. He followed his steps as they took him back to the trailer where Magnus was lying on the bed, with his legs curled around a pillow.

The Omega opened his eyes and looked at the distraught Alec as the Alpha stepped inside the trailer and headed straight to where Magnus was lying. Magnus’ pupils widened, and he sat up on the bed. “Alec are you ok?”, he called, but Alec did not respond to him. He just kept staring at the Omega with blankness in his eyes.

“Alexander?”, Magnus called out to him again. Alec felt his hands go limp as he approached Magnus and dropped lifelessly on the bed in front of him. He could feel his face heat up and his mouth dry. Magnus hands trailed their way up to his cheek and cupped it.

“Talk to me, Alexander...?”, he called out to the Alpha again. Alec lifted his gaze to look at Magnus and consequently, two drops of tears spilt out from his lids and fell on Magnus’ thumb. Alec squeezed his eyes shut when he realized that he had tears in his eyes all this time.

It’s alright... he heard Magnus call out to him. There’s nothing to be ashamed of... it’s just me... Magnus rubbed his tears away with his thumb and crawled closer, fully aware that he was still in his heat. Talk to me... tell me what is bothering you...

Alec didn’t respond. Instead, he just leaned in and buried his face in Magnus’ neck and wrapped his arms around the Omega’s chest squeezing the man closer to him. Soft sniffles followed as Alec broke down. Magnus swallowed the lump in his throat and rubbed Alec’s back.

I got you... he caressed his hair with his cheek.

Alec let out warm and deep breaths on Magnus’ neck and with every breath, his body calmed down. He relaxed himself and let lose as Magnus held on to him, protecting him with every last bit of the strength that the Omega had. No need to worry... let it all out, Alec.

I am so weak, Magnus. Alec thought.

No, you’re not. Magnus protested.

“Ok... what about this... you stay here...”, Magnus pulled away from Alec and lifted his head up by his chin. “I’ll get you some water and something to eat... does that sound like a good idea to you?”, the Omega stood up and grabbed Alec’s jacket after getting a nod in response. He slid his hands through it and wrapped it around himself. He went out of the trailer and straight into the cafeteria. There were some bagels and hotdogs left over from lunch which he grabbed along with a cup of Alec’s favorite coffee.
When he came back to the trailer, he found Sebastian hovering in front of the door. He was wearing a white hoodie which was unzipped, revealing his contoured abs.

“Can I help you with something, Mr Verlac?”, Magnus narrowed his brows and taunted.

“Uh…”, Sebastian jerked away in surprise. “You’re him... You are Alec’s…”, he pointed towards the trailer.

“Yeah... I am his fiancé... I am him…”, he shrugged, albeit proudly. Sebastian plastered a soft smile on his face and crossed his hands on his chest.

“We haven’t officially met…”, he cleared his throat.

“No, we haven’t”, Magnus smirked. “Not that I’d like to... though”, he added. “I know what I need to... to go on…”, the Omega snapped.

“I was... I just wanted to see if Alec’s ok?”, Sebastian muttered. His voice reeked of helplessness and concern, both of which puzzled Magnus to his core. “He looked a bit worn out after the first shot and I just…”

“He is absolutely ok... why wouldn’t he be?”, Magnus squinted his eyes.

Sebastian sighed and looked away. “Look... I know you don’t like me…”

“That’s not true…”, Magnus interrupted. “I don’t care enough to have any opinion about you…”, he added.

“Alec... doesn’t like me…”, Sebastian amended. “And... I fully support his disdain and dislike... I haven’t done anything to deserve his affection either…”, he gulped.

“I don’t see a point in whatever you’re saying, Sebastian?”, Magnus frowned. “If you’re going to stand here and shove facts down my throat, I suggest you do that elsewhere. I need to get these to Alec because he is hungry…”

“I guess I just want to say that even though I have acted and been a complete asshole in the last year, I do cherish the time I spent with Alec... and I do acknowledge that he is a great guy, one of the best I know. He didn’t deserve what he got…”, Sebastian took a deep breath. “And, it bothers me that he had his heart broken because of me and Jonathan... the two people he loved and trusted more than anything else”, he swallowed. “There are no words of apology that can compensate for the pain and loss he felt…”

“I don’t think you understand Alec or his anger?”, Magnus rolled his eyes, having had enough of Sebastian’s apology. “You and Jace broke his heart... but that was over a year ago. He doesn’t care about either of you anymore. I can feel it. He is my mate, after all. He is not angry, and he isn’t sad.”, Magnus came forward. “You and your boyfriend have stopped being of any importance to my fiancé and he’s doing ok without you. That doesn’t mean he doesn’t have his weak moments. But, you don’t need to worry about him. His family, his friends and I am here to make sure he’s happy and loved and cared for in such times as the rest. He doesn’t deserve people who forgot his value in their lives for their selfish whims and fancies. And that’s about all I can tell you about him... and it’s more than what the two of you deserved…”

“You’re Alec’s wolf mate?”, Sebastian’s pupils widened.

“I am…”, Magnus accepted, proudly. “Now, if you’ll excuse me... I need to take these to Alec. He’s starving, like I already mentioned. I’ll see you around, Sebastian. Or not?”, Magnus smiled and
brushed past the model straight into Alec’s trailer.

“What did he say to you...?” Alec looked up from his knees as Magnus entered the trailer. Magnus tilted his head and winked.

“Nothing that is worth repeating...”, the Omega quirked. He handed over a bagel and the cup of coffee to Alec and crawled on the bed next to him.

“You know I heard everything, anyway right?”, Alec sighed. He opened the wrapper around the bagel and dug his teeth into it.

“Which is why I said, repeating!”, Magnus rolled his eyes and shifted closer to his fiancé. “Won’t I know that you heard everything with our enhanced hearing powers?”, he added.

“You’re weird, Magnus...”, Alec scoffed, playing with his engagement finger.

“Yeah, I’ve heard that before...”, Magnus countered, tapping Alec’s upper arm. “Now, I am letting you go only because you’re hungry. But, you need to talk to me. Tonight... tomorrow, whenever you feel like. But you have to talk to me about what happened. That is the only way this works. We have to be honest with each other...”, he whispered, dropping his chin on Alec’s upper arm. Alec bit his lip and stole a glance at Magnus.

“I promise you...”, he smiled gently.

“Guys... can I come in?”, their heads shot up towards the door as they heard Tessa’s voice. Magnus shifted away from Alec and dusted his jacket.

“Yeah?”, Alec replied. The girl opened the door and climbed inside.

“I was hoping to steal your fiancé for a few minutes...?”, she requested with pleading eyes. Alec narrowed his brows and widened his pupils.

“Then you need to ask my fiancé...”, Alec’s lips curved into a lopsided grin. Magnus smacked Alec softly and turned his attention towards Tessa.

“Magnus?”, Tessa rolled her eyes and turned to the Omega. “I got these new lip colors for the project and I wanted your help deciding which one would look better...”

“Show me?”, Magnus tapped his hands and leaned forward.

“Can I... can I try them on you...?”, she folded her hands together.

“Oh?”, Magnus raised his brows and turned to look at Alec.

“Why are you looking at me?”, Alec said, defensively. “Go ahead... help my girl. You’ll be assisting in our project...”, Alec added, winking. “...that’s if you want to... if you’re feeling up to it...” Magnus shook his head and stood up to settle on a chair in front of Tessa.

Tessa smiled and pushed Magnus’ head back. She applied a primer matching his caramel skin tone followed by two shades of foundations. “Close your eyes for me, Magnus”, she whispered, opening liquid eyeliner. Magnus smiled and closed his eyes. Tessa meticulously winged perfect lines on both of Magnus’ eyes as Alec watched. She smudged black and grey eyeshadows on his eyes and added a mild layer of glitter.

“Blow on it gently, Alec”, she instructed as she proceeded to complete contouring the boy’s face.
Alec leaned closer and blew on Magnus’ eyes making the boy moan softly, only enough for Alec to hear. Magnus’ lips curved into a smile.

“Suck your cheeks in...”, Tessa instructed as the brush ran on Magnus’ cheekbones contouring his face at all the right places. She used a bronzer to highlight Magnus’ sharp bones. “Ok... you can open your eyes now...”, she huffed.

Magnus’ eyes popped out after he saw himself in the mirror. Tessa was amazing at her work.

“You’re so good”, he gasped. He lifted his gaze up at Alec who was already staring at him. Magnus blushed and bit his lip. “Like what you see, Alexander?”, Magnus winged. Alec chuckled and looked away.

“Shut up...”, he gritted.

“Gosh... you guys are adorable...”, Tessa rolled her eyes and bent down to do Magnus’ lips. “Brown...or Maroon?”, she held the two shades in her hand. Magnus looked between them and picked out the brown one.

“Ok...let’s start with brown then...”, she pulled out the brush and applied it on Magnus’ lips as he parted them. Magnus dabbed the extra lipstick on a tissue paper and looked at Alec wiggling his brows. Alec licked his lips and blushed, his conspicuous dimples coming out of hiding.

“You’re stunning”, he complemented.

“I don’t think we should try the maroon one... this brown is going perfectly with the rest of the makeup...right Magnus?”, Tessa held her fingertip on her chin and narrowed her brows. Magnus inspected himself and then nodded, approvingly.

“Magnus look at Tessa and smile for me...?”, Alec held his personal camera to his eye and focused it on Magnus.

“Alexander...”, awkwardness gripped the Omega as he felt the lens being focused on himself.

“Trust me...look at her and smile like you’re talking to her...”, Alec whispered and waited until Magnus relaxed and looked at Tessa.

“Perfect...”, Alec gasped after clicking a picture. He reviewed the shot in the gallery and a rush of energy flew through his heart. The energy that was previously missing when he had clicked Sebastian’s shots. He quickly connected it to his cellphone and uploaded the image on both his private and public accounts.

Alec had resumed his shoot with Sebastian after the lunch break while Magnus cleaned his face up. He sat down to work and catch up with Luke, occasionally peeping through the windows to see Alec working. They were now shooting with suspenders and harnesses and Alec’s hands were moving as he instructed. He was checking his emails on the laptop when his FaceTime ringtone alerted him. He connected it to the Laptop and received the call.

“Hola...”, Clary waved on the other side of the camera. “Someone looked drop dead gorgeous in that photo Alec uploaded?”, she wiggled her brows and Magnus struggled to hide his blush.

“Hey Bear...”, Magnus smiled and managed to say.
Her smile vanished as she inspected him. He looked pale and weak. There was a sheen of sweat shining on his forehead and his fingers shivered as he clasped on to the tea cup in his hand. Clary knew those symptoms. She had grown up noticing them. Horrified to death, she checked her mobile phone for the schedule that she had made for Magnus and her family’s convenience, and gasped. “Is it time already?”, she asked.

Magnus lifted his shoulders and smiled. “Apparently…”, he added, chuckling. “I got it yesterday, while having dinner and drinks with my mundane colleagues. It was a pretty scintillating experience, if you ask me…”, the Omega sighed.

“Oh my God, are you ok?”, she asked. “Did Alec… oh my God, MAG!”, she freaked out. “You should have called us… or mom… someone!”

“Clary…calm down. I am fine. Alexander didn’t. He would never”, Magnus shrugged the thought of Alec hurting him away. “He is being wonderful to me… very much like you and mom always are…”, he flashed a smile. “I never really thought there could be someone other than you all who would look after me so selflessly”

“Yeah? I am glad. I’d have punched his teeth out of him otherwise.”, she sighed. Magnus’ eyes widened hearing his sister’s declaration and he blinked. He knew she was fierce. But this was just insane. “I should have remembered. Magnus, we’re so sorry… we are so so sorry…”, she rubbed her temple. How could she forget something like that?

“Clary? Let it go. Let’s talk about something else… C’mon, what’s up?”, Magnus took a sip of his tea, but the redhead didn’t seem to hear what Magnus had just said. She was still nervously holding her head in her palms. “You need to learn to let me go and I need to learn to ask for other people’s help because my champion mother and sister are not there with me… it’s a learning curve for the both of us… you tell now, how are you? How’re mum and Dad?”

“Good… I am good…we’re all good…”, she smiled. “I am sorry I called you at such a bad time with my personal work…”, she dropped her head.

“What happened? Is everything okay with you?”

“I needed advice… Izzy… she…”, Clary waved her hand, nervously. “Izzy and I… she’s kind and caring… and she is adventurous and challenging…”, she stuttered. “I like her… she’s beautiful and smart…and”, the redhead gulped.

“…and?”, Magnus’ lips curved into a lopsided grin.

“And… I want to take her out…”, Clary sighed. “I just don’t know how… and, I don’t even know if she likes me… or women… it’s so stupid and I am stuck, big brother… I can’t get her out of my head, but I cannot do anything about those feelings either…”, Clary facepalmed herself, much to her brother’s amusement.

“You’d never know what she likes if you don’t ask…”, Magnus scoffed.

“Cannot exactly ask her out without… without risking losing my best friend in the whole process… help me Magnus. I don’t know what to do! It’s not like I have asked a lot of people out before… at least not someone I actually like so much…”

“Do you like her enough to take the risk?”

“What kind of a question is that?”, she narrowed her brows. Magnus facepalmed at how stupid his sister was behaving.
“Do you think you’d be able to live with the fact that you can be nothing more than friends... if you decide to not ask her out...? Like ever”, Magnus made a cut-throat gesture to Clary.

“Magnus, I don’t understand...”

“Clarissa Morgenstern!!”, Magnus widened her pupils. “You need to decide if Isabelle’s friendship is more important to you than the prospect of being with her”

“And if it is...?”, she blew air out of her mouth.

“Then... you need to go and ask her out...”

“How does one...?”, Clary protested. “Magnus, I swear if you’re making fun of me... I’ll find you and I will kill you... and I meant it alright?”, she added. “The very reason that I don’t want to lose my best friend is why I am so afraid of asking her out... and then your advice is for me to do the exact thing...”, she said, exasperated.

“Calm down, silly woman”, Magnus chuckled. “Go and be honest with your best friend. She would understand... I swear. Either ways, you’ll get an answer... ok?”

“So, according to you. I should willingly go and offer my head to Satan...”, she curved her lips upwards and shrugged.

“Your heart, sweetpea... and not to Satan, but to the girl you like...”, Magnus rolled her eyes. “Since when did you become such a drama queen...”

“I am a Bane. It is in my blood”, the redhead Alpha sighed. “Anyway, don’t tell this to Alec... not right now. I need to know if I am accepted or rejected...”

“Why will I?”, Magnus gasped, pretending to take offence.

“He’s your fiancé... and your friend. I am sure you tell each other every little detail about your lives... like you should. I am not judging you... but this is something I’d like Izzy to know before you tell Alec”, she added, unsure of what Magnus was making her do.

“Sister before mister”, Magnus winked, making Clary break into a chuckle.

“I love you, Magnus...”, she sighed.

“I love you too, Bear”.

“I think we’ve been at this for hours. Let’s take this up again tomorrow...?”, Alec took a deep breath, pulling himself out of the lens. “I don’t think my brain has any new ideas left.” The harness pulled Sebastian down on his command.

“Yeah... sounds good... we’ll take it up from here or are we done for this shot?”, Jace asked, folding his sleeves up to his elbows. Alec hummed an agreement for the first part while a jacket was summoned for Sebastian. The man had been naked for hours and he was quickly grabbed by his boyfriend as soon as he landed on the ground.

“Mr Lightwood...?”, a crew member yelled out to the Alpha. Alec turned around to find the source of the sound and saw a spotboy standing in front of his trailer. “Sir, your partner... he... doesn’t look so good. I think he is unwell. Can you come and check him?”, the man looked visibly anxious. Alec
dropped his camera holder from his hand and ran as soon as he heard Magnus’ whimpers from inside the trailer.

Magnus was leaning on his chair, his head falling back, and he was crying in pain. Alec pushed the door and rushed inside without wasting any more time. He kneeled in front of Magnus and supported his falling head. Magnus was heating up with fever. “Hey hey...Magnus, wake up. Oh God!”, Alec moaned. Magnus didn’t look like he was conscious or aware of Alec’s presence. Alec looked around and checked the temperature. The trailer was freezing up. He quickly rotated the control knob and went back to Magnus, but the man wasn’t waking up.

“Please, wake up...”, Alec cried. He absent-mindedly looked for his phone and dialed his mother-in-law. “Mrs Bane!”, he cried as soon as Kaya picked up. “Magnus has a very high fever... and he’s not responding to me... I don’t know what to do...”

“Alec? Calm down, son. Magnus is what?...is he on his heat...?”, Kaya gasped, realizing. “Calm down, son. You can’t help him if you’re panicking yourself, alright?”, Alec nodded and took a deep breath. “He’ll be fine... trust me... just... do as I say... and nothing is going to happen to Magnus”, she instructed.

“Is everything alright with your fiancé?”, Sebastian’s voice was the last thing Alec wanted to hear right now. And yet, the Irish model stood right on the door of his trailer, with his hands crossed on his chest, hugging his hoodie.

“Sebastian, not now. Get out”, Alec fumed and looked at Sebastian with tearful eyes. One of his hands tightly held on to Magnus caressing him and patting him to wake up.

“Alec don’t be silly. Magnus looks like he could use a hand...”, Sebastian protested, stepping forward.

“SEBASTIAN”, Alec gritted his teeth and stood face to face with his ex-boyfriend. “Leave me and Magnus alone... we don’t need your help...”, he hissed.

“I am not going anywhere”, Sebastian shrugged and leaned on the doorway.

“Fine...”, Alec had no time to argue with Sebastian when his mate needed him. Alec placed the phone back to his ear. “Yes... I am looking for the icepack. It should be here somewhere. I know Tess got it for Magnus early in the morning... and it has to be here”, he stated, opening the cabinets in the trailer one by one. Sebastian slowly left the trailer and came back holding an icepack in his hand. He held it out to the Alpha and Alec grabbed it, for want of time to find one himself.

“Thanks...”, Alec shrugged and rushed back to his fiancé. He put the phone on speaker and pulled Magnus up from the chair and settled him on the bed. The man’s lips were trembling and so were his muscles.

“Please...please wake up, Magnus... Talk to me. Tell me what is wrong...?””, Alec pleaded. He noticed Sebastian come inside and sit on the floor next to him, but he was too preoccupied with Magnus to start a fight with the model.

“Give me the icepack. I’ll help you...”, Sebastian offered. “If Magnus has fever, your proximity will bring him more help than this icepack...”, he explained. Alec took a deep breath realizing that Sebastian was probably right about all this. “I know I am the last person who should be advising you but you’re the one who explained it to me... once...”, he added, clearing his throat. “I don’t want to bring the past up any more than you do... but I am trying to say that if I am right, Magnus will feel better and I know that that is all you want for your fiancé”. Alec was so desperate to get Magnus
back that he handed over the icepack to Sebastian and pulled Magnus up to his chest.

“Magnus...wake up... I am here. Can you hear me?” he whispered rubbing Magnus’ back. The Omega’s head was limply hanging in Alec’s arms. His lips were parted, and his cheek was pressed against Alec’s neck. He put Magnus back on the bed and started rubbing his palms and sole to relieve Magnus’ shivering. Sebastian patted Magnus’ hair and dabbed his forehead with the icepack. “I shouldn’t have left you alone for so along.”. He carefully noticed what kind of a mess Alec had become with the mere thought of losing Magnus and his heart skipped a beat. He had seen Alec in love before, he had seen that love for him in his eyes, but this right here was much deeper than Sebastian had ever witnessed. He could see Alec’s soul hurting and the feelings he had for Magnus were much more enormous than anything else. And this made Sebastian envious.

“I am so sorry. But please, please wake up... Magnus”, Alec called out to Magnus, repeatedly. He unbuttoned Magnus’ shirt to allow him to breathe easily.

“Seb...what are you doing in Alec’s trailer? I was looking everywhere for you. What the hell!”, Jace gushed in flaring his nostrils in anger. His breath hitched when he noticed the strange scent in the trailer. “Alec... I swear to God if...”, he glared. Alec was controlling his rage by now. Having another Alpha is such a close proximity to his Omega in heat was angering Alec in ways he didn’t realize was possible.

“Magnus is unwell... I am merely helping Alec.”, Sebastian shrugged, trying to divert Jace’s attention to himself.

“You don’t need to help Alec and his mate...”, Jace growled.

“Jace...you need to leave this trailer now... before I rip you apart into pieces. And swear to the Moon, I will.”, Alec warned, closing his eyes. He kept rubbing Magnus’ palms to keep himself calm, but it was becoming increasingly difficult.

“Babe... I’ll be out soon. Just go away for now. I’ll find you once I am done here. You trust me, don’t you?”, Sebastian cleared his throat. Jace sighed and mumbled a yes before heading out of the trailer. Alec calmed himself down and relaxed his breath. “Alec, I am really sorry about Jace. I am sure he meant no harm”, Sebastian explained.

“I am not done with you two... not yet, but if something happens to Magnus...”, Sebastian could see the fear in Alec’s eyes. “I’ll deal with the two of you later... If you’re really here to help, do that and leave us”, he added, patting Magnus’ cheek. Magnus’ was slowly regaining consciousness as the icepack reduced his temperature.

Magnus coughed out a few breaths a while later and his eyes rolled inside his lids. Alec’s eyes brightened, and he called out to Magnus again, hoping his fiancé would respond to him this time round. “Hey... hey! Wake up, Magnus. Wake up...”, the Alpha encouraged the man. Magnus swallowed saliva down his throat and tilted his head away in the other direction, struggling to wake up.

He mumbled something and gently parted his eyelids to finally open his eyes – much to Alec’s relief. He was confused and unaware of his surroundings. The trailer was illuminated with a lot of lights and Magnus’ pupils constricted and he squinted his eyes. His Adam’s apple bobbed, and his lips parted and closed again. “Alexander...”, he mumbled a few seconds later.

“Yes, I am here...”, Alec’s eyes welled up with tears as he cupped his mate’s face. “Oh my God, you scared me... I am here... Magnus, open your eyes, please...”, Alec pleaded as the man slowly regained awareness of the surroundings and opened his eyes. He took a deep breath and his
revolving gaze fixed on Alec.

“Alexander”, Magnus gulped again. He felt so tired and exhausted like he had been doing heavy lifting all day. Alec’s eyes gleamed with joy as he cupped Magnus’ face and pressed it in his neck, keeping him close to himself.

“You’re alright, thank God! I thought I lost you... stay awake... don’t you dare close your eyes on me again!”, he whispered, rubbing the back of Magnus’ head. Sebastian pulled back and saw Alec’s undying concern for his fiancé. Magnus’ hands slipped between Alec’s arms and wrapped around the Alpha’s back.

“I am alright. Stop worrying about me. You won’t get rid of me that easily, Alec Lightwood”, he whispered, reassuring Alec. Sebastian quietly stood up and reached Alec’s desk to grab the glass of water and Tylenol that Alec had set aside for when Magnus woke up. He came closer to the couple and cleared his throat.

“Who says I want to!”, Alec rolled his eyes, still holding on to his fiancé.

“Alec?”, the model called out to his former lover. Magnus’ eyes wandered to the source of the sound and his body stiffened as he recognized Sebastian. He immediately pulled away from his Alpha and eyed the Irish boy top to bottom.

Alec took the pills from his hand and offered it to Magnus. “Take this... it is going to get your fever down...”, Alec handed over the pill to Magnus while Sebastian gave him the glass of water.

Magnus wearily swallowed the pill with all the strength he had and then dropped back on Alec’s chest again, feeling like he couldn’t move a muscle.

“Thank you, for your help, Sebastian”, Alec cleared his throat. He hoped that the guy would take the message and leave them. And Alec was right. Sebastian gave him a soft nod and then turned around to leave the trailer. “Wait... I’ll walk you out...”, Alec shook his head and then looked at Magnus who gave him a nod. Pressing a kiss on Magnus’ forehead, Alec stood up from the couch and followed Sebastian outside.

“Thank you for what you did in there. I don’t know what I would have done if something...”, Alec placed his hands on his hip and gestured towards the trailer. His body shuddered at the thought that he could lose Magnus because of his carelessness. Sebastian smiled and placed his hand on Alec’s shoulder.

“I am glad I could help”, he said. Alec twitched awkwardly and moved away from Sebastian’s touch, forcing the guy to retract his hand. “I am sorry...”, he looked away. “Magnus is alright. You didn’t lose him”, the model reassured.

“No... it’s alright”, Alec waved his hand. “I’ll... I’ll see you at work tomorrow. Have a peaceful evening.”, Alec shrugged, and held out his hand. Sebastian looked at Alec in disbelief and smiled before shaking it.

“Yeah... yeah!”, he said. “Alec? Can... I... Can I say something if you don’t mind?”

Alec looked up and furrowed his brows.

“Magnus is a very lucky man”, Sebastian gulped. Alec shot a questioning look at his ex-boyfriend. “I’ve been on the receiving end of your undying love and attention and it’s truly the most wonderful feeling in the world, Alec. He’s a lucky man because you love him so much...”, Sebastian explained with moisture in his eyes.
Alec opened his mouth to protest that there were no feelings between the two of them but chose to not indulge in this conversation with Sebastian of all people. “And you’re lucky too... Magnus would do anything for you... it’s... truly amazing how much the two of you care for each other.”, he chuckled, as if he was speaking from the experience of something quite the opposite. “I am happy that you have someone like Magnus... he deserves you... and you deserve him...”, he added and walked away from Alec, leaving the man stare at nothingness.
Alec returned to the trailer thinking about Sebastian and his last words to him about Magnus. He couldn’t understand if Sebastian was right about him and his feelings. Magnus was a very important part of his life and not just because he was his mate and fiancé. He was someone Alec truly cared about and couldn’t fathom losing. There was no denial there. But he didn’t know if there were any non-platonic feelings involved between the two wolves. And that too so soon. They had been in New York for about 3 months now and it was really too early for Alec and Magnus to judge the nature of the existing bond between the newly engaged.

Magnus was sitting upright on the couch, examining his hands that were lying on his lap. His shirt looked wet with sweat which meant that his fever was coming down. He was slowly fiddling with his engagement ring that was adorning his painted ring finger. The Alpha furrowed his brows and neared Magnus. “Magnus, you ok?”, the man asked softly. Magnus snapped out of his thoughts for a second and looked up. He gave him a slight nod and looked away from him, possibly trying to avoid Alec’s gaze.

“Magnus?” , Alec asked again, this time, sitting down next to him. He squeezed Magnus’ hand to attract his attention.

“Sebastian...did he...”, Magnus looked at Alec.

“Did he what?”, Alec leaned on the backrest and shifted closer to his fiancé.

“Why was he in your trailer?”, Magnus swallowed. “Did I... did I do something wrong, Alec? What did he tell you about the conversation he and I had...? I shouldn’t have said anything to him. I don’t... it’s not my business. It is your life... I had no right to interfere... Alexander I am sorry”, Magnus sighed and looked away, hiding his shame and embarrassment.

“Magnus!”, Alec exclaimed in disbelief. “Hey, look at me? Stop thinking that...”, Alec turned Magnus’ face towards him by his chin. “You did nothing wrong... you hear me? You had every right to call Sebastian out and I am glad you did. You’re my fiancé... and you’ll be my husband one day... you, more than anyone, has that kind of right on me...”, Alec cupped his cheek. “But, he wasn’t here on that account. He wouldn’t dare...He was here to help me... help you get better. I wouldn’t have let him come near you or me... but I couldn’t lose you. That’s it! Nothing else.”, the Alpha assured. “I was so scared... watching you shiver and that fever, Magnus...”, Alec’s breath hitched as he recalled Magnus burning in fever. Magnus watched Alec panic over the memory and he wanted to pull the Alpha close and tell him that he was ok, and he wouldn’t leave him.

“I just... I am alright now...”, Magnus managed to say.

“There’s nothing in this world that would make me believe his word over yours. Do you get me? That’s a promise.”, Alec wrapped his arm around Magnus and pulled him closer. “That is how much I trust you. That’s how special and unique you are to me.”, he added, helping Magnus rest his head on Alec’s chest. “And I’ll do everything in my power to make you believe that... You don’t have to
be scared for yourself.”

Magnus squeezed his eyes shut and buried his face in Alec’s chest. He felt safe. He felt like he mattered to someone other than his family. Nobody had ever made Magnus believe that he had a chance at a real relationship, outside the boundaries of his second gender. He had had a few relationships before but none of them superseded the need for pleasure on both sides. Magnus wanted an Alpha and vice-versa. It was always a barter deal for him until he found Alec. For four months that Magnus had known Alec, the wolf never brought up the other side of their mating deal – the side of uniting their bodies to continue the Bane and Lightwood legacy in form of their offspring. It was a bitter side of the truth to their relationship, but Magnus was surprised when Alec never really found it consequential enough to discuss.

He remembered the first and the only time Magnus had spoken to Alec about it – it was very early on in their relationship when they had just settled in New York and Magnus was starting his job at the Plaza Hotel.

Magnus upped the sleeves of his shirt, unable to control his hunger. The day at the Plaza had been ridiculously hectic and he just needed food and a good night’s sleep. Earlier that day, Magnus had a conversation with Clary when she pointed out that their mother met a couple of Omegas for a society meeting that day, and some of the members questioned her about Magnus and his chances of conceiving Alec’s kids, now that they were practically staying together. Clary didn’t want to tell this to Magnus, but he read her face as soon as he saw her on the video call.

This was something that would have inevitably come up in conversation with the photographer sooner or later, but Magnus decided to have a clear stand on the issue before they began adjusting in the new city.

“Sooner or later, people will start talking... ill mostly. I thought we could talk about it and get the confusion off this table. I mean, that’s if you...are...”, Magnus dropped the slice of carrot he was holding on his plate. Alec was sitting on the opposite side of the kitchen island, chewing his piece of carrot.

“I have no issues talking discussing it... but that’s what people do Magnus. They talk... about whatever rubbish they hear, and we really can’t stop them... but we can’t let those things get to us either...”, Alec rolled his eyes and looked at the Omega.

“It’s not all just about me... or my family. I hope you know that? They’ll question your Alpha-ness, your inability to subdue your Omega and your inefficacy in giving an Heir to the Lightwood and the Bane packs...? Your family will be scrutinized as much as mine will be...”, Magnus swallowed, waiting for Alec’s reaction.

“Like I said... I don’t care. Those people are not the ones trying to figure out what it means for two strangers like us to be engaged to each other and what it means to be mated to another wolf. It’s us who have to do that. Us and our families who have to learn to adjust to this new-found relationship. Therefore, we’re the only two people allowed to make decisions about things that affect us... nobody else”, he pointed out, as a matter-of-factly.

“As much as I agree with you... that is not how our community works and you know it? This is precisely what bothers me about the Clave and its ways along with it’s fraudulent claims of wanting to maintain the richness of our community when all it wants is that the wolves and the packs submit to it and follow the age-old customs blindly”, Magnus sounded bitter as he spoke of the High Council that governed the way the packs lived in Idris. “And the last thing I want is you and your
“Do hell with the Clave, Magnus. I don’t care what stupid rules they make. They’ll never make me follow any of their ‘age-old’ custom no matter how hard they try. This is not how my parents brought me up. And you know it, don’t you? You know I would never ask you to do something you’re not comfortable with. And I stand by my statement”, Alec waved his hand.

“I know”, Magnus smiled, softly. “I can’t imagine you forcing anything on me...that is not who you are... and I am not questioning your morals and your bringing up...”, he added. “But we can’t change the community that we belong to and we live in... and you are my fiancé, Alexander. I am allowed to be concerned about you... and your family’s reputation... because they are going to be my family one day too”

“As long as you believe me and have faith in my ideas... the rest of the High Council can go fuck themselves”, the boy shrugged, dramatically. Magnus’ eyes crinkled as he smiled. “I won’t stop you from caring about me or being concerned about me... you’re allowed to do that... just know that the vice-versa should also be applicable.”, the Alpha winked.

“Okay, let’s keep that aside and discuss something else, shall we?... have you ever...?”, Magnus took a deep breath. “You know... tried to...”

“Tried to what?”, Alec arched a brow, dropping his fork on the plate.

“Have you ever thought about having kids... someday?? Or what it would be like to have your children one day and a family... I mean. I am sure the thought must have crossed your mind before...? Especially when you know you’re going to head a new pack eventually?”, Magnus blurted out, looking away immediately to avoid looking right in Alec’s eyes.

Alec took a deep breath and picked his fork back up. “I have... as a matter of fact”, the Alpha answered.

“Mm...”, Magnus gulped.

“But who wouldn’t want to have children one day...? They make you whole... and they’re your family, so why not?”, Alec chuckled. “You tell me? Do you want to have kids one day?”, he asked.

“Want...?”, Magnus rolled his eyes, releasing a scoff. “I always thought it was a given for me... considering I am an Omega. I will HAVE to conceive an Alpha’s litter someday... I didn’t think I had a choice or a say in that matter...”, he added.

“You’ll always have a choice Magnus... you’re your own person. You get to decide whether or not you want to start a family of your own. Whether or not you’re ready for that kind of commitment. It’s important for you to have your mind in it whenever you wish to go ahead with it. You’re the one who has to take care of them before they enter this world... and it has to be your choice.”, Alec whispered softly. “It has to be both our decision to start a family... if and when it happens”, he said and dug back into his food.

Magnus stared as his fiancé ate his dinner and excused himself to take a shower and change before crashing onto the bed.

He had a choice.

Alec had said it himself.
“Do you want to go back home yet? Everyone else in the crew has left. Most of them, actually...”, Alec mumbled, shaking Magnus’ shoulder slightly. Magnus swallowed and looked up, placing his palm on Alec’s chest for support. He nodded and smiled, pulling himself away from the photographer to stand up on his feet and walk towards the car. Alec slipped his hand around Magnus’ waist and helped him in the process, holding his other hand tightly in a fist as they got up from the couch and proceeded towards the gate.

They trudged their way to Alec’s Volvo and Magnus dropped on the front seat, out of breath and strength as soon as they reached. Alec fastened the seatbelt on his fiancé and went back to his side to start the engines while Magnus connected his phone to the stereo system and put on some music as they hit the road.

“I will stay back home tomorrow”, Magnus mumbled as they took to the main road.

“Why would you do that?”, Alec turned his head towards Magnus and looked at him for a second before taking his eyes back on the road.

“You could hardly work today. I was such a big nuisance to you and the other crew members. They’re sweet people but...”, Magnus stretched himself and flinched as his muscles ached. “People on set will start talking, Alexander...”

“Talking about what?”

“About how their photographer’s fiancé bothers them at work every day. I don’t have any business being here other than being a massive pain in your ass and I can’t accept it. I won’t have your colleagues hating me...”, Magnus chuckled, picking up a bottle of water and opening the cap. He gulped down a large draught of water down his throat.

“Let them... if they can’t see you’re sick... it’s their bloody problem, not mine...or yours... You’re my family... and that’s my trailer. You can do whatever the hell you want to do there.”, the Alpha shrugged. “Besides, I won’t be at peace until you’re right in front of my eyes so that I can take care of you, mister. So, you’re coming with me... and that’s that. That’s where this conversation ends. And I won’t hear another word.”, Alec waved his palm in the air and Magnus understood that he couldn’t argue further.

They slowly reached their apartment building and Alec left Magnus on the doorway and went ahead to park the car. Magnus went to main lobby and took the elevator to their apartment and Alec followed him behind.

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“Mom and Dad want you in Idris for their 25th wedding anniversary party”, Izzy squealed as Alec picked up his phone. The man was parking his Volvo in the apartment building parking area while he spoke to his sister.

“Calm down... tell me again?”, Alec asked, flustered.

“I know you and Magnus aren’t supposed to be back until next month. But Mom and Dad are celebrating their wedding anniversary after a really long time and they’d love it if you can make it to the party. It is going to be a huge one for Idris. All the Council members and their families are in attendance”, she gasped for breath.

“Ok... well that depends on whether or not Magnus gets an off. He has already taken 2 days off because of his heat...”
“Oh... okay, I didn’t know. Of course, Magnus should stay and continue his work. That’s why the both of you are in New York. I just thought that it would be nice if you and Magnus could make it. Mom really misses you. She doesn’t say it out loud, but I know it.”, Alec felt uneasiness in Izzy’s voice but like she said, it could have been her missing Alec.

“I know Izzy. I miss her too but she gotta understand that I am working on a project and I need to be here full-time. So does Magnus”, Alec reasoned.

“She could really use her son right now... you know...”, Izzy answered absent mindedly. A moment of silence befell the conversation until the girl realized her mistake and gasped, covering the phone’s receiver to prevent Alec from hearing anything further.

“Izzy, is everything ok there? Are you not telling me something I should know?”, Alec’s breath hitched in his throat as he realized that Izzy may have slipped a certain detail that she might have not intended to.

“Yes... everything is fine. It’s just, our parents, Alec. They miss you and they could really use all their kids around them for that party... it is their big 25th anniversary party and they will cherish this moment forever. So, I thought that it would be nice if all of us managed to make it to the event?”, she sighed, pulling herself together.

“Izzy, you know I get it when you’re trying to keep something from me... you aren’t exactly the best liar we have in our family...”, Alec rolled his eyes, locking the car on his way up to his apartment. Izzy always stuttered when she was trying to hide something or lie, especially to Alec. He always saw right through her.

“Alec... it’s nothing. Trust me”

“Izzy, its not nothing... tell me what is going on? Are they alright? Is Max alright? Did something happen with the Council... or the Clave?”, Alec rubbed his temple.

“I can’t tell you... because there’s nothing to tell”

“Isabelle Sophia Lightwood”, Alec mumbled, raising his voice in fury. “You know I can hear right through your fear-laden voice... and you’re hiding something from me. I can sense it.”

“I can’t...”, Izzy breathed heavily on the phone. “It’s not my place to say. I promised mom that I won’t trouble you with this but... it’s getting out of hand lately and before something bad happens... I don’t know Alec. I should have kept my mouth shut, like I promised Mom but... God I am so stupid!””, the Alpha heard her swallow hard on the phone. “I just... we all need you. Mum and Dad more than anyone else... I am scared. I can’t do this alone...”

“I’ll be there as soon as I can, Iz. Let me talk to Magnus... and I’ll see if he can make some time out... alright?”, Alec pushed the door of his apartment open and found Magnus heating chicken and noodles that they’d packed on their way back home to avoid cooking dinner after such a long day at work.

Magnus heard the door open and turned around to face a cheerful Alec but instead saw the man rubbing his temple and sounding disturbed and tensed as he walked up and down their living room. The Omega stopped whatever he was doing and walked around the kitchen island to join Alec and offer his help.

“Don’t tell Mom about all of this. She’ll skewer me if she found out that I blabbered all of this in front of you. You weren’t supposed to know. I promised her that I would not tell you a damn thing.
Promise me Alec!”, Alec could hear the sadness and fear in her voice and it bothered him.

“I won’t... I promise. But, you keep me updated ok? Whatever happens? I’ll try and spin things here so that I can make it to Idris... for a while. But I can’t promise anything, alright? I have signed a contract with Vogue and I need to see what I can do about it. But, you promise to stay strong. You have to take care of Max and Mom for me...? And Dad...”, he said, definitely.

Magnus furrowed his brows and leaned closer, wrapping an arm around Alec’s waist as he sensed some tension building up in his fiancé. Alec let out the breath he was holding and pressed his forehead on Magnus’ hair, dropping his weight on the Omega. “Dad would never accept that he is upset or tensed, and it will eat him inside. So, don’t let him mope all alone. Ok?”

“I will. Mom sent Max to Dublin. You don’t worry about him. He’s doing ok there with Grandma and Grandpa...”, Izzy swallowed. “Dad is holding up fine for now... but I understand what you’re saying and I’ll keep a check”

“Ok good”, Alec sighed in relief. “Take care of yourself too!”

“You don’t worry too much, Alec. I will take as much care as I can... but you just... try...ok?”, the she-wolf admitted, defeat bubbling in her words.

“I will... little one... I will”, Alec faked a smile.

“Ok, I gotta go... alright? Clary’s coming over for a night-in... and I have to clean the room. It’s such a huge mess and she hates it”, the girl tried to lighten up Alec’s mood. Alec’s gaze fell on Magnus as soon as he heard Clary’s name and found Magnus unusually smiling.

“Ok... I love you?”

Alec cut the call and turned his torso completely in Magnus’ direction. He dropped his head on Magnus’ shoulder and buried his face in the crook of his neck. Magnus gently trailed his palm on Alec’s back and started rubbing it up and down, making soothing patterns to calm Alec down. Alec was glad that Magnus didn’t demand any explanation whatsoever and just offered the comfort he so clearly needed at that point.

Something was organically changing between the two of them and before today, Alec wouldn’t have realized it. However, his little chat with Sebastian forced him to look at himself and Magnus through a third-person’s eye and it was very clear. There was a deep connection that the two shared. It was beyond the norms of romance and soulmates. It was inherently coded in them. This emotion, far stronger than friendship and love combined, made the two strong and vulnerable, both at the same time.

“Do you want to talk about it over dinner? With some food and wine maybe?”, Magnus mumbled, a few minutes later after Alec’s breathing pattern relaxed. Alec let out a deep breath and nuzzled closer in Magnus’ neck.

“That is a good idea. I am starving”, he sighed.

“I figured”, Magnus pulled away and cupped Alec’s cheek. “Whatever it is, everything will be ok in the end. Alright? We’ll get through it together...one step at a time”, he stroked the Alpha’s cheekbone gently and the man smiled, leaning in to rest his cheek on Magnus’ palm. He nodded and closed his eyes swallowing the lump in his throat.

“I hope so...”, Alec let out a defeated sigh and tightened his grip around his Magnus’ shoulder, pressing his head back in Magnus’ neck to hug him again. They stayed there, locked in each other’s
arms for some time until Alec felt ok enough to walk to their bedroom and change his clothes, before coming back to join Magnus for dinner.

The environment was awfully quiet as Magnus set the table and poured wine in two glasses while waiting for Alec to join him. The man came out wearing a loose black hoodie and track pants. His hair smelt of sandalwood shampoo that belonged to Magnus, but the latter chose to not comment on it.

“Mom and Dad are going through some sort of an issue back in Alicante... and it has Izzy dejected to her core. I have never seen that girl so helpless before.”, Alec spoke up, playing with the pieces of chicken on his plate and rotated the noodle strands with his fork. Magnus was nibbling his food, waiting for Alec to start talking.

“What kind of an issue? If I may?” Magnus swallowed the bolus in his mouth. He could hear Isabelle through the phone and she indeed sounded like she was finding it hard to hide something from Alec and yet, desperately needed his help.

“Izzy wouldn’t tell me. She says that it isn’t her secret to tell and that I should ask Mom about it...”, Alec sighed, playing with his food. “In fact, our mother is the one who asked Izzy to not tell this to anyone... especially me...”

“How would you ask your mother about it, Alexander? If you’re not supposed to know that is? Don’t you think Isabelle would get into trouble for it.”, Magnus leaned in, trying to comprehend the situation.

“According to Izzy, I would understand everything as soon as I reach Alicante... and therefore, she wants me to come back for a few days and spend time with them. It is anyway their 25th anniversary next week and she suggested that it would be a good thing for all of us to come together and mom won’t be suspicious of why I came to Alicante. She’ll think that I am attending the party...”, Alec stuffed his mouth with a fork full of noodles.

“If she is right about this issue and about wanting you to be present, then we should definitely go and attend the party...”, Magnus popped the offer. “If your family needs your help, you should be there for them.”

“You have work, Magnus... and so do I. I cannot waive the contract I signed with Vogue. It will incur huge losses on both our parts... And Luke... he has been more than gracious about your heat cycles, but I doubt he’ll appreciate these frequent leaves of absences. I cannot ask you to risk your career for this. You’ve barely begun setting your foot down in New York.”

“I could ask Luke and he’d be okay with it, if I mention why I am going or taking a holiday. But, I suppose you’re right and you’ve got a point. This wouldn’t look so good on my part. It has only been three months since I started working at the Plaza and I have already asked too many favors...”, Magnus sighed, putting his fork down. “But, you could go right? If you ask Vogue about it...? And if they allow you to take the next weekend off...”, the man suggested.

“And you?”, Alec widened his eyes.

“I’ll stay back here. It won’t be forever right – just three days. You’ll be back by the time this weekend is over and I can manage 3 days without you... I am not so helpless, Alexander”, Magnus deadpanned, staring down Alec’s throat.

“No, you’re not. You’re very capable of holding your post. But... I cannot leave you alone in the city. With Luke’s pack hovering around you. I would not have single night of peaceful sleep
knowing you’re around them…”, Alec argued.

“I can keep myself safe. It is just three days... 2 of which... I will be working full time. Also, I think we’ve well established that Luke’s pack means everything but danger to us. But, if you’re so worried, I could take up overtime at the Hotel so that I can take an off later... don’t worry about me. I could also ask Cat to stay over for one night. There are literally so many options I can choose from but you... You should go and help your sister take care of whatever is going on in Idris”, Magnus extended his hand and placed it over Alec’s. He gently squeezed it.

Alec looked up at Magnus who was staring at him. Those dark brown eyes were flickering with a slight tinge of pain, owing to Magnus’ current physical state and yet they were bright and sunny. They were emitting comfort and love with every blink and flicker.

“I am not so sure about leaving you here. You may have been to other cities in the world but not New York. This place is vicious for people who are new... it’ll consume you... like it did me..”, Alec shook his head, words coming out of his mouth without his approval.

“I’ll be fine. You trust me, right? You think I am capable enough right? To hold my post?”, Magnus arched his brows and Alec nodded. “Well then I can hold myself up for two days.”, he said, as a matter-of-factly.

“Are you certain?”, Alec asked again.

“I am”, Magnus smiled, assuring Alec.

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The sound of boots clanking on the wooden steps of the hallway alerted Izzy and she hurried to clean her room. She hadn’t seen Clary in an awfully long time, because of whatever was going on at home. She was first busy preparing Max for his relocation to Dublin and then, hiding the secrets from Alec and Clary. To be honest, she wouldn’t have agreed for this sleepover if Clary hadn’t insisted and Izzy hadn’t been very good with refusing any of Clary’s requests. She was the one-person Izzy could never say no to.

They were supposed to eat Pizza together first... and Clary was supposed to bring that and a new bottle of wine and then, the two had planned on watching something on Netflix together, dressed in their favorite cartoon onesies and cuddling in their bed on this very rainy night in Idris.

“Hey there, stranger! It feels like I should reintroduce myself. Hello, Isabelle Lightwood... myself Clarissa Morgenstern Bane. It’s so nice to meet you... again...”, Clary chimed, holding the door of Izzy’s room open and leaning on the frame. Izzy sighed in relief as she heard Clary and walked right into her arms, encircling her own around the Alpha redhead.

“Clary...”, she breathed out, relaxing as Clary’s warm-self enveloped her in her blanket of comfort. “Hi...”

“Hi...”, Clary softly whispered, taken aback by the tightness of the hug. She nuzzled her head in Izzy’s black tresses and took a whiff, taking in the scent of her favorite wolf. “Everything ok there? I just taunted you for not meeting me more often and you completely ignored that...”, she gently stroked the back of Izzy’s hair with her palm.

“Yeah...”, Izzy panicked, plastering a smile on her face. “I am just so glad to see you... it has been so long, Ms Morgenstern”, she rolled her big and beautiful eyes.

“It has...”, Clary sighed, her painted fingers playing with the Beta’s tresses. “I thought I lost my only
sane friend in Idris”, she rolled her eyes.

“You didn’t... I’ve just been busy planning the party for Mum and Dad... and it’s my fault though... I should have stayed in touch. Let me make up for it today!”, Izzy smiled weakly, grabbing the pizza case from Clary’s hand and pulling her into her room. They changed into their cartoon onesies and had the pizza putting on the latest episode of Grey’s Anatomy.

They were tucked into their respective pillows, clutching onto their blanket when Izzy noticed Clary staring at her while she watched the show.

“You know... the television is there. Stop staring at me, Clary. You’ll bear holes in my perfect skin... shoo”, she lifted her chin up to gesture in the direction of the television. Clary scoffed and looked away.

“You know...”, Clary imitated the Lightwood girl. “I can tell when you’re being cryptic about something. And right now, something is bothering you... and you won’t let me know about it, right?”, she arched a brow.

Izzy looked between her fingers that were clutching her blanket and Clary who was waiting for an explanation. She couldn’t hide this news from her best friend, but she had given her word to her mother that no matter what happened, she wouldn’t drag anyone else into this... not even Alec, her brother... and the eldest child of the family. Not until Alec came home and figured out the rest on his own.

“You don’t have to tell me... if you don’t want to... yet? Tell me whenever you feel ok talking about it... alright? But... just for the record...”, the redhead spoke up before Izzy could muster courage and make a coherent response. “Assure me that whatever the issue is... you’ll be ok? You won’t hurt yourself...”, she added... squeezing Izzy’s hand.

“I will be...”, Izzy looked at her with wide eyes and nodded. “As long as I have people like you and Alec with me... I’ll be ok!”, she said.

Clary extended her arms and pulled Isabelle in a hug. “Always... little wolf... always...”, she assured the girl. Izzy sighed in relief, knowing that she is not alone.

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Magnus came out of the washroom later that night after taking a shower and changing out of his clothes from the day into a comfortable pair of pajamas and hoodie. Alec was sitting on the bed, with his legs sprawled out over the duvet and his laptop open on his lap. He looked up Magnus as the latter walked around rubbing his wet hair with a towel. A small understanding smile was what Magnus got from his Alpha and it made his insides jump with joy. He looked down at the floor and scoffed, rubbing the back of his head – a habit he had picked up from Alec during their little on-going adventure in New York.

“I sent an email to Jem asking them if they could meet me at a convenient time. I don’t think it would be appropriate for me to just email them if I am going to take an off from this project”, he spoke up, while Magnus got ready for work.

“That’s a good move, Alexander. I really hope they would approve of this. I don’t see why they shouldn’t. Even Sebastian took an off for the weekend and they did the switch gladly.”, Magnus pressed his lips together and slipped out his tongue to lick his lips.

“I hope so too.”, Alec smiled softly, again. “Enough about me... How...how are you feeling right
now? You don’t seem very jittery and unresponsive. Not as much as in the afternoon?”, Alec dropped on his elbow and leaned towards Magnus’ side of the bed as he waited for his fiancé. Magnus joined him on the bed after applying his lip balm and moisturizer and hummed in response.

“It usually comes and goes like this, Alexander. The heat is never continuous. I am glad that I feel good right now...but who knows. This heat is actually so selfish that it doesn’t even let me know when it’s going to attack next. It has a thing for catching me by surprise…”, Magnus scoffed and reached out to the edge of the blanket to pull it up. He slipped under the blanket and placed his head on his palm facing upwards on the pillow.

Alec pressed a comforting kiss on Magnus’ forehead. “You must be tired... so go to sleep. Wake me up if you need me or if your heat decides to knock at your door. Otherwise, I’ll see you in the morning. Good night, Magnus”, he whispered near Magnus’ forehead after the kiss and slipped out to leave the bed and sleep on the couch. However, he was stopped by his fiancé who grabbed his fist to keep him from leaving.

“Stay with me...”, Magnus whispered. Alec looked at his wrist being held on the bed by Magnus’ hand and then at Magnus who was looking at him with wide eyes. “I don’t want to sleep alone on this huge bed.”, he pouted.

“But...your...”, Alec said, exasperated.

“It’s ok. I don’t want you to sleep on that uncomfortable couch where your ankles hang out and your hand is almost always, brushing the ground”, he tapped Alec’s cheek and winked. Alec took a deep breath and nodded. He spread out his own blanket and settled next to Magnus, turning off the side-table lamps. Magnus heaved a sigh in relief and hugged his pillow, pulling himself closer to Alec. The Alpha’s back was turned towards Magnus and the latter could guess that something was going on in Alec’s head.

Alexander

Alec heard Magnus’ voice like his conscience, at the back of his head and he shot his eyes open. He mumbled a loud “Mm...”, to inform Magnus that he was awake and listening to him. His hands were tightly curled around the edge of the blanket.

*Talk to me... you know I can feel you...*

Alec shifted nervously and clutched his blanket harder. There was silence on the other side of their thoughts as Magnus waited for an answer.

*I have been a bad son... and an even worse brother...*

Alec thought, a couple of seconds later.

*No, you haven’t...*

Magnus protested, placing his hand on Alec’s shoulder and rubbing the palm up and down his bicep as he spoke.

*I should have spoken to them more often. How could I miss something like this? What if it is really bad... and I cannot fix it... even if I try and it’s too late? I should have spoken to them more often... I should have just...noticed the signs...*

Alec dug his head in his pillow and shut his eyes, squeezing the lids onto each other.
You cannot think like that. The important thing is, your family is ok for now. Nothing is damaged beyond repair... And you are in a position to do something about whatever the problem is. Turn around... look at me...

Magnus tapped Alec’s upper arms and waited. Alec turned around in his blanket to face Magnus and his soothing smile.

Better late than never, Alexander. You maybe right about missing the signs earlier, but you are able to see them now... right?

I was so wound up in my worries and thinking about how Izzy will react if she hears about Sebastian and Jace that I didn’t speak to them altogether... how selfish could I be, Magnus? I don’t know what Mum and Dad must be going through right now...

Magnus saw Alec’s eyes glistening and his heart ached.

You weren’t being selfish. You were looking out for Isabelle and your parents and it isn’t a selfish act. Far from it...

“What if?”, Alec shook his head in worry.

“No... stop, Alec...”, Magnus raised his voice and pressed his index finger on Alec’s finger. “Everything is alright for now. There’s no question of what if. And you weren’t being selfish. This is real life, Alec. There’s nothing black or white about it. There are grey areas, the shady ones where you have to bend the rules of right and wrong and accept whatever is in a higher proportion.”, Magnus sighed, leaning closer to Alec.

“You were right in not telling them too much about Sebastian. They would have worried about your well-being more than they should have because they’re your parents. And in that process, you missed out on this. Ok. You’ll do better next time. You’ll keep this error in mind. You’ll be a better person... a wiser one the next time. Because you’ll learn from this situation. You’ll grow... as an individual... and that’s how the curve should be...”

“What if I am too late this time...?”, Alec mumbled, his voice choking.

“If there’s anyone who can make the complication of this situation work, it is you!”, Magnus craned his neck up and pressed a kiss on his forehead. “In the end... you’ll do what’s best and right for your family. I know you, Alexander Lightwood. You’ll break the very ground you stand on...to make something right!”

Alec looked up at Magnus’ face which was hovering right above his eyes. Both of his fiancé’s hands were on either side of his head, holding it and stroking the cheekbone with his delicate thumbs. Alec curled his fingers around Magnus’ wrist and caressed it all the way up to meet his palm.

“Thank you...for letting me sleep next to you tonight. I don’t think I could have slept alone”, Alec closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

“I know...”, Magnus gave him a lopsided yet soft smile and pulled himself down to settle on Alec’s chest and inserted his neck in the space between Alec’s pillow and his neck. Alec spread his arm out and wrapped it around Magnus’ back, pulling him closer. Magnus’ hand slipped down to Alec’s waist and settled there for the night.

“We’ll deal with this... don’t worry Alec. I am with you. Every step of the way...”, Magnus assured, playing with the hem of Alec’s tshirt.
“I am counting on that”, Alec smiled, kissing Magnus’ forehead again.
“Listen... so I was thinking that I will join you on your set in the latter half of the day?”, Magnus suggested the next morning, as he stood in front of the mirror spraying perfume over himself. Alec was standing right next to him, adjusting his shirt and applying cologne on his wrists and letting it soak in his veins.

“And what would you do during the first half?”, Alec arched his brow, picking up his belt to tighten his jeans. They were supposed to go to Alec’s photoshoot together so that Alec could keep an eye on Magnus’ health.

“I would go back to the hotel and do at least half a day of work?”, Magnus shrugged, adjusting his collar that had folded inside. Alec had noticed Magnus taking an early shower this morning and wearing his white button-up shirt from his work, but he assumed that Magnus was dressing up to accompany him on set and not thinking about going back to work after passing out from a fever less than twelve hours ago.

“Absolutely not!!”, Alec raised his voice, stopping his grooming midway and turned to Magnus. “You can barely hold that kohl stick in your hand...”, he came forward and stood in front of the man, barely inches apart from him. And, by the Moon, Alec was right. Magnus’ hands were shivering, and he could not hold the kohl stick firmly without dropping it on the ground, let alone using it to draw strokes on his eyelids.

Magnus took a deep breath and then looked away as the stench of his Alpha saturated his lungs. Alec had come too close too fast for Magnus to prepare himself. The Omega was still on the peak of his heat and Alec was his bonded mate. The reminder had been sudden and threw him off his tracks. He took a short step back and swallowed, unable to get the lingering sense of Alec’s scent from his nostrils. The blood in his veins rose to his cheeks and his head – with his carotid artery throbbing strong pulses that Magnus could hear with his heightened senses.

Alec realized the struggle that Magnus was facing and gently pulled away from the Omega, giving him space and air to breathe. “I don’t...”, he stammered wishing that he could say sorry for this sudden intrusion in Magnus’ personal space, “...all I am trying to say is that... it wouldn’t be such a good idea to exhaust yourself so soon...”, he managed to say. “It has barely been what... two days now...right?”, Alec questioned. Magnus took a deep breath and looked at Alec. “Let the symptoms settle for another day and then...?”, he advised.

“Yeah...but...”, Magnus shook his head, not convinced by Alec’s suggestion. “Sitting at home and in your trailer is killing me. I don’t know if I can do it anymore, you know?”, he confessed, looking away from the Alpha wolf.

“Why not?”, Alec widened his eyes and closed the distance between the two, regardless of the foul play of stenches that governed their senses. “Magnus... did someone say something to you? On set... any crew... cast? Sebastian? I swear to God I will rip him apart if he did... did Jace...?”, his concerns rose as he raised his hands and cupped the Omega’s face between both his hands. Magnus looked up and furrowed his brows.

“Of course not?”, he said, surprised at the conclusion. He chuckled at the sudden assumption that Alec had drawn from his decision to go back to work. “Why would you... no it’s not that. Everyone
has been super amazing. Especially Tessa and Jem... but my concerns are different.”, Magnus added, gaining Alec’s full attention. “And they have nothing to do with you... or your trailer or the amazing crew you work with... which doesn’t include those two assholes because... they’re assholes...”, Magnus rolled his eyes.

“Then…”, Alec pressed his lips together, perplexed.

“I woke up this morning, ready to join you on set…”, Magnus interrupted and began to explain. “And then I realized something. This heat of mine...this will happen every four months... and thrice a year... and if I give in to it... if I lose in front of it, I lose the chance to become someone different than what this society expects me to be – which is a wolf-making machine... an Omega”, he elaborated, curling his fingers around Alec’s wrist.

“You’re not giving in Magnus…?”, Alec widened his pupils.

“But I am. You see, I can’t stop working for a living just because I am sick. And this heat... is not me being sick. It’s me being absolutely healthy and so, I should behave like that. No matter what happens, this cycle is going to repeat itself and therefore, I should learn to live my life through it the same way as I live it when the heat is not there. And, it’s never too late to start…”, he said, becoming aware of his words and their possible effect on Alec.

“That’s where you’re sorta wrong...not completely though”, Alec rebutted, albeit very gently. “This cycle that you go through... heat that we call it... this is not something that makes you or your gender weak. It makes you all the stronger coz God knows I couldn’t handle all that pain and mood swings. But you do it because you can. And I know you know this... and also understand this, somewhere deep down in your mind because I’ve told you this plenty of times…”, Alec winked, lightening the mood. Magnus rolled his eyes and squinted at the Alpha. Alec pursed his lips and mouthed just kidding. Alec had always been very careful with his words but lately, Magnus had begun to realize that he was overall a very charming personality – full of witty words and carefully curated thoughts that looked after everyone’s needs.

“My point is... that sometimes, even the strongest one of us needs help... and when they do, they should ask for it. It’s just as simple.”, Alec lifted his shoulders up in a jerk. “So, me helping you... or you asking for it... doesn’t make you weak or helpless Magnus.”, he comforted the Omega. Magnus looked up at Alec and narrowed his brows, anticipating his Alpha’s next words. He knew that Alec would say something that Magnus least expected.

“It makes you aware. Of yourself and your needs. And being self-aware is the biggest strength anyone can possibly have.”, he added with a shake of his head. “How many of us can honestly stand up today and say that I have a mental health issue and I need help from someone because I can’t do this alone? We can’t. The strongest of us can’t...but we should... right? At least you are able to stand up to me and tell me that you need me to hold you... and that is not because you’re incapable of doing it yourself... it’s just that it will be easier for you if someone aided you with it.”, Magnus smiled and looked down at the floor, unable to control his emotions. “Asking for help is the strongest thing someone can do... Magnus... and realizing that you might need it... is even stronger than that! So believe me when I tell you, you’re the strongest person that I am fortunate enough of knowing... and even more so, being engaged to spend the rest of my life with you... I am truly lucky”, and that was it. Magnus’ eyes were poking out of his lids and were tearing up. Alec Lightwood, an Alpha wolf had just declared how lucky he was to have Magnus as his partner.

He had himself been very lucky to have someone like Alec in his life. Not everyone in their community had been fortunate enough to meet someone who wanted nothing out of their partner but an undying promise of friendship and mutual respect and admiration. Alec had done that for him. No
conditions involved. No expectations involved. As Magnus stared into Alec’s hazel orbs, he wanted to hug him... and to be honest, kiss him right on his lips. Alec’s lips were soft and pink... and still looked moist as his tongue slipped out and did the work. Magnus shook the thoughts away and nodded. He felt like expressing his gratitude for those words, but the man was too overwhelmed to form a coherent sentence in his mind.

“I still think that I am capable enough of working at least half a day today. Not more than that I promise. But I am dying to get back to my job, Alexander...”, Magnus protested, as he gathered his ability to speak. Alec rolled his eyes and smiled.

“Fine. Go... do your job! Have it your way, you stubborn man...”, he scoffed, letting Magnus go. “But there are rules for this alright...?”, he said, crossing his hands on his chest. Magnus sucked his cheeks in and pouted, patiently listening to the Alpha. “First - You check in with me... every hour on the hour...”

“Ok...doable?”, Magnus shrugged, pretending to be disinterested in the whole deal.

“Second – As soon as your shift is halftime at lunch, you’ll rush to my set and have a nice and tight nap in my trailer.”, Alec curved his lips upwards and smiled. “Because if I see you tired or exhausted... or worse, passing out with fever...”, he shuddered at the thought.

“Fine...”, Magnus squinted his eyes and a lopsided grin appeared on his face. Alec took a deep breath and nodded. Magnus understood that the Alpha was still not convinced with letting Magnus go for work but one of the best things about Alec was, he let the people around him make their own decisions without pressing his own opinions on them.

Both of them went back to getting ready for work. Magnus made a quick call to Raphael, his senior officer, informing him that he would be coming in for half a day of work. After that, he fished out oats and cereal from the supply cabinet and heated some milk while Alec did a quick workup on the theme for his shoot, sipping the coffee that he had picked out for Magnus and himself on the way back from his morning run to burn off his Alpha steam. Apart from the slight discomfort from being around Magnus during his heat, Alec was doing fine with controlling his urges.

“Your cereals”, Magnus offered a bowl with Alec’s favorite cereals and placed a jar of milk in front of him. Alec smiled softly and quickly glanced at the man before looking away to his laptop. Magnus sighed. Alec’s concerns for his safety were spread all over the Alpha’s face. “I’ll be alright, Alexander. You don’t have to look so miserable and worried...”, Magnus chortled, sitting down on his side of the kitchen island and pulling his bowl of cereals.

“Who says I am worried?”, Alec deflected.

“Your face, your eyes... your thoughts... the way you’re violently typing on the laptop even though I know there’s nothing there to be angry about... you’re just tweeting and retweeting...”, Magnus tilted his head to one side and arched a brow. Alec tongued his cheek internally on one side and looked away, hiding his ok-you-caught-me face. “I know you, Alexander Lightwood. You can’t pretend to be anything in front of me... I can see right through your drama...”, Magnus reassured with a click of his tongue.

“I won’t stop you from going to work today”, Alec defended himself, raising his palms up in the air. “No matter how much it bothers me...”, he added.

Magnus blushed, yeah... Magnus Bane blushed and nodded. Alec Lightwood was a keeper of the promises he made. He hummed a reply and dived into his food so that he could reach the hotel in time. They ate their breakfast in peace and then Magnus got up to put the bowls in the dishwasher
while Alec retreated to their sleeping area to pick up his bag and other essentials. Magnus took out two brown packets and placed his and Alec’s lunch in those. Waking up early that morning had enabled the Omega to take control of the kitchen and beat Alec to making breakfast for the two of them, as per usual.

Alec came back holding his backpack in his hand and a different brown packet. “Here’s a bag of the tea that Luke asked me to give you... drink it as soon as you reach the Plaza... preferably hot. I don’t want you developing a sore throat after all this is over...”, Alec informed Magnus as the latter joined him with the food packets. “And there’s a new packet of Tylenol. I will call Catarina and ask her to keep a check on you. If you ever feel fever rising up... you take this... no matter how fine you feel...”, he informed with raised brows.

“Anything else, mom...”, Magnus rolled his eyes. Alec scorned at Magnus and then rolled his eyes grinning.

“Magnus if anything happens...”, Alec hyperventilated and waved his hands. “You have to promise me...”, he shook his head.

“I’ll tell you. I promise you. Stop worrying about me. ”, Magnus closed the distance between him and Alec. Alec was half sitting on the edge of the kitchen island. Magnus placed his palms on Alec’s chest and stopped between both of Alec’s legs that were spread apart. “It is just a few hours and I have to slowly get back to my job... alright? Y’think Cat would let me be of any use if she sees me panicking and... the first person she’ll notify will be you... not Luke... or Raphael... you! So, calm down.”, he assured the Alpha. Alec looked away and then pulled out the Volvo’s keys out his pocket and handed it over to the Omega.

“Take it...”, he offered. Magnus sighed and took the keys.

“If this keeps you from worrying about me... I will... most definitely.”, Magnus said, taking the keys from Alec’s hand. He picked his food packet and turned around to leave as Alec stared at him, following his tracks. He stopped at the door and took a deep breath. Alexander. He squealed his name in his thoughts. Alexander Lightwood. He repeated the name. He looked at the packets in his hand. There was something he wanted to do – before he left for work and before it was too late. Keeping them on the side-table, Magnus turned around to look at Alec. The photographer was playing with his engagement ring in his hand and Magnus couldn’t help but smile. Had Alec always been that adorable? Or New York had done that to him?

Magnus didn’t realize when he started walking towards Alec, but he did, leaving his stuff behind at the door. He closed the distance between himself and his Alpha briskly. Alec looked up from his fingers when he heard the footsteps and found Magnus approaching him. He stood straight up from the kitchen island and furrowed his brows anticipating what Magnus had left. The Omega caught him by surprise when lifted his hands in the air and reached out to hold the lapels of Alec’s shirt. Alec looked down to study the movement of Magnus’ fingers around his shirt and by the time he looked back up, Magnus was closer to him than he ever had been. Alec’s hormones jumped as he felt his Omega (on his heat) advance so close to him and he stopped his breathing midway to avoid taking in anything that could make him lose control over himself.

Magnus’ chest pressed on Alec’s and the Alpha dropped back on the kitchen island. He wrapped one arm instinctively around Magnus’ waist to prevent him from tripping and pressed the other on the edge of the island for support. The Omega’s senses were still heightened enough as he gazed at Alec’s face, memorizing every last detail on it. He then opened his mouth and reached for Alec’s face. His lips pouted and moved forward until they found Alec’s lips between them. He heard a soft moan as Alec closed his eyes and gave in to Magnus’ lips that embraced his.
Alec tightened his grasp around Magnus and flattened his palm on his back to hold him closer to his chest. Alec wanted to believe that it was because he wanted to make sure Magnus did not hurt himself in the process, but the man also just wanted his fiancé close and the kiss just made him aware of this fact about himself. Magnus let go Alec’s shirt in one hand and inserted his hand inside to feel the chest hair on Alec’s skin which elicited goosebumps in the latter’s upper arm. Their head tilted in the opposite direction as the kiss deepened. The movements were swift and natural... and the feelings felt organic.

The kiss didn’t feel like a necessity... or a need. It more or less felt like the right thing to express in front of one another. They wanted to tell each other how much they meant to them... and how much their support and encouragement had uplifted them in the last few months. They had won each other’s respect and affection and this kiss was a declaration of that.

“Woah...”, Magnus stopped breathing and pulled away. His stared at Alec’s lips for a while before gathering courage to actually look at Alec in his eyes. To his fortunate surprise, Alec wasn’t looking away from him and he sure didn’t look embarrassed about it. The Alpha was just staring at Magnus with his dilated hazel orbs. Magnus swallowed, and his nostrils flickered in nervousness as he slowly let Alec go and replaced the distance between them. “I’ll see you at lunch?”, he said, catching his breath. If Alec regretted the kiss, he would definitely not want to see Magnus anytime soon. Magnus gulped hard at the possibility and blinked.

“Yeah...”, Alec breathed, a couple of moments later. “Don’t be late...”, he flashed an awkward smile and looked away.

Good...so Alec didn’t completely hate Magnus. The Omega sighed in relief and turned around. They would eventually talk about it... but, it wasn’t going to be right now. He briskly walked back to the door and picked up his food packets. As soon as he was about to leave, Alec called out his name.

“Magnus?”, the Omega hear and stopped. He turned his head slightly and fixed his eyes on Alec. “The rules...”, Alec clicked his tongue. Magnus bit his lip and smiled.

“I promise”, he mumbled, and walked out of the door.

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“Did Clary leave already?”, Maryse popped the question as soon as she saw Izzy head downstairs in her dancing pants and t-shirt. She had her bag hanging on one shoulder and her hoodie on her arm. The girl looked around for her father, but she couldn’t find him. “I thought she would stay for breakfast and leave for the Academy, with you...?”, she finally asked, unable to control her nerves.

“Your Dad already left for his meeting with the Council”, Maryse sighed and licked her lips nervously. It was a big day for them. But then her mind wandered to one detail that Izzy had let out... about Magnus’ heat. “Wait... what?”, she widened her eyes. “Magnus got his heat...?”, she gasped, groping for her phone to call her son. “I should call Alec and ask him if they are doing okay there. This is the first time Magnus is away from home... what if they need something... advise or suggestion...?”, the concern in Maryse’s voice was genuine.

“Clary told me that he was doing okay... they both were. And I spoke to Alec last night. If there would have been a problem, I’d have noticed in his voice...”, Izzy sighed, sitting down on the dining
table as Maryse served food. “He sounded alright... very happy in fact”

“You spoke to Alec? Did... you...?”, she asked. “Oh Isabelle...?”, she tilted her head and closed her eyes.

“I didn’t tell him... I promised you... I wouldn’t tell anyone, not even Alec and I have kept my word, Mom. You have to trust me...”, she looked away. “But you know this is not right. Alec is our family... he is your eldest son and he deserves to know what is going on... especially because half of this is related to him...”, she complained, thinking about Robert. “Dad is going through all this alone. If Alec were here...”

“He would have been dragged in this unnecessary mess. Robert can handle this by himself. And we are here for all the support he needs. In fact, even Asmodeus and Hodge are on our side. We’ll be ok. Alec and Magnus are building their life together... they’re trying to make their relationship work and I don’t think they deserve to be dragged into this...”, Maryse shook her head. She was trying to keep her mind off her husband, but this conversation wasn’t helping.

“They will be dragged into this... sooner or later. This pertains to them too. And both Magnus and Alec will not appreciate that we kept them in dark for so long. Especially at the cost of Dad, Uncle Asmodeus and Hodge’s safety...”

“Alec and Magnus are my children, Isabelle. I will not let the Clave drag them into this mess just because they have some weird and ancient ideas about how the community should work. Robert is the Consul for the Clave and even he couldn’t bend their ways around... Nobody can do a thing once the Clave put their minds to it and so... I am not letting them anywhere near my kids. That’s not going to happen under our watches.”, Maryse said, rather firmly.

Izzy bit her lip and nodded. Maryse did have a point though that point came at a very heavy price. A price that Robert was paying every day. She didn’t want Alec to come and pay the price for all this but she couldn’t let her father go through this alone.

***

Magnus was listening to music blazing in the Volvo as he drove his way to work. His mind was replaying the kiss he had with Alec and he had to do something to get that out of his head. Fortunately, enough, his sister decided to call him and interrupt his chain of thoughts. Magnus’ phone was plugged into the car and he put her on speaker. “Morning, Bear”, he spoke as soon as he picked up the call.

“Good morning, big brother. How are you feeling today?”

“I am good... feeling a lot better. In fact, I am resuming work from today. So, I am finally going back to my old life... one step at a time”, Magnus chimed, sounding excited to reach the hotel.

“That is great. I hope Alec’s taking good care of you...? Because I will kick his ass if he isn’t”

“Yeah...”, Magnus’ smile vanished, and he sighed. “He is... Alexander is...”

“Uh oh... what happened? Tell me everything...!”

“Nothing happened...”, Magnus defended himself.

“Magnus Bane... I am your sister. I can hear it in your voice... tell me what happened with Alec...wait, did he say something to you... or... did he did he touch you... without your permission...”, Clary poked her eyes out.
“NO! OF COURSE NOT!!”, Magnus protested in raised voice. He could feel the disgust in his mind at the thought of accusing Alec of something like this. “Alec would never... I... did something in fact, and I am not sure what the consequences would be!”, he gulped.

“What did you do...?”

“I kissed him... Clary...”, Magnus sighed.

“You kissed Alec?”, Clary gasped, rather loudly. “Oh my God... when? Tell me everything... you kissed Alec, oh my GOD!”

“This morning... a few minutes ago, actually...”, Magnus confessed.

“You don’t regret it... do you?”

“No... no... not at all. But I am not sure if Alec feels the same... I have this weird pit in my stomach that I might have ruined my friendship with him. He isn’t into me... not like that...”, Magnus gripped the steering wheel tightly. “Honestly, I don’t know if he is or isn’t into me. I just know that I don’t want to lose my best friend...”

“Magnus... you did what you wanted to do. Talk to Alec about this. Honestly, if Alec is the way you describe him to be, there’s no doubt that he will be willing to talk and find a solution to all this. And what if he has the same feelings for you?”

“I don’t know Clary... he has been through a lot, as far as his relationships are concerned and I think that I really overstepped my limits by going ahead with my instincts”

“You’ve been through enough too, Magnus. Do not sell yourself short. Maybe this relationship will be good for the both of you... You deserve to be happy too, right?”

“Yeah... I guess?”

“Talk to Alec before making any further scenarios in your head... alright?”

Magnus took a deep breath. “Fine”, he mumbled. “Enough about me... tell me how did the night with Isabelle go?”

“It was good...!”, Clary dragged.

“Did you ask her... tell her how you feel?”

“Not really... she was worried about something and I thought I shouldn’t pry or force my feelings on her when she’s clearly stressed about something”, she whispered.

“Hmm...”, Magnus hummed, keeping the secret about Alec being in a similar state last night to himself. It wasn’t his secret to share.

“Anyway, I’ll call you in the evening. Take care of yourself...?”

“I will. Tell Mom I am doing alright. I don’t need her panicking about my heat.”, he said, before Clary hung up the call.

***

“If you ask me, Bane... I don’t think you should worry a dime about this...”, Catarina rolled her eyes as she and Magnus walked through the hallways of the hotel, holding cards in their hand. The Plaza
was throwing an annual gala night for all the special guests in their rooms and the two managers were circulating the fliers to let the people be aware.

“Mr Colbert? I hope you’re enjoying your vacation in Manhattan. We’re throwing an annual party for some chosen guests in the Rose Club tonight. We hope you’d be able to make it. Here are your customized passes... See you there? Have a nice day, Sir! Also, for any other requests, the Hospitality is available at the speed dial number 07.”, Magnus flashed a smile as the guest opened the door and then waited for them to shut it back before proceeding further. “And why would you say that...?”, he continued his conversation with Catarina.

“Because...”, she grinned and paused momentarily to read the room number of the next guest that they were supposed to invite for the party. “I have seen the way he cares about you...”, she flickered her eyes and looked at him.

“That’s cause he’s my fiancé... I wouldn’t expect anything less...?” Magnus shrugged, reading out his lists of guests as well. “I’ll do 305... you do 316”, he pointed at the third in front of them. Catarina took the invite for room 316 and nodded.

“No... it’s coz he really does care about you... in a very non-platonic way if you ask me. Do you get it? I have seen the two of you up close... and it’s nauseating to me... the amount of affection you have for each other...”, Cat rolled her eyes as she knocked on Room 316.

“You’ve met him... two times, Cat...!!”, Magnus chuckled.

“And those were enough for me to recognize his big and soft heart eyes that he has only for you”, she clicked her tongue and grinned. The door opened she invited the guest. “I can’t say that you and he should just jump right into the romantic parts of your relationship because that would be too soon and immature... but don’t disregard your feelings just because your friendship is more important... alright?”

“All of that is correct... but I don’t know what to do next. Not until I know what Alexander feels about all this. You know... he works with his ex-boyfriend who cheated on him with his best friend. And he might not be heartbroken like before, but he could very well have feelings for the man and I may have just ruined the only good friendship he had in his life...”, Magnus sighed. “And... I cannot fathom losing him as my friend...”

“In the downside you do lose your friendship... you have all the time in the world to build it back up before something bad happens. Talk it out and then just get on with making things right between the two of you. That’s obviously, if he doesn’t have feelings for you too... which would be very shocking and impossible for me to believe. Remember, it’s not an offence to have feelings for someone, Magnus!”

“I know it’s not an offence, but this is Alexander we’re talking about. And less than three months ago, I couldn’t tolerate his existence and I hated him for how our families got us engaged and now I freaking kissed him...”, Magnus said, exasperated. “Alec must be so confused. Hell, I am confused. What is happening to me?”

“A lot can happen in three months, my boy. Trust me. A lot. Stop moping and take control of your feelings. Accept them... the way they are, without questioning or reasoning...”, she moved forward and pulled Magnus in a tight hug. The man smiled softly and complied, burying his head in her shoulder. They were interrupted by Magnus’ phone that vibrated in his pocket, making Catarina jump away from him.

“It’s Alec... why is Alec calling me...? Oh God... what if he is angry with me. What if he wants to
break off the engagement because he doesn’t like me... or Catarina... what if...”, Magnus blabbered looking at his ringing phone.

“Stop assuming things and pick up the damn call, Magnus”, Catarina sighed.

“Right...yeah. I should pick up the call... it could very well be nothing. I shouldn’t overreact...”, Magnus stuttered and pressed the answer button. “Alexander, hey... what a lovely surprise!”, he flashed a smile. He bit his tongue a few seconds later, realizing the greeting might have been a little inappropriate.

“Magnus are you drunk?”, Alec gasped on the other sight. Magnus licked his lips and shook his head, also slapping himself softly.

“No... no, why would I be drunk early in the morning. I was actually busy distributing invites for a party... I am sorry...”, he cleared his throat and straightened himself, as if Alec could see him through the phone. “So... what were you saying exactly?”, he swallowed, unable to remember why Alec had called in the first place.

“Nothing”, Alec deadpanned. Magnus rolled his eyes and shut them. Why was he being so finicky? It was just Alec.

“Right... what were you about to say then?”, he said, attempting to damage control.

“Letting you go for work was a very bad idea. I knew it. I was right. I shouldn’t have agreed with you. You should have come with me. I am so stupid sometimes. You wait there. I am coming to pick you up in an hour or two at max? Alright?”, Alec announced. “As soon as I break for coffee...”, he sounded determined.

“What...NO!? What...?”, Magnus protested. “Why? I’m perfectly fine... why would you say something like that. You’re not coming here Alexander. I won’t let you... I want to work here half day, please”, he said, hyperventilating.

“What is the time?”, Alec asked.

“9:47... why?”, Magnus rubbed his temple, stressing out all of a sudden.

“You were supposed to check in with me at 9:30... it has been over 15 minutes since the scheduled time. Magnus, you promised me...”, Alec complained. Magnus swallowed and heaved a sigh of relief. Of course. Right. He had to check in with Alec every hour. This had nothing to do with the kiss, Alec was just being his normal self.

“Oh... yeah... I am so sorry”, Magnus covered his gaping mouth with his hand. “I just... these invites, they were so many, and Cat and I just got so lost as soon as we got them handed over”, Magnus explained. “But, you’re right. I should have remembered. Don’t worry, I’ll call you sharp at 10:30am next?”, he asked.

“Did you eat something... or take the tea?”, Alec inquired, ignoring Magnus’ last sentence.

“I did... I drank a cup. I am ok, Alexander. I swear”, Magnus reassured the Alpha wolf. “So, can I get back to work?”, he asked.

“Hm... 10:30am Magnus...? I am going to wait for the call or I will come and pick you up myself.”, Alec reminded. Magnus smiled and hummed. He stared at the phone after Alec cut the call and stared at the call log.
Alec was sitting on his camera chair on-location. Sebastian was getting ready for the next take right in front of him. They were doing a metrosexual theme today and so Tessa was closely working on Sebastian’s makeup to make him appropriate for the theme while another team from Vogue was trying to capture the behind-the-scenes action from the photoshoot. They had already spoken to Alec a few minutes ago, to hear his thoughts that he puts in before capturing any moment and what he expects out of his month long project. Now that they were setting up for the next shot, Alec had a few minutes in his hand. Therefore, he was nervously fiddling with his engagement ring and thinking about the kiss from this morning.

The kiss.

Alec jerked up in surprise when he felt himself harden at the mere thought of Magnus and his lips. He looked around awkwardly, hoping no one had noticed him or his bulging pants. Squeezing his member between his legs rather painfully, Alec swallowed and flinched, trying to subdue the discomfort that he was feeling. The kiss in the morning hadn’t been anticipated by him. And from what it seemed like, neither by his fiancé.

Magnus was a head-strong individual who had made it clear that he wasn’t looking for a relationship with anyone, not even his own Alpha mate. And he had been the one to initiate the kiss – which made it even more strange. Alec took a deep breath and looked around. Sebastian and Jace were chatting right there in front of him, had been for the last couple of minutes and the only thing Alec could think about was Magnus. He was so sure that Magnus would be beating himself up for the kiss and cursing himself for giving in to his feelings. Especially after his phone-call where Magnus seemed so out and nervous with his answers. But who’s to say that those feelings weren’t due to his heat, Alec wondered. And maybe, even the phone-call. They could very well be an implication of his raging hormones and Magnus had no feelings for Alec.

“Alec... you ready?”, Tessa shook him.

“Yeah?”, Alec blinked and looked at her. “Yeah... I am... I was waiting for Sebastian and Jace to...”, he furrowed his brows to look at Sebastian and Jace who were chatting away just a moment ago. Or rather 10 minutes ago because he was now sitting in his position and waiting for Alec to begin. “Let’s go...”

“You ok?”, Tessa whispered near Alec as soon as he adjusted the lenses. “I’ve been trying to grab your attention for the last 5 minutes...?”

“I am”, Alec shook his head. “I was just... thinking about something. Sorry. Won’t happen again...”, he looked right into his camera and adjusted the settings based on the light in the room.

“Something happen with Magnus this morning?” she asked. “Is he feeling better today? I haven’t seen him around and here I thought you’d bring him today as well...?”

“No... no no... he’s fine. Magnus is alright. He went to the hotel... stubborn man... I wanted him to stay and rest for one more day, but you know how he is... always enthusiastic to work...”, Alec flashed a smile. “Let’s start rolling?”, he called out to Jace and his team. Sebastian gave a thumbs-up and the shoot resumed.

The High Council in Idris – the headquarters of the Werewolf Clave were situated in the heart of the Alicante forests, hidden perfectly in plain sight from the mundane eye of the other residents of the
city. The opposite side of the hills that flanked the city and the lake Lynn was dug on the inside and there it stood – The High Council, in all its glory, showcasing the remnants of the rich heritage of werewolves in this part of America. It looked ancient and culturally preserved. No one other than the members knew about its whereabouts.

The entrance was guarded by an ancient lever system that only the Elders knew how to operate. The Elders, as they called themselves, were the senior-most members of the main packs that now inhabited the city and one of the most important gifts that any Elder gave to their heir was the direction to the location of the High Council whenever they were passing on the baton.

This fine morning, Robert Lightwood, the Elder from the Lightwood clan and the honorable Consul for the Clave stood on the high ground inside the hills. He was surrounded by all the other Elders of Idris, eyed upon in a very non-supportive manner, and looked down upon in contempt. To make matters worse Dim lamp lights were flaring on the walls and there was a stench of moss and algae around.

Robert Lightwood had inherited the Consulate from his father-in-law, Adam Trueblood on his deathbed and even though the other members were strictly against the man, they had to respect the wishes of their most respected Alpha – Maryse’s father Adam. Robert was not suited for the position of the Consul primarily because his ideas were way forward of his times. He was against rearing of Omegas to serve as prostitutes for Alpha wolves who were looking to start a pack without the burden of mate or marriages. In fact, he had been the one to revoke the law that legalized Omega Prostitution in the Clave. Among other notable achievements, he had also advocated the promotion of Betas and given them the power to choose their mates just like the Alphas had. The annual Mating Ball and run had been ceased under his Consulate too.

Subsequently, he was not in the good books of the traditional wolf packs of the city and always had had a tough time in meetings.

“Consul Lightwood. What have you thought about our demand? We expect execution of the same within the next 2 weeks, that’s our decision.”, Stephen Herondale spoke up. Robert looked at him and squinted his eyes.

“The Clave’s demands are outrageous. We live in the 21st century, for Heaven’s sake!” Robert insinuated. “As a Consul of this Clave, I request you to reconsider the decision because we don’t have control over the lives of her community members. We can only go so far as making sure our community survives the tests of time”, he reasoned.

“Our legacy lies in our traditions. What are we without them?”, Jia Penhallow pitched in, stepping forward.

“The traditions were created by our ancestors, Ms Penhallow. With all due respect, don’t you think they should be modified because of their inapplicability in the current times?”, Robert was appalled at the way this meeting was shaping up.

“Our traditions, no matter how ineffective in your mind, have kept us alive all these years. You wouldn’t be here, if it weren’t for traditions. Consul Trueblood appointed you as our new leader because it was tradition to do so. The least you can do is respect his choice”, another Elder from a smaller pack in Idris spoke up.

“I am thankful to Consul Trueblood. He gave me a chance to bring about change in our world and all I am doing is respecting his wishes, respected members of the High Council”, Robert folded his hands and sighed. “And now I am standing in front of you... asking you to reconsider your demand because my sons are young... and they have their whole life in front of them. I don’t want them to
sacrifice their dreams because of our traditions. Magnus and Alec deserve better”, he whispered, locking his eyes with Asmodeus who was dying to jump in Robert’s support.

“Magnus and Alec are promising new wolves of the next generation and they’d be a great asset, as long as they are back in their hometowns... not chasing their mundane dreams...”, Jia spat, looking at Asmodeus scornfully.

“Elder Herondale... you get me... don’t you? Your son Jace... he’s been away from Idris for almost as long as Alec has... and he is doing so well in his life... would you want him to rip off him dreams just for the sake of traditions?”, Robert looked at Stephen Herondale pleadingly.

“Jonathan isn’t my son anymore. He is a disgrace to my pack and I don’t care what he does with his time... as long as he is playing around with that mundane boyfriend of his, the one your boy threw away...”, Stephen scorned. Robert sighed, giving up on the last hope of asking the High Council to take their demand back.

“Respected members of the Council, I hear you... and I see that you’re not willing to bend the tradition. My decision, however, remains firm irrevocable. My son, Alec Lightwood and his fiancé Magnus Bane... who also happens to be my best friend’s son will not return to Idris to complete the mating ritual in order to continue the Lightwood and Bane packs. They will remain where they are, figuring out their career and will get married when they deem right. We’ve no right to demand anything out of their lives that they themselves won’t agree with“, he announced.

“With that... the Council is dismissed. I hope that should there be any requests or demands, feel free to visit me... or summon me. As a Consul, I am always at your service. And although you all are stubborn with your thoughts, I’d appreciate if you give my point of view, a chance.”, he ended, stepping down from the stage.

He was greeted by Asmodeus who tapped his shoulder supportively. “You did your best, my friend. You did your best”

“I hope my best is good enough for our sons”, Robert sighed.

“It has to be. And if it isn’t, then we’re there to protect them from this age-old ridiculous society. We’re still strong and capable of defending them. They’re not alone”, Asmodeus assured as the two walked out of the High Council.

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Magnus folded his sleeves up to his elbow and removed his vest. He had reached Alec’s set after lunch, as promised and Alec had been right – the half day of work had exhausted Magnus completely. All he wanted was to get a few hours of sleep to regain his strength. He was still skeptical to face Alec, but he lived with the guy... if not right now, he’d have to face him at home anyway.

“Let’s get this over with...”, he mumbled, pulling out his bag from the car and locking it on his way to Alec’s trailer. He was greeted by Sebastian on the way and the Omega rolled his eyes. Perfect. “This couldn’t get any better...”, he mumbled very softly, albeit flashing a smile to the Irish model. “Mr Verlac”, he greeted.

“Mr Bane”, Sebastian flashed a smile. “I didn’t see you around for the morning session. Are you alright?”, Magnus arched a brow, analyzing the audacity.

“Yeah... I have a full-time job that I have to do... can’t take an off every day”, Magnus deadpanned,
as he began walking towards the set. “Even I thought you’d be at the shoot. Alexander told me about your 4-day schedule with him.

“Oh, he did?”, Sebastian faked a smile. “We had broken for lunch... and Jonathan and I decided to go out for a stroll and lunch...”, he explained. “I am just going back to my trailer to start the next shoot... its in... uhh 10 minutes”, he checked his phone and gasped. “I’ll see you around...?”, he said. Magnus widened his pupils and scoffed.

“Of course. All the best”, he faked and walked away from the model. He reached Alec’s trailer hoping the boy is alone so that he can talk to him before nervousness and anxiety gripped him. He turned the door knob and it was locked. The trailer was locked. Magnus pulled out his set of keys and unlocked the door. Alec wasn’t there. He sighed and dropped his things on the couch before heading out to find Alec. He was at the door when Tessa caught up to him.

“You’re here...”, she chimed.

“Yeah... have you seen Alexander?”, he asked, anxious to meet his fiancé.

“He’s... I think in the Canteen... at the bank. Jem and he were discussing something over lunch...?”, she asked, squinting her eyes because of the glaring sunrays.

“Oh... then it must be important. I’ll just wait here for him...”, he said, sitting down on the staircase in the trailer.

“No...”, Tessa grabbed Magnus’ hand. “Alec has been miserable since morning. I’ve come to believe that you should take an off every day just so I can see that glow on your faces when you’re around each other”, she winked, pulling him to the back of the set.

“Alexander and Jem must be busy. I don’t think we should disturb them...?”, Magnus suggested.

“We’ll see about that.”, she shook her head, turning them around the corner and then Magnus finally saw Alec. After whole half a day. His hear skipped a beat by the way Alec’s bicep were protruding out of his shirt. He was sitting on the chair with his arm resting on the chair behind him. His legs were crossed on to each other.

“Are you guys done eating...”, Tessa called when she was close enough to the boys. Alec was tapping his coffee mug when he froze – possibly inhaling Magnus around him. He straightened himself and jumped off of his chair to look around.

Magnus awkwardly locked his eyes onto Alec and flashed a weak smile. The Alpha heaved a sigh of relief and sprinted across the open canteen area. Magnus himself stepped forward to cover the distance between him and Alec. Alec raised his hands in the air to hold Magnus’ shoulder when he came close enough and without a second thought, pressed his lips on Magnus’ forehead. “Finally...”, he breathed out, enveloping Magnus in his embrace.

Magnus widened his eyes as he hugged Alec back. “Hi...”, he whispered, digging his head in Alec’s shoulder.

Alec pulled away slightly and kissed the hair above Magnus’ ear, followed by his temple. “I was so worried”, he admitted, cupping Magnus’ face to stroke his cheek. Magnus looked at Alec with moist eyes and confusion.

Chapter End Notes
I usually try to post chapters only when I am done with the next one, and this time... I am not. So bear with me... I hope between all the fighting and campaign, I'll find time to write the new one before Saturday next week!
Magnus swallowed hard, after Alec pulled away from the Omega, replacing distance between the two werewolves. He was unable to wrap the facts around his head. So, Alec wasn’t angry with him. And he wasn’t avoiding him, despite their impromptu kiss earlier that morning? What did that mean? He stared at Alec, contemplating on these thoughts, as the man made sure Magnus was ok. Magnus could feel Alec’s fingers running down his arms, inspecting them. Tessa and Jem joined each other as they observed Alec and Magnus.

“Lightwood can finally breathe now…”, Tessa cracked up, a second later, grabbing Jem’s waist. Magnus furrowed his brows and looked over at the girl from Alec’s shoulder. Alec rolled his eyes and glared at Tessa who broke into a chuckle. She was in no mood to stop. “I swear to God, Magnus. I am not lying. The whole day he looked like he had tasted poison. Blue and so pale”, she added with a wink and Alec didn’t look amused by the comment. Magnus dropped his head down and blushed, although he could feel Alec’s thoughts inside him. He didn’t expect Alec to be so uncomfortable not having him around to watch over him.

“Tessa?”, Alec gasped, exasperated. He grabbed Magnus’ hand and turned around to leave, too embarrassed to look at Magnus. Magnus bit his lips and let himself be dragged to the trailer, his fingers tightly wrapped around Alec’s palm. They stepped inside the trailer and Alec bolted it shut behind him. Magnus finally came to his senses and gently stepped away from him.

“There’s no one here...so we should…”, he gulped and made distance between him and Alec and turned around to avoid facing him.

“We should...what?”, Alec gasped, confused at Magnus’ actions. He narrowed his brows and crossed his hands on his chest. Magnus closed his eyes and dropped his head.

“I get that we shouldn’t let others know... that we... you and me...”, Magnus waved his hand. He had no idea what he was trying to say at this point.

“You and me, what Magnus?”, Alec couldn’t really understand but the fact that Magnus was making no sense was driving him crazy. He could feel his senses heightening and that didn’t seem like a good idea at all. “You have to be clear because you’re not making any sense right now, Magnus... and I... I need to know what is going on in that head of yours…”, he admitted, rubbing his temple, restlessly as Magnus tried to speak.

“We don’t have to hold hands when nobody’s watching... I mean…”, Magnus blurted out, frustrated with his own sense of confusion. He was shocked at his own confession and then mentally wanted to slap himself for being so blunt about it.

“You think I hold your hand in public to show it off?”, Alec swallowed, gasping at the accusation. “Showing off to who... Tessa... Jem... or Sebastian...?”, he gritted his teeth together. “Magnus did
you just... I can’t believe you just said that...”, he could feel his nostrils flaring with rage and that wasn’t good.

“Alexander... I don’t mean it like that...”, Magnus turned out and spoke in a very soft tone, realizing that he might have just triggered the wrong emotion in his fiancé. Alec’s rage and growing temper could be felt through their mating bond.

“How do you mean it then?”, Alec widened his pupils. “Because... I don’t see any other possible explanation to what you just suggested...”, he said, getting louder in his tone. He stepped forward, closing the distance between him and Magnus and Magnus gulped, stepping hesitantly. Magnus’ mating mark twitched, making the Omega gasp. In the last 3 months, the mark hadn’t hurt. It was almost like Magnus had forgotten that it existed, altogether. But today, today he could feel a tingling sensation in it. Magnus scratched the scar and took a deep breath.

“Alexander, you’ve to calm down. All I am saying is that...”, he began to explain, stepping a little further away from Alec.

“Yeah...? You’ve said enough Magnus...”, he closed his eyes and looked away. No, he couldn’t hurt Magnus. He couldn’t let his hormones get the best of him and yet, the strong scent that Magnus was emitting wasn’t helping his case. Alec could feel himself losing control and a part of himself didn’t want that. “After months... months of pleading my case...”, he began, clenching his fist. Magnus began to open his mouth, but Alec’s palm went straight up... stopping the Omega from going any further in his conversation.

“I didn’t agree to marry you just because I am an Alpha and you’re an Omega and I want to shag you... I don’t...”, he stated. “I don’t care about you just because I am your fiancé... or because it is my duty to do so... I care about you... just because you’ve become important to me...”, he waved his hand and moved forward. “AND I DON’T HOLD YOUR HAND BECAUSE I WANT TO SHOW IT OFF TO ANYONE”, he growled, stepping very close to Magnus. Magnus shivered as he felt the anger so close to him. He looked up straight in the Alpha’s eyes and saw the crimson rage in them... after such a long time. Alec’s eyes were wide and furious, and he could see the veins popping in near the pupils.

“I have been doing my best to make you feel comfortable... and familiar with me and you still think that there’s an ulterior motive to everything that I do?”, he swallowed shaking his head in despair. Magnus was breathing heavily, unable to look Alec straight in the eyes. He had never seen Alec lose his temper with Magnus before. It was unbelievably the first time Magnus had seen the Alpha rage in Alec... directed at the Omega.

“Being around you... especially now... drives me nuts, Magnus and yet... I am trying. Why? Because you were trying... trying to make it work... or at least I thought you were...”

“I was... am... I am, Alexander”, Magnus raised his arms to hold Alec by the shoulders and calm him down. But he was too scared to touch the guy. “Alexander...”, he called out to him. “Calm down... please...”, he requested, gently brushing his palms on Alec’s shoulder. Alec flinched and stepped away from the touch, leaving Magnus disappointed.

“All this is not easy for me... and I don’t want to boast about it... but being around you smelling like that isn’t easy...”, he closed his eyes, admitting his strongest weakness in front of Magnus... not knowing if that would ruin their relationship. “But I feel something stronger than my urge to come close to you. And that is my urge to see you fulfill you dream and become the man you always wanted to become... I have been worried sick since morning... not having you around... not knowing
if you’re doing okay at the hotel by yourself...”, Alec admitted. “Because...I brought you here... you are my responsibility... and it is my duty to keep you safe... because I brought you here... when your family wasn’t ready...”, he confessed.

“Alexander...”, Magnus gulped and stepped forward. Alec couldn’t hurt him, no matter how angry he was, and Magnus had that trust in the boy. “I am sorry... please...calm down... just calm down, I did not mean what I said... I didn’t...”, he requested again. He could feel the crimson in Alec’s eyes disappear.

“I kissed you in the morning... and”, he admitted. “...and I couldn’t help but think all day that you didn’t want that to happen. You didn’t want to kiss me, and you did it out of obligation... and I may have ruined our friendship... and I just didn’t want you to do something just to make me happy... or please me... I didn’t... I couldn’t tolerate if you just stayed with me... because it is your duty, not because you like me...”, he spoke in one breath, to avoid losing a chance to talk.

Alec’s eyes returned to their mundane color. “I am sorry... I did not mean to hurt you...”, Magnus dropped his head and squeezed his fingers around Alec’s shoulders.

“I kissed you back... you idiot? Do you not the remember the part where I kissed you back...?”, Alec spoke, a few seconds later. “You didn’t make me do it out of my duty towards you... I did it, because I wanted to...”, he confessed”, Magnus’ breath hitched in his throat as he looked up. “But I also didn’t want you to have any idea... because, you’re still on your heat... and still high on emotions...”, Alec shook his head. “Who’s to say that you’ll feel the same when your senses have finally calmed down?”, he arched a brow.

“I know what I feel, Alexander”, Magnus tilted his head. “I don’t and will not regret the fact that I kissed you...”

“I know what I feel too, Magnus”, Alec whispered and stepped away from Magnus. “I just hoped that you’d know me better now... better than misunderstanding my actions”, he said, breaking Magnus’ heart. The Omega could feel Alec’s disappointment written all over his face. He had disappointed Alec. Alec stood there for a couple of seconds and then turned around.

“Rest now... I’ll resume my work. There are some things for you to eat... in the fridge. And, the temperature regulator is there... don’t freeze...”, he advised and walked out of the trailer, leaving Magnus alone. The Omega dropped on the bed, lifelessly holding his forehead. This wasn’t how he pictured this conversation happening.

***

Alec didn’t return to the trailer after their argument in the afternoon and continued to shoot until they packed up for the day. Magnus could see Alec working non-stop from the window and he wanted to call him back and explain things before the situation got worse than it already was. He tried to study Alec’s thoughts, but it felt like Alec was shutting him out... and doing everything to avoid letting Magnus in. A spot boy came in to ask how Magnus was doing or if he needed something. Magnus knew that Alec had sent him. The spot boy said that Mr Lightwood was a little busy and that’s why he asked him to check on Magnus, but the man knew better. He knew Alec was still upset and didn’t want to face his fiancé and made this crew member do it for him.

He cried himself to sleep for an hour or two, exhausted after the mental breakdown. When he woke up, the shoot was wrapping up outside and Magnus saw Alec talking to Jem animatedly. Magnus yawned and stretched himself. Alec will come to the trailer soon and they’ll have to be on their way home. It was better to be ready before that so that he didn’t give Alec another reason to be upset. He went to the washroom and washed his face to remove the remnants of sleep from his face. He felt
stronger since morning and therefore, took out his kohl to line his eyes to look presentable to himself. He was still far from normal, but he was getting there. One day at a time. Quicker than he would have... with Alec on his side.

When he came out drying his hands on the towel, Alec was already in the trailer, packing his things in his backpack. He still looked tensed and closed off, and unwilling to make a conversation with Magnus, which only put Magnus in more misery. Magnus quietly began packing his things when Tessa dropped by knocking at the trailer.

“You guys are leaving already?”, she quirked, standing near the exit. Magnus stopped packing his things and looked at the woman.

“Yeah... the shoot packed up, right? Is there a briefing I missed a memo about...? If not, I’d really like to go home...”, Alec scoffed. Tessa rolled her eyes and looked at Magnus who softly smiled. She shook her head in a refusal and placed her hands on her hips

“I thought we’d go out for drinks together... you two and Jem and I?”, she clapped. “Double date... of sorts”, she quirked.

“Some other time, Tess...”, Alec sighed, grabbing his backpack and keys. “Today won’t be possible... sorry!”, he shrugged.

“Oh, you’re always the bore one. Why did I even give you a choice or ask you? The last time you said that Magnus wasn’t there, and you didn’t feel like coming... and what’s the excuse today? Magnus is here... and he looks alright... don’t you Bane?”, she pointed at Magnus. Magnus pursed his lips and sighed, flashing a smile at Tessa followed by Alec... trying to pretend that things were nothing out of the ordinary.

“I am alright... but I think we’ll pass...”, he said apologetically.

“Et tu, Brute?”, she gasped.

“Hear me out... ok. I am really exhausted... and even though it looks like I am fine... I can still feel a little feverish and... rain check on those drinks? We promise!”, he offered. Tessa grumbled and looked at Alec who smiled again, weirdly. She eventually let them be and walked out... complaining. Magnus looked at Alec who still looked like he was avoiding him. Magnus sighed and zipped his bags. He walked out of the trailer to wait for Alec in the car.

Alec unlocked the car and put his backpack in the backseat. Magnus quietly strapped himself to his seat and waited for Alec who said nothing all this while and they finally drove off towards home.

The first few minutes of the journey were very silent. Soft music was playing on the radio, to lighten their moods. Magnus took to checking his messages and emails, to avoid the awkward silence that was filling the car.

“I spoke to Jem... and he said that I could go to Idris next weekend... if I wanted to. He was willing to shift the shoots on those days after he heard that there are certain personal problems that demand my presence back home.”, Alec said, when they were half-way through the journey. Cars were rushing past them. Magnus looked up from his phone and mumbled an automatic hmm... making Alec repeat his line.

“Oh my God, really?”, Magnus’ grin widened after Alec repeated his last sentence. “That’s honestly such a good news, Alexander... you can finally go and be with your family... and see what is going on with them? I am so glad Vogue is willing to be that adjusting”, he said, thrilled at the revelation. He turned to his side to face the Lightwood boy. Alec just smiled softly, without taking the
conversation further.

“Hmm”, he barely uttered. Magnus’ smile vanished, and he realized that Alec wasn’t willing to talk any more than that. He swallowed and looked back... straight ahead, dropping his head in disappointment. He could hardly hear anything over his struggle to hold his tears back. His lips trembled, and he used his teeth to hold them together in place. The corner of the lower lip started bleeding when Magnus pierced it with his canine. He wanted to flinch in pain, but he couldn’t let Alec know of that. He had no right to emotionally blackmail Alec into caring for him again.

Alec didn’t admit that he heard those sobs that escaped Magnus’ throat shortly after he told him about possibly going to Idris. He also didn’t admit feeling stabbed in the chest seeing Magnus breaking down like that. He simply just gripped his steering wheel and took a deep breath. He had been upset over their conversation from the afternoon and yet, this feeling of knowing that Magnus was a few centimeters away from him, drowning in sadness bothered him more than he wanted to admit. He licked his lips and shook his head, making a mental note to speak with Magnus and end all this drama, once and for all. He swiftly reached out to the buttons and loudened the music to distract Magnus... and hoped that his plan would work.

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“We haven’t spoken to Clary about this because she will not be able to hide the truth from Magnus and we can’t have Magnus or Alec knowing any of this mess that the Clave has created.”, Kaya sighed, slicing a piece of steak on her plate. Maryse and Robert were seated right across the dinner table in the Lightwood mansion. They had invited the Banes for dinner to discuss about the Council meeting from the day before.

“Isabelle knows about this. I am afraid she heard me, and Robert talking one night and confronted me the next day. But I made her swear to not utter a word to Alec or Magnus...”, Maryse sighed. “Speaking of Magnus... is he doing alright now? I haven’t spoken to Alec in so long and... Isabelle told me he got...”

“Yeah, he’s doing alright Maryse. I spoke to Alec the other day... and Clary has been talking to Magnus on a daily basis too. They’re doing ok. Your boy has been really nice and caring towards Magnus and I cannot thank the God enough for the fact that Magnus found someone like your Alec.”, she smiled, hinting at the fact that she was missing her son. Maryse thought about how much she missed Alec too and closed her eyes. She hadn’t been speaking to Alec for the last couple of days to avoid letting out the secret in front of him. He could have heard right through her voice that there was something bothering his mother.

“I assure you Kaya, Alec is just as lucky to have gotten Magnus. I couldn’t have asked for a better life partner for him. We’re right there with you on the thanking queue.”, she quirked. “They’re each other’s biggest strengths...”

“Robert... I really think we should inform our sons about this...”, Asmodeus cleared his throat. “The sooner they know, the better”, he added. “Alec and Magnus need to be prepared for what is waiting for them when they come back...”

“What will we tell them? For all they know, their mating ritual was completed when Alec marked Magnus”, Robert swallowed the food in his mouth. “How will we tell them that they are missing a key aspect of the ritual...? You and I... we both know that three months ago when Alec asked to be mated to Magnus, they weren’t ready to become a mated pair... not truly. God knows they’re still getting there and I cannot let anything hamper their progress”

“We have to... they need to know. What if they return to Idris...? The Clave will not let them leave
without completing the ritual and you and I... we both know that Alec and Magnus barely know each other... and this union... was arranged...”, Asmodeus explained.

“If we tell them, we risk ruining whatever friendship they’ve made so far…”, Robert argued.

“I know... Rob, I know. But they need to know... sooner than later”. Asmodeus nibbled on his food.

“And we’ll tell them. We’ll tell them everything, but they need to be ready for it. I am just glad that they’re not coming back anytime soon. “We’ll handle this and then let them know... alright?”, Robert assured.

He didn’t realize that Izzy had come down to grab her headphones and she heard the last part of the conversation. Alec had texted her earlier that evening that he was thinking about coming to Alicante and that he had managed to get a weekend off as well. And now she was confused. If Robert was correct... Alec shouldn’t come back to Alicante any time soon. And yet, there was no way she could convince Alec to not come. She swallowed the lump in her throat and rushed up to join Clary again... albeit with a heavy heart.

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Magnus reached the apartment a few minutes before Alec, who had to wait to park the vehicle in the parking lot. The Omega headed straight to the washroom and washed his face with cold water to remove the remnants of grief from his face. His cheeks were feeling hot and fluffed and he needed the splash of cold. The kohl had been smudged a little from wiping too hard, while attempting to dry out the tears that came out as soon as he was away from Alec’s vicinity. Unwilling to look better, he removed his liner and decided to be barefaced for the rest of the evening.

Magnus changed into a pair of very light pajama bottoms and a half-sleeve lose t-shirt and went straight to the kitchen to make coffee for himself and Alec... in case the latter decided to speak with him after all. If luck was on his side, he would even be able to get a chance to cook dinner for the two of them, instead of Alec taking charge as always.

Alec dragged himself inside a couple of minutes later and toed his shoes out at the door. He stole a glance at Magnus who was doing something in the kitchen. He was exhausting himself again and that irked Alec. Alec looked closely and saw Magnus’ cheeks glistening and if the man wasn’t cutting onions, he sure as hell was crying incessantly. Alec’s heart ached, and he froze in his tracks for a couple of minutes – before resuming his actions. He walked past the kitchen area and saw Magnus turn away from him automatically. He was trying to hide his tears. Magnus’ hair looked wet and he was giving out the scent of his facewash. Alec took a deep breath and walked inside the bathroom to freshen himself up. He would come and talk to Magnus after changing into new clothes.

He came out wearing a plain white t-shirt and black pajamas and reached straight into the kitchen, making Magnus jump in his place.

“I made you coffee...black coffee... if you need...”, Magnus’ voice shivered as he tried to muster up courage and make a coherent statement in front of Alec without possibly looking at him. A part of him was still scared that he would see those scary red Alpha eyes from this afternoon again. Magnus’ voice was loaded with emotions and the Alpha could recognize the tear-stricken tone. Alec looked in the direction Magnus was pointing at and grabbed his mug of coffee.

“Thanks...”, he whispered and heard a muffled hum as a reply. Alec pressed his palm on the edge of the kitchen counter and leaned on it, to get a closer look at Magnus who was chopping lettuce and broccoli. Magnus’ side profile was visible to him and the Omega was desperately trying to not make total eye contact with his fiancé. There were dried out tear stains on the Omega’s left cheek and some
fresh drops were wetting his lashes.

He swiftly turned his back to Alec without making it evident and grabbed a tissue paper to wipe the
tears that were repeatedly forming in his dark brown orbs. He seemed to have no control over them.
Alec felt so guilty, but he had no idea how to start a conversation with Magnus. Never before in the
last three months, he had felt that he needed some lessons on how to talk to your fiancé... and yet, he
had no idea what to do right at that moment.

He left his coffee-mug on the kitchen island and finally decided to approach Magnus who was
looking down at the chopped vegetables simmering in the pan. He stopped to contemplate for a
second, to reassure himself if this was the right way to go. Then, he sighed and walked behind
Magnus, wrapping his arms around Magnus’ waist. The Omega stiffened and felt his throat bob as
the arms brushed against his abdomen. He blinked and looked down, feeling the gentle force that
Alec was using to pull him back, and away from the kitchen counter. Magnus let himself lose and
stepped back until he hit Alec’s chest and froze again.

Alec lowered his head and dropped it on Magnus’ shoulder. Magnus took a deep breath and felt his
body shaking. It was getting harder and harder to control his tears every second, but Magnus held his
breath and tears at bay. “If you keep crying like this...”, Alec breathed against Magnus’ neck,
running a shiver down the latter’s spine. “... there would be far too much seasoning in the baked
vegetables... don’t you think?”, he added, tightening his hold around Magnus and pulling him closer.
Magnus could feel his chest tightening.

“I am sorry...”, Alec continued, a few more seconds later. “I shouldn’t have lost my temper...”, he
confessed, and Magnus finally broke into sniffles.

“It is my fault... I have always misunderstood you...Alexander”, he apologized, turning around to
face Alec for the first time since afternoon. He looked up at Alec and there was no sign of anger
anywhere on the Alpha’s face. Instead, there was the same old endearing expression that Magnus
adored so much – the one with care and love oozing out with a hint of the naughtiness that defined
Alexander Lightwood. Alec tilted his head, noticing the bags under Magnus’ eyes – all a result of
crying all day. He used his thumbs to wipe off all the fresh tears and let Magnus wrapped his arms
around his neck and pull him in a hug.

“It wasn’t your fault entirely... so, you can’t blame yourself alone...”, Alec mumbled, rubbing
Magnus’ back, and letting him cry out his grief. That was the best way to make Magnus feel lighter
and better. “I let anger get the better of me... and that’s just... I am so sorry Magnus. I wasn’t thinking
straight...”, he admitted.

Magnus pulled away from Alec’s neck and looked at him with furrowed brows.

“I have been taking you for granted, Alec”, Magnus sniffled and wiped his nose with the back of his
hand. Alec didn’t comment on the gesture and just smiled. “I should have just... I got so scared that I
 messed up our relationship by kissing you... and I thought you couldn’t like me... not like that.”, he
continued, looking at everything but Alec. “And then you called, and I thought you would shout at
me... and then you did... but not because I kissed you... but because I forgot to uphold my end of the
deal... and you didn’t mention the kiss at all... and I freaked out that it didn’t mean enough for you to
even acknowledge. Then on set, I thought you’d finally yell at me... and instead, you held my hand...
and I freaked out again... and...”, Magnus paused and took a deep breath while Alec quietly listened.
“... I think I ruined... I am sorry...”, he breathed out and dropped his head apologetically on
Alec’s chest. Alec hummed in reply... accepting the apology.

“Now... that we’re confessing”, Alec replied. “Letting you go out to work was the hardest decision I
took... and I didn’t realize it soon enough, but I could picture you dropping the towels you were
holding... or some cutlery... or just passing out in the lobbies and it scared the shit out of me. I couldn’t concentrate on the shoot, all but thinking about you... And then you didn’t call during the first hour and I thought something had really happened to you...”, Alec gulped. “I couldn’t bear the idea of you getting hurt... and then the kiss...”, Alec cleared his throat.

“You know you have these heightened feelings during these times... and I was unsure if you kissed me because you liked me... or just because you know...you’re...”, he paused for a second. “...hormonal... I tried to not talk about the kiss so that you wouldn’t feel awkward... and that was a mistake. I get that now.”, he breathed out. “All this... and then it... all just... built inside...”, Alec was unable to form a proper sentence. “I just... it came out as anger... and I am really sorry... I couldn’t come back to the trailer after our argument because I saw fear in your eyes when you looked at me and I cannot forget that I scared you... I am so sorry...”, and Alec meant it.

“I know you are”, Magnus admitted, sounding like a little kid. Alec bent down and kissed Magnus’ hair. “So, we’re good...?”, he asked, looking up.

“We’re the best”, Alec said, proudly. Magnus bit his lip and chuckled. “I promise you... you’ll never see me angry again... ever.”, the Alpha assured.

Alec stroked Magnus’ back, relaxing him down. Magnus pulled away a few moments later, with even redder and sore eyes. Alec grabbed a tissue paper and wiped Magnus’ face gently. Magnus looked like a kid... with the running nose and swollen cheeks and Alec chuckled as he wiped his fiancé’s nose too, embarrassing the shit out of the older man.

“For the record, I didn’t mean to cry so much... they just kept coming out. It was beyond my control”, Magnus dramatically waved his hand, pulling away from Alec. Alec, although very amused, nodded repeatedly.

“Of course”, the Alpha mused, as he offered another tissue paper to Magnus.

“I don’t cry... that’s not me”, Magnus defended himself.

“No, you don’t”, Alec agreed, crossing his hands on his chest as he watched Magnus run around, blowing his nose and wiping his face to look presentable. He bent down to look at himself in the reflection of the tap and gasped.

“I looked like a ripe tomato”, he quipped.

“Of course”, Alec chortled, absent-mindedly... just blindly agreeing to whatever Magnus was saying. Magnus narrowed his brows and pouted. He turned around to look at Alec with suspicious eyes and then the frown lines on his forehead vanished as he realized he was right.

“Not funny?”, Magnus huffed. Alec plucked his lips and grinned. He came forward and bent to press a kiss on Magnus’ red nose.

“It kind of is...”, Alec scrunched his nose. Magnus smacked Alec’s chest and looked away.

“Alexander no...”, he said in a slightly nasal tone. Alec stepped ahead and wrapped his arms around Magnus’ chest and upper arms, trapping the man. He pressed a kiss on his temple and chuckled against the Omega’s caramel skin.

“It’s funny... and extremely adorable, Magnus Bane”, he poked Magnus’ nose with his finger and then jerked a little, stepping away from Magnus without tipping him off. He stopped breathing and muttered a little while later.
“Your hormones are rocking my world right now... literally and figuratively...”, Alec remarked. Magnus’ pupils widened as he realized the hidden meaning behind it. “I’ll be right back...”, Alec said, closing his mouth now.

“Alexander... did you really just...”, Magnus gasped.

Alec bit his lip and nodded. He let Magnus go and returned to the room, leaving Magnus in a state of utter confusion and embarrassment. The Omega heard the bathroom door click and shut and he closed his eyes. He must have really tried to avoid getting so aroused. Magnus felt guilty and he quickly finished the vegetables and put them in the oven for baking.

Grabbing his cup of coffee, he walked out into the balcony so that when Alec came back, he’d have the apartment to himself. On one of the many weekends, Magnus and Alec had bought a swing for their spacious balcony. Magnus felt the cool breeze on his face and settled on the swing. He tapped the floor gently to give it a nice motion and leaned back to close his eyes. Today had been a good day for his heat. He hadn’t had hot flashes... or blackouts and life looked fine.

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“So, clearly something is up with Mom and Dad... and they think that they can hide it from me...”, Clary rolled her eyes, as she snuggled into the cushion she was holding. The redhead was laid comfortable on a couch, wrapped in a comfy blanket. She had decided to stay over at the Lightwood’s post dinner.

“I am sure they’ve got good reason”, Izzy reasoned, shuffling the playlist on the sound system. She was spread out on the rug, with her head resting on the back of her upper arm. They were listening to music, unable to decide on what show or movie to binge.

“I am sure they do”, Clary agreed, plucking the ends of the blanket. “But, what if I can actually help them with their problem... you know? It’s not like I am ten years old or something... I am legally an adult and I can handle situations.”, she sighed, looking directly at the moon from the large window in Izzy’s room. Izzy took a deep breath and looked away. She knew exactly what was troubling both their parents, but she couldn’t say.

“And then there’s you...”, the redhead Alpha pointed at the Lightwood second-born. “You’ve been going through something too... and yet you wouldn’t say a word to me. It’s like the whole world wants to be their own superhero...”, she complained.

“It’s nothing, C...I can handle it”, Izzy lied. Clary rolled her eyes and flashed a small smile, unimpressed with her. She could see the concern in Izzy’s eyes and the way they flickered in fear whenever she remembered what was troubling her. Clary was just tired of seeing people around her suffer. First, her elder brother who went through a horrific phase of his heat cycle every few months and now... her adoptive family. The only person who was always honest with her had been Magnus – no one else and she missed her brother so much.

“Whatsoever... I am out for a run”, Clary suddenly stood up and threw her blanket off. Izzy tilted her and looked at the redhead who seemed a little too furious too soon. She sat up on the rug and furrowed her brows.

“Clary, you okay?”, she asked, pulling her legs close to herself.

“Yeah... I am fine... I just need some air... I’ll be back soon. Don’t wait up for me.”, she waved her hand off.

“I’ll be fine...”, Clary huffed climbing onto the ledge of the balcony. She raised her hand in the air and dropped down before Izzy could stop her. 2 pairs of legs landed on the grass ahead and the wolf ran into the darkness of the forest. Izzy rolled her eyes and transformed behind her. Following Clary wasn’t difficult. Her fur shone through the darkness when moonlight fell on it and very soon, the Lightwood wolf caught onto her.

They weren’t mated and therefore, they weren’t connected in thoughts like Magnus and Alec were. But they could communicate if Clary decided to speak up. The wolves chased each other, cutting through the leaves and branches until they reached the creek. The creek was overflowing with violent waves of water. Izzy halted behind Clary whose head was dropped low. She pawed herself closer to the Alpha and saw her eyes. They were glistening.

Izzy transformed back into her human form – not caring that she was naked. Clary transformed next and they both sat down on the ground.

“You know what is going on with my parents... right Izzy? You’ve been going through the same thing, aren’t you?”, Clary looked up at the moon and her lips shivered in the wind. She was wet from head to toe – her red hairs sticking to her body.

“Uh...”, Izzy stammered.

“I try very hard to not remember the fact that... I am not a Bane by birth”, Clary huffed out air from her mouth. “...hoping that with time, that fact will cease to be true...”, she sniffled. “And yet, the fact remains... I am not a Bane... no matter what... this truth about my existence will never change...”, she said, closing her eyes as tears squeezed out. “And I just... I want to help them, you know... help them with whatever is going on and they...”

“Clary...”, Izzy came closer, wrapping her arms around Clary’s upper arm. “You are their daughter... their younger kid... and they haven’t told you about it... because they don’t want you to worry... and I happened to walk by mum and dad’s room one night... and I accidentally heard what was going on... I wasn’t supposed to!”, she reasoned. “You are a part of their family and you always will be. Your mother never does anything without running by you... you are the one who gets all the clothes for your Dad because he approves your choice... and Magnus... what would Magnus do without his little sister? You are a Bane – in every sense there is...”, Clary looked at Izzy and a smile tugged her lips. The girl had her way with words.

“What if I can help...?”, she licked her lips.

“You can... you can...it’s not like you can’t. They just don’t want us involved... to keep us safe. And we can help them by supporting them, alright?”, Izzy dropped her head on Clary’s shoulder. Clary tilted her own until her cheek rested on Izzy’s hair.

“Is it too bad?”, she asked.

“Nothing they can’t handle... alright?”, the Lightwood girl assured Clary. Her face shone up a little as a bolt of thunder lit up the sky. “Let’s get back home... before our parents found out we escaped through the balcony...”, she rolled her eyes and got up, holding out her hand to Clary. Clary chuckled and grabbed her hand. As soon as they were on their feet, they transformed back into their wolf counterparts and sprinted back home.

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Alec was alerted when the oven didn’t stop beeping. Magnus wasn’t in the kitchen. Narrowing his brows, Alec walked to the counter and took out the dish from the oven using mittens and looked around. He couldn’t find his fiancé. “Magnus?”, he called out. There was no response. Alec looked at the door and it was still bolted from inside. He kept the dish aside and walked over to the living room to take a peek at the balcony.

The swing was oscillating softly. He went closer to the glass wall and pressed his palm on it. Magnus was asleep on the swing with his head resting on the corner of backrest. He had a cushion clutched to his chest and his coffee mug was lying on the table in front of him. It was still full. Alec smiled and pushed the glass door open. It was rather chilly out there and a shiver ran down Alec’s arm. Magnus had nothing but a thin t-shirt on. Alec gently walked over to the swing and sat down in the empty place next to Magnus.

Alec gently placed a palm on Magnus’ shoulder and squeezed it. Magnus moved a little, albeit without attempting to wake up. “Hey...? Magnus?”, Alec called. Magnus mumbled something and settled back to his sleep.

“Hey...wake up...?”, he called to the man again.

“Go away... I want to sleep... I am very tired...okay?”, Magnus complained. Alec chuckled softly and shifted closer to Magnus, pulling him from the swing and letting him drop on his chest. Magnus let out a deep sigh and went back to sleep.

“Magnus, you haven’t had dinner yet... wake up... eat something and then sleep, all you like.”, Alec reasoned, patting Magnus’ cheek. “If you don’t eat...you’ll wake up in the middle of the night with all sorts of noises coming out of your stomach...”

“Not hungry...”, Magnus replied.

“Why?”, Alec asked, amused by his fiancé’s words. “You haven’t had anything all day... not since lunch...”, he added.

“Sleepy... Alexander... go away...”, Magnus threatened.

“Ok fine... but come and sleep on the bed... it’s too cold outside and it will only get colder...”, Alec arched his brows. He gently stood up and pulled Magnus, but the man was too sleepy to walk on his own. Admitting defeat, Alec placed a hand below Magnus’ knees and lifted him off his feet, carrying him all the way to the bed. He lifted the blanket and placed Magnus on the bed, replacing the blanket to cover the Omega. Magnus cuddled in the warmth and softness of the bed and hugged the blanket close to himself.

Alec stopped by Magnus’ bedside for a second to stare at his stunner of a fiancé. Their lives were so exciting, and each day brought new adventures for them. Sometimes, they forgot to stop and revel the little moments like this one. Alec couldn’t have imagined opening up his heart again for someone after what Sebastian and Jace had done... at least not for some more years. And more importantly, he wouldn’t have thought that Magnus of all people would be the one to do it. For the world, Magnus Bane was a determined and hardworking citizen, but Alec knew that this man was all-heart. He was compassionate and honest – but the most important thing for Alec was – Magnus had come to mean everything to Alec in their short span of living together.

He gently removed the strands of hair from Magnus’ forehead and lurched forward, pressing a soft kiss on Magnus’ lips.

“Goodnight Magnus...”, he whispered against those pink and plump lips.
Maryse and Robert hadn’t been informed by Isabelle about Alec’s impromptu visit to Idris to join them for the anniversary party that the Lightwoods were throwing this weekend. After the dinner with Banes last week, Izzy had called Alec to ask him to rethink about his trip because the new developments suggested that Alec and Magnus should be far away from Idris until this situation cooled down. Alec had argued that there was no way he would leave the family alone – now that he knew that there was something wrong; even if it meant putting himself in a complicated situation by showing up. Isabelle had started realizing that maybe she had put Alec in more trouble while attempting to save her father. Alec, on the other side, spoke with Magnus to make sure the man was ok staying alone for the three days that Alec was going to be absent. That alone was a very crucial point for Alec to make the final decision to travel to Idris. He couldn’t leave Magnus alone even if there was an iota of doubt in the latter’s head. Magnus’ heat had fortunately subsided last week itself, and Magnus had regained his full strength. There was no possible complication on that front, nothing that Alec could think about.

Alec was supposed to leave by a flight in the afternoon on Friday and return to New York on Monday morning to resume his shoot. Three days – that’s all he had asked for from Vogue. Jem had been insisting him to take another day, just to make sure the family was going to be fine. But Alec was adamant. He didn’t want to miss out on a lot or breach the original contract he signed with the magazine. He had worked double shifts on the nights in the past week to compensate for his leaves, despite Jem assuring him that it was alright if the project was delayed by a day or two. Taking a flight was also not the initial thought but Magnus and Izzy pushed Alec to use the flight instead of hiring a car and driving it all the night on Friday to reach Idris in the morning. The flight was from New York to Seattle – followed by a 2-hour drive into the forests to reach the city of wolves.

Magnus had insisted on dropping him to the airport since he had taken the car to work that day and had asked for a half day from work in that effect – compensating it with a night shift on the same night. Right now, Magnus was still working at the hotel and Alec was supposed to pack his things and meet him there in an hour. After Magnus left, Alec had gone out to the nearby store and bought some medicines and essentials in case Magnus would need them, and also left Luke a message to keep a check on Magnus. He also did the week’s laundry in advance so that Magnus wouldn’t be swamped with work at home. Finally, Alec called an Uber after he was done packing his things and reached the Plaza way before the time when he was supposed to. Magnus was inspecting laundry at the third floor at the time and when Alec spoke to the receptionist, she summoned Raphael instead.

“Mr Lightwood!”, Raphael called from afar, greeting Alec in a heavily laden Spanish accent. Alec returned the greeting with a smile and nodded recollecting the man’s name. He was very bad with names, but he vaguely remembered Raphael’s from the night he and Catarina had helped Magnus after the onset of his heat.
“Mr Santiago!”, he replied.

“You’re here for Magnus, aren’t you? He’s just inspecting the laundry department at Floor 3 and will be with you in no time...”, Raphael explained, directing Alec to the bullpen – and straight to Magnus’ office. Alec hadn’t been there before, and the office was resembled his fiancé so much – it was just as classy and elegant as the man himself. A stack of papers sitting down under a paper weight adorned one side of the writing table. The other side had a landline phone with a board of extensions for different departments resting on it. There were 3 frames on the desk behind the phone, glass ones with shiny and glitter borders.

Alec walked around to see whose photographs they housed. There was a photo of Kaya and Asmodeus standing in front of their home in Idris and Magnus holding Clary in his arms. Clary had a birthday hat on her head and it must have been taken on one of her birthdays – before Magnus’ second gender had been revealed. They looked like they were in high school in the photo. Alec picked the frame up and smiled. Magnus hadn’t changed much in his looks, apart from getting rid of a very ugly pair of braces that adorned his teeth back then and his hair that was bleached blond at the tips and spiked up – Magnus’ rebellious phase. The Lightwood boy scoffed and rolled his eyes. Regardless of that, the boy looked just as gorgeous and honest as he did now. Alec wasted no time in taking out his phone and snapping the photo of Magnus in braces – to use it against him in the future. He smirked devilishly at his wicked idea and placed the frame back and proceeded to the other two. His eyes poked open and he gasped.

There was one solo photo of Alec on the desk – much to Alec’s happy surprise. This was from one of his older shoots with a magazine where the camera team had taken some behind-the-scenes photos of Alec as he worked with the models. Alec was holding a camera to his face and his biceps were popping out from his t-shirt. The short sleeves were rolled up to his shoulders and his brows looked scrunchked. Magnus must have asked Tessa and Jem to get it for him – in good quality. He had a soft copy of it uploaded on his Instagram as his profile picture. To be honest, Alec was pleasantly surprised to be on Magnus’ desk. The other photo was from the night at Pandemonium where they had gotten drunk in the middle of the week and passed out together on the couch. Alec didn’t remember the pictures that bartender had taken but Magnus had apparently gotten them framed for his office. They were looking at each other, with their faces only centimeters apart. Alec’s eyes looked slightly tipsy and Magnus’ lips were curved in a notorious smile. His highlighted cheeks were glowing against the light in the club.

The Alpha’s grin was wide – almost ear to ear – as he caressed Magnus’ face on the photo with his thumb. For people who didn’t know the two men, Magnus and Alec came across as that couple who could never keep their eyes off each other. Their development from strangers to friends... and now whatever they were had been so organic that they themselves didn’t notice the change. He placed the frame back down and stuffed his hands in the pocket and walked over to the window. The view from Magnus’ office was gorgeous. The street outside had a very ancient feel to it. Very Manhattan. Alec sighed and observed. A few school kids were walking down from their bus – possibly going home after their long and tiring day. A few people looked like they were rushing back to work after lunch... and a bunch of tourists were snapping whatever scene they could capture in their cameras.

“Alexander”, Magnus’ voice brought Alec back from his trance. He turned and smiled at Magnus. Magnus looked a little tired and exhausted. The man straightened his shirt to get rid of the creases and walked over to his chair. “Raphael told me you had come early... and I got here as fast as I could... the laundry department has been a mess lately. You’d think the opposite... considering it’s the Plaza... but bitter truths”, he explained, waving his hands dramatically. “Did you wait here for too long?”, he asked, grabbing a notepad from the table and noting something down as he spoke. Alec returned to his seat, the one across the table from Magnus and watched him record every observation and complaint.
“Not long. Don’t worry about it…”, Alec mumbled. Magnus sighed in relief and then gestured Alec to wait two seconds. He just had to make one more call. “I hope you didn’t miss out on any work because of me?”, he arched a brow. Magnus shook his head in a no and smiled.

“Ask Cara to meet me before she leaves for home today. Alright? I need to speak with her immediately…”, he instructed on the phone, authoritatively, and hung up without waiting for an explanation or excuse from the other side. This was the first time Alec was seeing Magnus in his work place – in his true essence and my, was he charismatic? Alec awed his fiancé as he signed a few memos and placed them aside.

“I am so sorry… half of the staff has been replaced by new recruits and there’s no one proper person capable of instructing them… All these new kids do is run around unorganized and mess things up for us…”, he apologized to Alec after he hung up on the communications department. Alec shook his head and smiled, mouthing him to carry on, and that he’d patiently wait. “I swear to God, some days, this place is like a hell hole”, Magnus complained.

“Room number 346 complained about no cable connection in their room over two hours ago and the complaint hasn’t yet been attended to. Where is Jeremiah? Why is he not running point with me on this? Find him and ask him to call me…as soon as he can. If not my office, then my personal number. And that’s after he fixes the problem…”, he blasted off someone and Alec was just charmed. Magnus looked so hot when he was furious and authoritative. He was so charming. Alec pressed his fingers on his lips and watched Magnus.

“Room number 346 complained about no cable connection in their room over two hours ago and the complaint hasn’t yet been attended to. Where is Jeremiah? Why is he not running point with me on this? Find him and ask him to call me…as soon as he can. If not my office, then my personal number. And that’s after he fixes the problem…”, he apologized to Alec after he hung up on the communications department. Alec shook his head and smiled, mouthing him to carry on, and that he’d patiently wait. “I swear to God, some days, this place is like a hell hole”, Magnus complained.

“Should we go?”, Magnus heaved a sigh of relief a couple of minutes later and checked his phone for the time.

“I’ve still got time… but you look busy. I’ll take a cab to the airport if you want. You don’t have to worry, Magnus”, Alec huffed out air.

“No… I’ll drop you. I’ve spoken to Luke about resuming my shift after I am come back and completing my daily hours… don’t worry?”, Magnus smiled, closing his folders. He put some confidential papers in the first drawer and locked it. “This never ends… I have learnt to pull the plug sometimes, otherwise I’ll pluck my gorgeous hair out”, he chuckled.

“Ok…let’s go then…”, Alec said, half-heartedly. Standing up from the chair, Magnus grabbed his phone and took out the car keys. Alec smiled and followed him out. He didn’t know if he really wanted to go. Of course his family needed him, but he was definitely doing to miss Magnus.

The drive to the airport was very quiet. As the destination approached, it became increasing real to the two men that for the first time in over three months, they would have to be apart from each other for more than a few hours. It didn’t seem like a very difficult thing to do, back when Magnus suggested Alec to go to Idris alone and handle the situation there, but now it looked like it was in fact a big deal. The days without Alec around won’t be easy. Magnus clutched the steering wheel hard, trying not to think too much into it. Overthinking had never helped anyone before. Primarily because there was nothing he could do now… Alec had to go and be with his family. And secondarily, because Alec would have deciphered his thoughts right away.

Alec’s head was tilted towards the window away from Magnus and his cheek was resting on his palm. His elbow rested on the window frame and he was blankly looking outside at the traffic, melancholy dripping from his every stance. He felt like he had been torn into two parts of his self. The part of him that couldn’t wait to get to Idris to help his parents… and the other half that didn’t want to leave Magnus alone here. Amidst the complications surrounding their families at home, Alec and Magnus hadn’t given much thought about their kiss from last week.
Now that Magnus’ heat had subsided, they realized that the feelings they had for each other weren’t because of the hormonal cycles. They were very real and also becoming stronger every day. From sleeping on separate edges of the bed to now sleeping cuddled in each other’s arms, albeit in separate blankets, Magnus and Alec could feel the progress in their relationship but they had not been able to gather courage to come clean each other about how they felt. There were times when Magnus caught Alec staring at him or clicking pictures from his phone. Alec didn’t realize that Magnus noticed him stealing glances and smiling at him for no reason when the latter went to Alec’s set to pick him up from his shoot. Brushing each other’s cheek with thumbs and other such small gestures had become much more common for the two men and everyone except for them could notice how much they needed to address this elephant in the room and confess their feelings. Guess they were just waiting for the right time according to them.

Normally, Magnus would have dropped Alec at the drop-in point at the Departures gate but instead, he turned towards the parking area to get a little more time to properly say goodbye to his fiancé. Alec didn’t notice the change in route because he kept staring outside without his mind being into it. Magnus tried to engage in Alec’s thoughts, but they seemed to be blank. Magnus drove their Volvo inside the Parking area. Alec’s lids flickered when the outside went dark and he cleared his throat, becoming aware of himself and where they were. To his surprise, they had reached the airport. Magnus pulled out the key from the car and sighed. The time for Alec to leave was getting closer every minute.

Wearily, he stepped out of the car and went back to get Alec’s bag. Alec opened the back door to pull out his laptop bag which also had his files from work. He joined Magnus at the back who was closing the carrier door.

“Will you be fine?”, Alec spoke up, after an hour of silence.

“Hm...”, Magnus’ voice choked from being quiet for too long and he looked away to calm down. “It’s barely three days, Alexander... you’ll be back before I blink!”, he collected himself and put on the façade of his charming self.

Alec lifted both his hands and placed them on Magnus’ bicep, sliding them down slowly to take Magnus’ hands in his. Magnus looked up and locked his eyes with his fiancé. They were the most gorgeous shade of hazel that he had seen and no matter how many times he had appreciated the color before, the sight always got the best of him and made him weak to his knees. Alec lifted Magnus’ hands up to his nose and sniffed his wrists. Magnus shivered at the tough of Alec’s cold tip of his nose. “Take care, Magnus”, Alec whispered softly. Magnus bit his lip and nodded.

“I will... you don’t worry...”, Magnus smiled, turning his hands around in Alec’s hold to kiss him softly. “You make sure your family is okay... alright?”, the man tried to be as calm as he could. Alec looked at him and nodded. Oh, this was so hard.

Magnus slowly reached out to the collar of Alec’s shirt and grabbed it between his hands. He came forward and raised his chin up to press his lips onto Alec’s. Alec heaved a huge sigh of relief and kissed his fiancé back. “I will miss you...”, Magnus pulled away and whispered against Alec’s lips. The man’s mouth dried. He nodded swiftly mouthing I will miss you too. Magnus stepped away from Alec and grabbed his luggage as they made their way out to the Departures terminals.

Somewhere along the way, Alec slipped his hand in Magnus and it seemed like a very normal thing to do.

Magnus handed over the bag to Alec when they finally reached the gate. It was time for Alec to leave. Magnus let Alec’s hand go and wrapped it around himself protectively. His anxiety was slowly reaching it’s peak.
“Call me when you reach Seattle... and when you finally reach home. Both times?”, Magnus reminded as Alec took out his wallet to find his ticket confirmation slip. He hummed an affirmative while searching his laptop bag.

“And give Izzy and Clary the chocolates I got for them. Without forgetting, Alexander?”, he reminded the Alpha wolf.

“Yes, Magnus... I will... anything else?”, Alec whispered. He finally found his ticket which was surprisingly right in front of him the whole time. Guess he was rather too anxious of leaving Magnus alone to function properly.

Without further ado, Alec whispered a quick bye to Magnus and turned around to proceed to the Gate. There was no easy way to do this. He had to face his fear, some way or the other. His heart was racing. Something didn’t seem right. He didn’t feel like he was ready to go yet. And then he stopped right outside the Gate and turned to see if Magnus was there. A certain realization dawned on him. Chances were, Magnus had already left to get back to his car. To Alec’s surprise, the Omega was standing there, waiting for Alec to go inside. He straightened himself when he saw Alec staring at him and arched his brows asking if he had forgotten something. Alec smiled and sprinted to cross the distance between him and his fiancé.

Reaching Magnus, he dropped his bags on the ground and shot himself on Magnus, his lips crashing onto Magnus’. Magnus raised his hands in air to regain his balance and moaned.

“Go out with me...”, Alec breathed out, his words rushing out.

“Huh?”, Magnus widened his eyes.

“Go out with me, Magnus...”, Alec repeated. “You and me... together. Where there’s nobody else... it is just us...”, he explained.

Magnus smiled, hiding the blush on his cheeks. “We go out multiple times... almost every Friday, Alexander!”, he teased. Alec rolled his eyes.

“Magnus...”, the guy pleaded. “Alone... I want to spend some time with you... like real, romantic... time...”, Alec was almost always not good with beating around the bush and Magnus loved that about the Alpha male.

Magnus chuckled. “Are you asking me out on a date?”, he questioned back.

“Yeah...”, Alec bit his lip and nodded. “Would you?”

“Yes”, Magnus said, without hesitation. “I will. You don’t even need to ask me... just take my hand and drag me out of the apartment and I’ll go anywhere to spend some real, romantic time”, the Omega repeated Alec’s last words, making the Alpha roll his eyes in embarrassment and chuckle.

He came closer and pressed one palm on Alec’s chest and wrapped his other hand around his waist. “Go... and come back soon. I’ll be waiting for you to take me on this date you promised?”, he whispered. Alec bent and kissed Magnus’ cheek.

“I’ll be back before you know it...”, Alec promised.

“I am counting on that”, Magnus winked. He let Alec go and turned around to leave. Alec was still leaving, and Magnus would still be alone but this promise that Alec had made... had had a lasting impact on the Omega and he was overly enthusiastic for the weekend to pass so that he could see Alec again.
Alec reached Idris at around midnight and he sent a text to Magnus to inform him that he was going to reach home in a few minutes. He also informed Izzy to keep the door open for him so that Maryse and Robert didn’t wake up. Alec had missed the quiet and dark roads of his hometown. The branches of the Pine and Cedar trees overhung the roads that were cut out in the mountains. He rolled the window pane down to feel the cool breeze that was tainted with the scent of wet mud and wood. The leaves were rustling with the wind. The cab turned inside the Lightwood estate that was situation on the other side of the river. The lamps were mostly out, except the ones closest to their mansion. The cab stopped in front of the gate and Izzy was sitting on the stairs leading to the door. Her eyes lit up when she saw her brother step out of the car. As much as she didn’t want Alec here in the last few days, she had to accept that she missed him. Alec paid the driver and took out his bags. Izzy took his laptop bag from him and he wrapped his arms around her.

Kissing the top of her hair, Alec mumbled a soft hi.

“How is everything?”, he asked. Izzy hummed something on the lines of “the same...” and grabbed Alec’s hand to lead him inside to his room. The mansion was very quiet. It had started drizzling outside and Alec could hear the raindrops hitting the glass walls on the other side of the mansion. He walked up the staircase and pushed the door of his room. Izzy had gotten it cleaned away from Maryse’s eyes. There had also been a few changes made to the room – namely two extra cupboards that now stood next to Alec’s. His bed was replaced by a larger one, to accommodate two people and wall with photographs now also included Magnus’ photographs as well as some from them together, riffed off from Magnus and Alec’s Instagram account.

“Take rest, big brother. I’ll find you tomorrow morning”, Izzy sighed as she turned around to leave. “We need to talk, Iz”, Alec tilted his head.

“It can wait till tomorrow...”, she faked a smile. “You are here now...”, she nodded. “Good night...”, she waved and closed Alec’s door behind her. Alec took a deep breath and dropped on his bed. The mattress was heavenly. He was lying on his side of the bed where he slept back in his apartment in New York. Instinctively, his palm reached out to the empty side of the bed and he looked in the same direction. He missed Magnus so damn much. He pulled out his phone from his pocket and scrolled to find Magnus’ contact.

Magnus was sitting in his office, writing reviews on the temporary staff attendants that were under observation. Raphael, Luke and Catarina had already left, being the day shift staff. Raphael’s place was replaced by Victor who managed the night shift. He wasn’t as warm and friendly as Raphael, but he was behaving alright with Magnus... possibly because Magnus hadn’t given him much to complain about. He was very meticulous with everything.

He jumped in his seat when his phone rang. It was unusual for someone to call at 1am in the morning and Magnus turned his phone over to see who it was. Magnus’ face lit up in a smile as he read the name Alexander on the screen.

“Hey!”, he smiled and leaned back on his chair. The chair squeaked a little as it bent backwards.

“Hi there...”, Alec breathed out, happiness oozing out from his husky voice. Magnus could hear Alec’s grin on the other side of the phone.

“Did you reach home safely?”, Magnus cleared his throat and asked.

“Yes, I did. Only a couple of minutes ago. I am sorry, are you still working? I should have just
texted...”, Alec muttered.

“It’s absolutely fine, Alexander. Hotels are really not that hectic in the night shifts. I am doing just fine. I have to go and check the floors in an hour or so. Other than that, I am stuck doing paperwork. So, relax”, Magnus whispered.

“Ok...”, Alec sighed in relief.

“How’s Isabelle? Is she holding up fine?”

“Yeah... I guess so. She refused to talk, though. Said that it’s better we spoke in the morning. I am not sure what to make of that. Also, the house was very quiet and calm. I mean... it appeared so”, Alec waved his hand.

“Your sister is a wise girl, Alexander. I am sure she knows what she is doing. Don’t think too much into anything okay? Wait for her to tell you everything in the morning. Patience is a virtue, my dear”, he quoted.

“Well, my dear...”, Alec imitated. “I am not very high on patience...”, he reminded.

“Oh, I know. I know.”, Magnus raised his brows and chuckled. Alec paused for a minute and then scoffed, breaking into a full-blown laughter.

“Hey...”, the Alpha stopped laughing and sat up on the bed, recalling something all of a sudden. Magnus stopped giggling and became attentive, indicating Alec that he had his full attention. “I am going to convert this into a video call. There’s something I need you to see... just a second okay? Magnus... don’t go anywhere...”, he hurriedly mentioned. He cut the call and FaceTime’d Magnus a minute later.

Magnus accepted the call and Alec’s face lit up on the screen. He was sitting on the bed now, but his hair was all spiked up in all directions. Magnus assumed that Alec must have been lying on the bed for quite some time. His grin was ear to ear on seeing Magnus and that alone made Magnus forget all his exhaustion.

Alec flipped the screen and showed Magnus his room. Magnus was either very sleepy or had very few memories of the room from his last visit, but he couldn’t point out the differences in the design, except for maybe a different paint on the walls. He furrowed his brows, trying to hide his expressions from Alec’s excited eyes that were bawling out of the sockets.

“Yeaaaah... I can see it. It looks really nice, Alexander”, he dragged, managing to lie. On most days, he would be very good at deflecting but his exhaustion from work was showing up in his inability to fake an observation. Alec was tired himself, but he saw right through Magnus’ deflection and squinted his eyes.

“Do you even know what I am trying to show you... and failing at?”, Alec arched a brow. Magnus sucked in his lower lip and giggled.

“Nope... not a clue”, he admitted, looking away from the screen in embarrassment.

“Oh God, Magnus...”, Alec said, disapprovingly. He came closer to the wardrobe and heaved a sigh. “Magnus, my love”, Alec rubbed his temple, not realizing the little phrase he had added after Magnus’ name and the effect it had had on a now flushing fiancé of his. “Mom installed another set of closets for you... so, whenever you come and visit... you can bring some of your stuff...!” he shrugged.
“Or keep a few things stashed there permanently?” Magnus offered, clicking his tongue and winking his right eye. Alec loved that little wink because Magnus could never manage to stop his other eye from fluttering shut too.

“Yeah... that too...”, Alec rubbed the back of his head... nervously licking his lips.

“And there’s a new bed... larger and comfier, more than enough for the two of us...”, Alec jumped on it and landed on his back, the mattress shaping itself according to Alec’s back. There were silk sheets in a vibrant gold color and Alec could feel himself drowning in those. “It’s better than the smaller one I used to have...”, he suggested.

“Contrary to what you might claim, you’re a very motile sleeper, Alexander”, Magnus rolled his eyes. “This bed should accommodate your reptilian nature though”, he said, hiding his smile.

“OH yeah?”, Alec arched his brows.

“Absolutely yeah...”, Magnus nodded, humming his reply. Alec faked being offended and gasped, holding his chest.

“I miss you...”, Alec grumbled, throwing his head back.

Magnus fell silent on the other side and Alec could just hear him breathe... rather unevenly. “I miss you too”, he admitted, a few seconds later.

“I wish I could have you with me for the anniversary party”, Alec admitted. Magnus saw Alec’s hazel orbs and the truthfulness of his statements were oozing out of them. “I am not carved to attend parties but you...”

“You’ll be fine, Alexander.”, Magnus shut him off midline and waved his hand.

“The only time you’ve seen me at a party is when you’ve been there with me... and you calm my nerves down, Magnus”, Alec said.

“And I’ll be there with you tomorrow, if you need me alright? I am just a phone call away, darling”, Magnus said, flicking his hand dramatically. He had just used darling for Alec and I don’t think either of them realized it.

“Counting on that...”, Alec whispered. He was about to say something about the lovely weather back in Idris when he heard a knock through the call. Ugh. He thought.

“Alexander?”, Magnus asked, a few seconds later.

“Yeah...yeah talk to you tomorrow...”, Alec understood that Magnus was being summoned somewhere.

“Goodnight Alexander.”, Magnus’ face curved in a grin. Alec really noticed his life.

“I miss you...”, Alec whispered again. Those weren’t the three words you’d have usually said to someone you like...but Alec and Magnus, both knew that these three words meant something very similar. It was their own declaration of feelings.

“I miss you too”, Magnus responded, warmly.

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Maryse was sitting on the breakfast table with Robert, quietly eating her hash browns when a
familiar but unexpected figure walked down the staircase. She looked up in the direction and her eyes widened. Her hand that was lifting the glass of juice to her lips stopped midway as well.

“Alec”, she squeaked. Alec yawned and pulled his t-shirt down his body. He was wearing a maroon one over ash grey pajama pants. Robert cleared his throat and looked back. It was indeed his eldest son.

“Son?”, he narrowed his brows.

Alec flashed a smile, rubbing the back of his hair. He yawned again and reached his parents. Maryse stood up from her chair and wrapped her arms around her boy. Oh, she had missed him so much. “Hey Mom”, Alec whispered in her hair. “Happy Anniversary...”, he wished her. Pulling away from her, Alec cupped her face and pressed a kiss on her forehead. Maryse relaxed in her son’s touch. For a second, Alec felt like she was relieved to see him; and he could feel that she was suddenly feeling safe and protected.

“Alec”, she repeated her son’s name and a smile appeared on her face. Alec turned to wish his father who was now standing behind him, waiting for Alec to finish meeting his mother. He looked normal to Alec but his eyes had a light sense of fear in them. Alec and Izzy had learnt to read Robert’s eyes over the years because he was not the type of man who would share his problems with anyone, especially not his children.

“Alec”, she repeated her son’s name and a smile appeared on her face. Alec turned to wish his father who was now standing behind him, waiting for Alec to finish meeting his mother. He looked normal to Alec but his eyes had a light sense of fear in them. Alec and Izzy had learnt to read Robert’s eyes over the years because he was not the type of man who would share his problems with anyone, especially not his children.


“Thank you, my boy”, he replied. “But... what are you doing here? I thought you were working on that Vogue project?”, Robert pulled away and placed a hand on Alec’s shoulder.

“Yes... but Izzy told me about the party and I couldn’t miss it”, Alec shrugged, flashing a smile to hide that he knew what they were going through.

“Oh, that girl”, Robert rolled his eyes and chuckled. “She can never keep a secret now, can she? I hope your bosses didn’t mind this weekend getaway?”, he arched a brow.

“No... they were excited to know that my parents are celebrating their silver jubilee anniversary”, Alec turned around to grab a slice of apple from the table.

“Where’s... where’s my son-in-law?”, Maryse looked over Alec’s shoulder to see if Magnus would follow him down.

“Ohh... Magnus couldn’t make it. He had to take a few leaves because of his heat last week... and”, Alec was reminded of Magnus and his lips curved into a soft smile. “I asked him to stay... he would’ve taken an off but... I...”

“No, you did the right thing Alec... Magnus is in New York to make a career and that’s what he SHOULD be doing, okay?”, Robert said, affirmatively.

“He sends his best regards to the two of you...”, Alec added. “And a pretty special gift which you’ll get only after you cut the cake tonight...”, Alec winked at his mom and walked around to sit on the seat opposite to Robert, across the table.

Maryse tensed at the reminder of the party. “He didn’t have to send us a gift, Alec. Magnus’ love and regards don’t need a proof”, she added with a weak smile.

“I know... but he was adamant. He said that he wanted to do something, considering he was not
going to make it to the party...”, Alec eyed her as she sat down and passed the plate of hash browns and toasted bread over to Alec.

“That’s very thoughtful of Magnus”, Maryse remarked, whilst trying to remain calm, but Alec could see right through to her. He also noticed how Robert was holding her hand below the table, trying to calm her down and hide her anxiety. Izzy was right.

“So... how is everything?”, Alec cleared his throat and pulled the slice of butter towards himself to apply it on the bread.

“Fine”, Maryse choked, rapidly and faked another smile.

“Everything is alright, Alec. Why do you ask?”, Robert tried to cover up for his wife.

“I know Izzy must be sleeping... but I don’t see Max? Where is he...? Doesn’t he have school?”, Alec asked, pretending to look around. He knew Maryse and Robert had sent Max to Dublin to grow up away from the Clave’s influence.

“Max...”, Maryse gasped. “Max is with... Nana and Grandpa”, she informed. “We sent him to Dublin recently. Sorry, I thought I mentioned it to you, Alec?”, she furrowed his brows.

“No... it’s ok. It must have slipped out of your mind”, Alec waved his hand off. “Is he settling in alright?”, he added with an interrogatory tone. Robert felt suspicious. Alec was never the one to ask too many questions.

“He is. We spoke to him yesterday and he’s really happy there”, Maryse smiled.

“I’ll call him and tell him to not find himself a Sebastian. That doesn’t work out...”, Alec rolled his eyes, trying to crack a joke about his ex-fling. Maryse looked up at Alec with a genuine concern in her eyes. She knew a little about what went wrong with that particular mundane and was surprised to see how free Alec seemed about mentioning him.

Alec gave a very endearing look to Maryse, telling her he was fine.

They quietly finished their breakfast and Alec went back upstairs to see if Isabelle had woken up. He gently pushed her door open and found Magnus’ sister curled up on the rug on the floor while Izzy was snoring in the bed. Alec was relieved. He could give Clary the chocolates after she woke up and wouldn’t have to wait until the evening for the party.

The breeze outside was moist and cool, very tempting for a quick run. Alec went to the balcony in his room and took out his tshirt. He inserted his thumbs between his pajamas and his skin and slid it out. With a gush of breath, Alec transformed after jumping on to the grassy backyard and launched his wolf form into the forest.

The forests had become denser since the last time he was here. This was probably due to heavy rains. His tracks that he had made by running and clearing the grass beneath him had disappeared, after being covered with bushes. Alec smelt the moisture of the ground and heard the rustling of the leaves. As he neared the creek, he realized that the noise was water running was significantly higher. As the water body neared, Alec realized how wide the creek had become... and how violent the water current was. The rock which he usually used to give him a jumpstart across the creek was now overflown by the water current, trapping the man towards this side of the flowing water.

Alec halted at the bank and sat on his hindlegs. This place looked very similar, yet different. He inspected the surroundings and then felt himself. Luke had given him free access to take a run in his warehouse. But nothing could ever come close to what Alec felt when he stretched his legs in these
open forests. He relaxed himself and dropped on the ground. Settling his head on one of his paws, he closed his eyes for a few minutes.

***

Magnus returned home late in the afternoon on Saturday. He had the evening off and had to go back to work on Sunday morning, as per his original schedule. Between the night shift last night, a half day on Friday and a half day on Saturday, Magnus had managed to cover his duty hours. Now, he had the half his afternoon and the entire evening to himself. Not that he wanted it. An apartment without Alec bickering around wasn’t the best idea to begin with. But, he had promised Alec to not overwork himself and he needed to sleep for a bit before Alec called.

He had texted the Omega at around lunch-time, asking him to be there when he got ready. Izzy would have helped him but according to Alec, she had been avoiding her brother all day by running off to Clary’s under the pretext of helping her with her studies.

Magnus called him right after he received the text that suggested that Alec was sort of panicking without him around. Magnus always had the right things to say to Alec... some of which instantly calmed the nerves down. He instantly told Alec to stop worrying because whatever it was, he was present right there to sort it out. He offered to help... call Clary or Izzy and confront them about it but Alec said that he’d handle... or rather try to. Magnus also told him to go and speak with his mother after the party. Alec thought for a while before agreeing to do it if Izzy didn’t tell him what was going on. That’s what he was there for.

Magnus took a quick shower after he reached the apartment and came out wearing a pair of black pajamas and no-shirt. He walked over to his cupboard and opened it. His eyes wandered off to Alec’s portion of the wardrobe and he felt his fingers feeling the fibers of Alec’s sweater. He smiled, at the reminder of his fiancé and curled his fingers around this particular grey sweater that was Alec’s favorite and therefore, always remained on the top of the pile of clothes. He pulled the sweater out and sniffed it. It smelled of Alec – the rich flavor of lemongrass and oil that was Alec’s favorite scent of bodywash. Alec mustn’t have worn it more than once because he could faintly smell Alec’s alpha male scent on the sweater and that drove him crazy as soon as it hit his nostrils. It was a cold day outside and Magnus absent-mindedly pulled the sweater down his neck and slide his hands through the sleeves.

He always chastised Alec to wear something different on their weekend stay-in at home but now he understood why Alec loved this sweater so much. The fibers were so soft and brushed lightly against the skin. The perfect size hugged you in all the right places but for Magnus – it reminded him of Alec and therefore, nothing could top that. He gently plucked the sweater at the chest area and sniffed it again. This time, a small smile appeared on his lips.

He took out a can of ice-cream and settled on the couch. There wasn’t much on Netflix these days that Magnus really liked, but he clicked on The Notebook to pass his time. There wasn’t a lot of ice-cream left in the can and Magnus pretty much finished it in a few minutes before snuggling in the covers. He put a spare cushion underneath his head and continued to watch the movie until finally, his eyes drooped close and he fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

Find me on Twitter @mymalecstories
Let me know what you thought either on Twitter or here in the comments :)

Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

There's clizzy, and Alec and Underhill? Also, the plot the begins :)

Chapter Notes

The tags are changed. So, please do have a look before you go ahead with the chapter. This is where the major plot begins. The plot will culminate into a minor plot before the fiction ends.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alec didn’t realise and it was already Saturday – the day of the Anniversary party. He spent the morning jogging in the woods, and meeting with the Banes over breakfast, Handing over Clary's chocolates that Magnus had packed for them. Kaya gave him some cookies that Magnus loved and Alec assured her that they would reach his son safely. After that, he came back home. Magnus hadn’t called him since morning. There were only simple texts from him, wishing him good morning and then a goodluck for the party. He had texted Magnus to call him as soon as he was able to but –

Sorry, Alec. Long shift and my boss is giving me a hard time. I'll text you when I am free to call. :)

Alec had read the message and shoved the phone back in his pocket. He was missing Magnus. The day went by, preparing the Lightwood mansion for the party and before Alec knew, it was time to get ready. Magnus had helped him back a nice suit for the occasion. It was bought by him when he went out for a random trip to shop for his clothes. Alec was buttoning up his shirt when he finally heard Isabelle enter the house. The girl had done a great job evading him all day but now she was back and Alec knew he had to confront her. He left his grooming for a minute and rushed out into Izzy’s room. The girl had already dressed up for the party, in a bright red mini-dress that perfectly revealed her curves.

“We need to talk”, Alec huffed, shutting the door behind him. Izzy flinched a little and put the lipstick down. She took a deep breath and turned around.

“About what, big brother?” she tried to evade him again. Alec rolled his eyes and crossed his hands on his chest with a “I don’t have time for this expression on his face.

“You know what, Izzy?” Alec deadpanned. “I left Magnus alone in New York because you suggested that our parents are in some sort of a problem”, he cleared a little stuff from the armrest of a couch and sat on it.

“I never insinuated that our parents are in trouble, Alec”, she looked away. She knew how ridiculous she was being but if this was the way she could fix her mistakes, she would. “I may have hinted at something but like I said, the truth isn’t mine to share”

“Izzy, listen to yourself? You’re spewing crap right now”, Alec raised his voice. “I am not here to
play games. I need to get back to Magnus as soon as I can. If you’re not going to tell me, I am packing and leaving – right now”

“I don’t want you to leave”, Izzy covered her face with her palms. “But I cannot tell you what you want to know. It is not safe”, she admitted. Alec felt like he had been slapped on the face.

“And why is it not safe for me? What is it? Mom and Dad look pale and scared all the time, and there are whispers around me. I don’t get it. I don’t”, he stood up and moved his hands through his hair.

“I shouldn’t have asked you to come.”, she turned away from Alec.

“Wow”, Alec huffed, rolling his eyes. “Now, if you want to leave… you are free to. But I cannot tell you what you want to know, big brother. Ask Mom, or Dad. I cannot be the one spilling the truth”, she whispered.

“Great. This is amazing”, Alec waved his hands in air dismissively and marched out of the room before he said something to Clary that he would have regretted earlier. He came back to his room and picked up his phone from the bed to see if Magnus had come back from the shift.

Video call? I really need it.

Alec typed and pressed the send button. He shoved the phone in his pocket and went outside to his balcony. The dusk was setting in. Leaning his elbows on the railing of the balcony, Alec took a deep breath to calm himself down. He wanted to leave and go back to New York but he had come so far, to attend the party – might as well attend it before he returned. His phone buzzed in his pocket and Alec excitedly plucked it out.

Still busy :( cannot make a video call.

Alec sighed. He was missing Magnus. He needed to hear his voice that would tell him that things would be okay in the end.

... 

Magnus opened his eyes after a lot of struggle. It hurt. Rolling them inside his eyelids, he could feel the fatigue in the muscles. As if he had shed a lot of tears or resented coming here. How long had he been out of consciousness? He let a tired breath out and tried to open his eyes. There was an eerie sound of water drop falling into a puddle – over and over again. The sound had been there for as long as Magnus could recall and now he just wanted it to stop. His eyelashes were stuck into each other when he tried to open his eyes. It was dark. He looked around and felt wetness and humidity everywhere around him. It felt like a cave of sorts. A cave in NYC? Magnus swallowed into his dry throat and sniffed. It smelt of algae and fungi. This looked bad. He took a deep breath and tried to remember the last thing he could-

That morning, he had woken up on his couch in their apartment in Upper East Side. Still clad in Alec’s sweater, Magnus had made his way into the washroom to shower and leave for his shift at the Plaza. It was a usual work day with the exception of Alec’s absence. Magnus had made himself pancakes with strawberries and chocolate syrup and drank coffee from their favorite café before heading out for work. He remembered getting into the car. That was it. That was the last memory he could conjure.
Cut to now, wherever he was? He couldn’t even guess how much time had passed. Maybe only a few minutes, or hours… or days. There was no way he could find it out. He lifted his head up to look around him. It was a very dark room – not a cave. The walls had a white or a yellow paint on them, he couldn’t be sure. The only light in the room was because of scented candles. He was lying on a king-size bed which was curved on the end where one kept their legs. There were windows, of course. But they were blocked by something dark and rusty.

No.

This was a cave. A room crafted for deception inside a cave. The windows were blocked by the walls of the cave. That’s why the smell of moisture and algae. Magnus could feel the humidity because of the candles and he lifted his hand to wipe of the drop of sweat that was trickling down his eyes. That’s when something else dawned on him – his hands were immovable. They were locked together on one side. Magnus looked over his shoulder and the handcuffs came into view. They were attached to the wall with a chain. Magnus had been chained down to the bed. He pulled the cuffs to get out of them but they were strong. Not even his wolf strength could have helped him. Magnus used his shirt sleeve to wipe his forehead and sat straighter up. The candles were scented, and it was a familiar scent. Something that was very close to Magnus but his hazy memories couldn’t yet point it out.

Somewhere between his apartment and the Plaza, Magnus had been taken here without his consent. Which is why he didn’t remember any of it. He must have been knocked out or sedated. There was no throbbing pain in any part of his head, therefore, it must have been a drug.

This was not how he had pictured the weekend going. He was supposed to work all day and then come back home in time to call Alec and help him get ready for the party.

Alec.

“Fuck”, Magnus mumbled. Alec must be out of his mind right now. He must have called a dozen times, and left voicemails. Magnus threw his head back. Alec must have been on his way to New York, leaving the party if it was still the same day outside. He must be drowning himself in guilt for letting this happen. Magnus wanted to kill himself right now. He groaned and got up, looking around – now more awake than ever – figuring out a way to get out of here before Alec did something stupid.

There was a door, on the far end of the room – right in front of Magnus. The door wasn’t a regular one. It looked like it was made out of metal, with a small window that was barred.

“Let me out, you bastards!”, Magnus yelled, announcing to his captors that he was awake now, and ready to fight. “You cannot keep me here for long… you know it”, he threatened, pulling his chains to break out of them.

Everything around him was driving him crazy. He was furious. The soft pillows, the mattress that took the shape of your body based on how comfortable it was. Other days, Magnus would have paid sufficient bucks to buy a mattress as comfortable as this, but today was not those days. The soft gold duvets, Magnus hated how warm and cozy he felt because his legs were sitting over the folded ones. Damn. And the candles. The familiarity of that smell was driving him insane. They smelt like they belonged with him. And he couldn’t fathom how.

“Who are you, assholes? What do you want from me?”, Magnus tried to instigate anyone (if at all) outside for a chat. He could hear whispers, so there was definitely someone. He just had to provoke them. “Let me out!”, he yelled.
The party was going splendidly. Each one of the Lightwood guest had brought lavish gifts for Robert and Maryse who were standing near the welcome area, welcoming guests. Izzy and Clary were standing near the glass wall, animatedly talking to each other. Alec didn’t want to speak to Izzy, he had been so furious at her for not telling him about everything but he couldn’t help but notice the way Clary and Izzy were behaving around each other. The flirty smiles, the glanced, it was all very sweet and romantic and Alec wondered if he was seeing what he was seeing, or was it just his brain that was seeing beauty in everything around him – since he had accepted that there was something between him and Magnus. It had been 4 months since they had mated and shifted to New York. During these months, they had not only gotten closer to each other, but also had made them open their hearts again. Magnus had been repressed by his true nature, unwilling to believe that anybody would want him for him, and not his gender and Alec who had been wounded by betrayals and heartbreaks. They had mended each other’s hearts and made them beat for love again. Alec didn’t even remember when he stopped thinking about Sebastian and Jace bothering him at work. He didn’t realize when Magnus became more important to him that anyone else. Their first kiss had been magical, to say the least. Alec had been kissed before, and had kissed people before, but none of them even close to what he felt when he kissed Magnus. It was like fireworks and peace in one single moment of time. The kiss had soothed him, healed him, made his heart flutter with joy and made him believe that he was capable of loving again. They hadn’t been on a single date and yet, Alec knew how strongly he felt for his wonderful fiancé and what he felt for Magnus wasn’t just simple casual infatuation – it was stronger. It could as well be love.

Alec was falling in love again and he could feel it, right in his veins.

The breaking of a whiskey glass brought Alec back from his thoughts about Magnus. He looked around, he was still at the party and Magnus must have been working in NYC. He looked at his phone for the last text from Magnus. They hadn’t spoken since Alec had reached Idris last night and although Alec was a bit worried, they had been texting each other so, it should have been okay in New York. Magnus was supposed to video call him before he got ready for the party, but he received a text saying that he was covering for Raphael and won’t be able to make it in time so Alec should just go ahead and enjoy the evening.

Still stuck at the hotel, this shift is crazy.

Alec read the last text again. He pushed the phone back in his coat pocket and looked up. His eyes landed on Clary and Izzy. They were still chatting, and laughing. There was a certain way Clary behaved, it reminded him of Magnus. The way she wiggled her brows, or the way she dressed up, the way she waved her hands in flair when she was talking. It was so Magnus. And it was logical. She had grown up with him, he was her brother through everything except blood. Izzy had had boyfriends before. But he had never seen her interact with anyone the way she interacted with Clary. The way her eyes twinkled when the redhead walked in. It felt like something that Alec was missing out on, and he brushed it off because as long as Izzy was happy, so was he.

He tapped the bar table with his empty glass, asking for more whiskey. The night was going as boring as he had anticipated without Magnus. If he had been here, they would have flirted a little, Magnus would have judged everyone’s outfit, messed up Alec’s hair a bit with his painted fingers and dragged him onto the dance floor. Without him, everything looked so dull and uninteresting. To add to that, everyone in his family was adamant on keeping him oblivious about everything. There had been moments at the party where he noticed people pointing at him and talking about something serious. At one point, he even had noticed his own mother looking at him as if she was concerned about something bad that was about to happen. He felt like a part of that crime thriller where everyone but him was a part of a secret plan, and he was that innocent character who was too pure to
be let in on the plan as it would have tarnished his character. He gulped the whiskey down his throat and felt his throat burn.

“Lightwood? Is that you?”, Alec’s neck snapped at a vaguely familiar voice. He turned around and saw one of his closest friends from his childhood days – Underhill. Finally. Alec wouldn’t be completely bored to death now.

“Underhill?”, Alec rasped in his voice laden with alcohol. “Long time!”, he rolled his eyes and raised his arms out to pull the man in a hug. Underhill slapped his back fondly and laughed humming at how long it had indeed been. Underhill was a non-native citizen of Idris whose parents had passed away when he was young. He was raised by the School of the Young Wolves, run by the Clave Council. Alec had been in Idris for only a few years before he shifted to Dublin, and Underhill had been one of his closest friends. They lost touch for a while, but then with the advent of phone and technology, Alec and Underhill connected in the Senior Year and had been talking and chatting since. He was a Beta wolf, and very open about his interest in men, much like Alec. Alec’s parents were equally fond of him, and often invited him for family movie nights.

“Heard you were in New York with the fiancé?”, Underhill quirked, pulling away from Alec and tapping the table with his nails to summon the bartender. Alec sat back on his stool. He didn’t need to be reminded that was missing Magnus.

“Yes! Came here for the party…and well, some family reunion shit. My parents were apparently missing me!”, Alec chuckled. This was his third glass of whiskey and he was sure that one or two glasses down, he wouldn’t remember being gloomy.

“Right. Of course. Mrs Lightwood was so happy to see you. I just met her”, Underhill sighed. “So, what’s up?”

“Photography? NYC? The usual? What have you been up to?”, Alec replied, holding out his glass to the bartender to fill it up.


“We did that already? 4 months ago…”, Alec sipped his freshly refilled whiskey.

“Oh wow! Really? How come we never heard about it?”, he asked.

“We never really told anyone, I guess. It all happened all of a sudden. We were meeting for dinner – both our families and Magnus expressed his desire to find out about this job in New York”, Alec swallowed, recovering from the sensation that talking about Magnus was giving him. Whiskey was hitting him now, with every sip he took. “The only way they would have allowed Magnus to go and work, was after he got mated. And so we did. It was pretty hush hush. And only our families know for now”, Alec waved it off.

“And you left him alone, in that condition, and came here?”, Underhill squeaked. Alec squinted his eyes at him. What condition exactly was his friend referring to? He had marked Magnus. His heat was over and everything else seemed to be in check as well? Maybe he was thinking too much into everything because he was missing Magnus so much. There was a vibrating sensation in his head – with a few seconds of no consciousness here and there.

“He is a grown man – he can handle himself”, Alec shrugged. He turned to spot his parents. They
were now talking to Stephen Herondale and his wife. The resemblance between Jace and his father was borderline creepy to say the least. Alec scrunched his nose because Robert looked a little annoyed and Maryse had her guards up. She was standing as if she were the one who reigned but he could see her crumbling to the ground inside.

Maybe he should go and see what is going on? Maybe not? They were hiding something from him and Alec wasn’t the one to go prying into people’s lives.

“Another drink, Sir?” a voice snapped Alec from his gaze and he turned around. It was the same bartender. She was smirking at him – with a hint of mischief in her eyes. Alec hadn’t noticed her until now. She reminded him of those pixies they showed on TV. Was she up to something? Alec thought and then quickly brushed it off because he was too drunk to think rationally.

“Sure”, Alec sniffed.

“What does your fiancé do?”, Underhill asked a few minutes or so later. Ok, he was still here. Sitting next to him.

“He makes me happy?”, Alec smiled and rolled his eyes. He shouldn’t have said that. He licked his lips and the reminder of Magnus kissing him flashed in front of him – like a visual. He was drunk. He had to go and find Isabelle now. Drunk Alec was sappy Alec. And that had to stop for now.

“For a real job, Alec. You’re such romantic”, Underhill chuckled. Alec wanted to roll his eyes and turn around to reply to him but he couldn’t focus on anything. The world around him had started looking like he was seeing it from under water. There were blurry scenes, ripples in front of his eyes and dark spots. Recalling Izzy’s position from a few minutes ago, he turned his head to that direction. There were figures moving around. He could faintly make out Clary’s fiery red hair but other than that, nothing. He couldn’t know for sure if Izzy had still been with her.

“Your drink!”, the bartender spoke up and pushed another full glass of whiskey in his hand. One part of Alec’s mind was asking him to stop now. The other part was behaving strangely. There was a voice inside his head. A new one. And it was talking to him. And it was scary.

*Drink it, Alec. You know you want to.* It said. This was so similar to the way he always communicated with Magnus. This voice was right inside him, encouraging him to take the drink. What number was this? 5th…or was it the 6th one? Who knew? Alec couldn’t be sure.

“I need to get to Izzy”, Alec abruptly stood up to head towards the direction he had last registered Izzy in but he forgot where the ground was and slipped, his head hitting the bar table. Underhill’s voice called out to him and he felt that he was getting hauled up by someone. “My room…”, he mumbled at the end before a wave of black out hit him.

Clary wore a beautiful satin dark green dress. It was a deep cut at the back and the front had a boat neck collar. She clipped two strands of hair behind her head with the help of a butterfly shaped black clip and let her other hair fall lose on her chest like a beautiful waterfall. She was standing by the wall that overlooked the Lightwood backyard, leaning on it. Isabelle was standing right in front of her. They were both holding mocktails because they were still underage. Izzy was telling her about how she had to be cryptic to Alec about the whole situation.

“My brother probably hates me now”, Izzy sighed. She sipped her drink and looked out. Some guests were chatting in their backyard lit by beautiful lanterns. Under a different circumstance, this would have been such a beautiful party to be a part of.
“I don’t think our brothers are capable of hating us, Iz”, Clary rolled her eyes. She chuckled a little and Izzy's gaze fell on how her eyes squeezed a little when she laughed. The way she threw her head back and covered her mouth with her palm. “He might be annoyed, but he will understand. I am sure”, she stepped forward and tapped Izzy's chin. “From what Magnus tells me, Alec is a very reasonable man. He would understand your situation”, she tried to make her friend feel better. “Dance with me?”, she asked out of nowhere. Izzy squeaked a little and looked at the crowd. A few couples were dancing. She looked between the floor and Clary's hand that was outspread for her to grab. There were gorgeous chains entangled in her fingers and the nails were painted deep red. Hesitantly, she looked around for her brother. He was nowhere to be seen. Only minutes ago she had seen him speak to Underhill and now the bar stools were empty. Maybe Alec walked out to speak to Magnus. It didn’t have to necessarily mean anything dangerous.

“Ok”, she agreed, timidly and gave her hand in Clary’s. The redhead dragged her to the floor, squeezing between guests and muttering a soft thank you. The music was gentle and romantic. Once they were on the dance floor, Clary raised her that was entwined in Izzy's and placed the other one on her shoulder. Izzy slipped her free hand around Clary's waist and pulled her closed until she could feel their chest sticking to each other.

“You're still worried, aren’t you?”, Clary whispered, leaning into Isabelle's ear. Izzy felt goosebumps in her arm as she felt the Alpha’s warm breath brush her cheek and she moaned.

“I fucked up”, Izzy admitted. “What if I put Alec in some grave danger because of this…”, she added.

“Alec’s an independent adult and an Alpha. He is also the Consul's son. He can fend for himself. Don’t worry about it, okay? Plus, we’re all here. We will not let anything bad happen to my brother’s fiancé”, Clary assured, clearing a strand of hair from Izzy's forehead and tucking it behind her ear. Isabelle smiled a little and then stretched Clary away from herself, twirling her back in the next moment until her shoulder hit Izzy’s chest. Clary was a little surprised by the move and she chuckled, regaining her balance.

“You’ve got moves, Lightwood”, she arched a brow.

“I aim to please, Bane”, the beta wolf winked. She pulled Clary to her chest, wrapping her arms now around Clary’s waist and entwining them together in front of Clary. Clary pushed her head back a little and settled it in the crook of Izzy’s neck. The moved to the music, swaying their bodies softly. There was rhythm to it, and a certain passion. Clary’s heart was on fire because she could feel Izzy’s heart, and hear it thrumming against her back. Izzy leaned down and pressed the tip of her nose at the nape of her neck. Clary shivered. She took a whiff and rubbed the nose upward, taking in the smell of her hair.

“You're so beautiful, Clary”, Izzy whispered. The touch of her lips against her skin caused Clary’s breath to hitch in her throat. They were so close. For the first time, she could feel that there was a chance of something happening. In the days that had gone by, Izzy had shut down because of the whole drama with the family but right now, she was opening up back to her best friend and maybe, Clary still had a chance.

“You are beautiful, Clary”, Izzy merely whispered.

Opening her eyes, Clary turned around in Izzy's hold to properly look at the Beta wolf. The way the lanterns illuminated her pale skin, the sheen of pink on one side of her cheek from the light coming from outside. Everything was perfect. Clary lifted one hand and placed it on Izzy's cheek to stroke her cheekbones. “You know I am here for you, right? No matter what happens”, she whispered. Izzy smiled and nodded. She could feel Clary leaning in. Anticipating everything, Izzy relaxed into
Clary’s touch and closed her eyes. She took a deep breath and her lips parted. Soon, there were another pair of lips on hers. They were warm and soft and tasted sweet. Clary pressed her fingertips onto the back of Izzy’s neck and leaned further ahead – until their cheeks were sticking to each other. Izzy moaned in the kiss and pulled Clary closer by her waist. She stuck her tongue out softly and licked Clary’s upper lip before teasing her way in the redhead’s mouth.

They tilted their heads as the kiss deepened and the passion flared up. Izzy’s hand rubbed it’s way up to Clary’s arm and finally found her neck where the fingers curled around.

“I have wanted this for so long…”, Clary broke away for a second to catch her breath and admitted. Izzy opened her eyes and widened it at Clary in disbelief.

“Why didn’t you do it before…?”, Izzy protested. Clary’s lips curved into a smile and pressed a sloppy kiss on Izzy’s cheek.

“I didn’t know if you liked me… like that”, she used her hands to tuck Izzy’s hair behind her ears and cup her face. “Because I like you… so much that it scares me…”, she sighed. “I have never felt the same for anyone in my life…”

Izzy was grinning now. She jumped forward and kissed Clary again, wrapping her arms around the redhead’s neck. “I like you too, Clarissa Morgenstern-Bane”, pulling away, she buried her head in her shoulder and chuckled. “So much…”

Clary couldn’t believe it right now. The one moment she had been picturing for so long had just happened. All those nights dreading if Izzy felt the same for her, and all those missed chances. She didn’t regret it. This first time had been magical for them. And Clary couldn’t be happier.

“Go on a date with me?”, the Lightwood girl squeaked – pulling away from her. Clary chortled at her excitement and nodded.

“I thought you would never ask, Isabelle Lightwood”, she smiled and pecked her again before they continued dancing.

Underhill pulled Alec straight up and wrapped his arms around his neck. He grabbed him by his waist and stood up to make it to Alec’s room and tuck him in bed for the night. On the way to the stairs, he was stopped by the same bartender. She had a smile on her face that was very deceiving.

“Are you looking for Mr Lightwood’s room?”, she asked, looking back and forth between Alec and him. Underhill furrowed his brows but nodded.

“Yeah?”

“It’s not upstairs anymore. He shifted to the basement. The entire floor is his”, the girl informed him, indicating the way to the Lightwood’s basement. Underhill looked around hoping to find someone from Alec’s family to corroborate the information but they were nowhere to be seen. He sighed and nodded. He had been to the basement before. It was eerie and Alec had told him how their ancestors used to use them to hide Omegas in heat. No sound or smell could ever come out of those walls. Maybe Alec had had it redecorated for his use. The way to the basement was from the backyard. Underhill firmly held Alec and walked out.

The basement was open, and it was still dark when he reached the entrance. A part of him wanted to turn back and take Alec somewhere else but he couldn’t be sure if Alec would be in trouble in his own home. He opened the door that led into the basement and found that it had indeed been
renovated. There were bright white walls, scented candles and a couch. There was also a TV in what seemed like a living room. Underhill sighed in relief and made Alec sit on the couch. Alec was unconscious. The other man found a folded blanket in one corner and draped it around Alec.

“Goodnight, Alec”, he mumbled and left the sleeping man there.

... Magnus woke up again suddenly and realized that he had been out of consciousness. Again. The room wasn’t quiet anymore. Magnus could hear voices. And they were closer than the last time. If he focused properly, he could also make out what they were saying. This sedation that Magnus had been put on was different. It just made him sleepy – no headaches or pressure on the brain. He pulled his hands to check if they were still tied and they were. Magnus decided to focus on the voices. There were 3 distinct voices and they were eating something while they spoke.

“The Omega has been asleep for hours now. When was the last time he was sedated?”

“At the time we grabbed him in NYC. It’s been 7 hours, I think… Chief said that we need to keep him alert before the next dose of injections.”

Magnus had been in and out of sleep for 7 hours now. Wow.

“What did the Chief say about the Alpha. Where is he?’

“He is being taken care off. At the party. Once he is here, we can go ahead with our plans…”, one of them chuckled. The party. The Lightwood party. Magnus’ eyes widened as he accepted the possibility of him being in Idris.

“It’s such a sadness. Have you seen the Omega?’

“I have. By the moon, he is gorgeous. Who wouldn’t want to get in his pants”, another one chuckled. Magnus swallowed. This was about him. Of course.

“His fiancé doesn’t. That weakling of an Alpha”, they chided Alec. Magnus fumed in anger. “He was so cowardly that he didn’t even mate with this Omega. Just marked him”

What the hell? No? Alec and Magnus had mated.

“We’re doing God’s work for them. After tonight, everything in Idris will go back to being normal”, they roared in laughter.

Magnus definitively assumed that he was in Idris. He groaned and attempted to sit up but he felt unusually weak and disoriented at the same time. Like there was something in the sedation that was sucking his strength away. He wanted Alec. He needed Alec.

“The Alpha is here”, a 4th voice came in, as if he were running. Magnus heard them crumpling foil as they probably discarded their lunch. The footsteps receded into silence and within seconds, Magnus was alone again, trapped in darkness.

Alexander...can you hear me? He repeated this in his thoughts. Since he was in Idris, there was a chance he could make a connection with Alec and tell him that he had been taken by some people who were talking about them not being mated and preparing an Alpha for something that didn’t sound ominous.

The other side of his thoughts, Alec’s side – was blank. He was about to drift back into sleep when
his door unbolted and a man stepped in. Magnus blinked a little to clear his vision but he was so tired and the sedation had been strong. The shadow came forward and dipped next to him on his bed.

“Who are you?”, Magnus growled, crawling away from it. The shadow chuckled a little and pulled out something from his pocket. It was shiny and made of metal. And it looked thin and sharp, almost like a needle.

“No one that matters”, the man whispered, pushing the needle into a bottle with silvery viscous liquid. Pulling the piston back, he filled the barrel completely and then pushed the piston a little so that there were no air bubbles in it. Magnus watched him prepare for the injection and fear dawned on him. They had been preparing for this for months. There was no way out.

“Come on little Omega”, the man reached out for Magnus using his gloved hand. Magnus slipped away a little bit this man was too strong. He grabbed Magnus by his jaw and squeezed it until Magnus could faintly hear his bones cracking a little. “Don’t move. It will hurt you even more…”, the man warned and pressed the tip of the needle against Magnus’ carotid. Magnus swallowed, trying to struggle to get himself out of the man’s hold but he was too strong. A sharp pain rushed into Magnus’ brain as the needle plunged into his artery. The piston was slowly pushed and Magnus gasped as he felt the thick liquid enter his blood stream.

A flash of light blinded Magnus as the contents of the injection started reacting with his blood. The liquid was viscous and was not dissolving with the blood. It was painful and it stung. He could picture the movement of the molecules of the liquid because of how thick they were. As the inject spread inside, Magnus couldn’t feel the left side of his neck as numbness took over. Whatever this medication was, it was designed for him or his Omega kind. He groaned a little and took shaky breaths as the man emptied the contents of the barrel inside Magnus’ blood. By the time the man was finished, Magnus was barely conscious. His eyes were rolling under his lids as the medication spread through the entirety of his body. He had stopped struggling long back and the man released his hold on Magnus’ jaw. The Omega dropped on the pillows, still shaking and gasping. He was cold, and his throat felt dry. The man got up from the bed and threw the syringe away. He teared open another packet. That’s when another pair of footsteps walked into the room.

“I don’t think he needs a double dose. Look at him.”, the man said.

“We can’t be too sure. If this doesn’t work, our communities will forever be ashamed because of our incompetent leader, that asshole Robert Lightwood”, Magnus faintly heard another barrel of syringe being filled up with the liquid. His senses had unnaturally heightened because of this drug. He raised his cuffed hands to crawl out of the bed but the bed had started seeming rather large all of a sudden.

The man tapped the syringe and grabbed Magnus by his neck again. This time, he chose a slightly higher spot than the last prick and injected the liquid in the carotid rather quickly. Magnus arched his back upwards and let out a stronger grasp. He shut his eyes as tears squeezed out. This had hurt at least ten times more.

The pain was excruciating. But he had a faint idea that this was just the beginning. His subconscious was responsive, aware of everything. He could feel the conflict between that part of him and the one that was heavily medicated by something.

Alexander

His subconscious called out to the man Magnus cared about. The man Magnus maybe also loved?

“Aw, would you look at that! He is nice and ripe, and leaking. Bring in the Alpha. We’re ready”, the man spoke up, looking at Magnus’ crotch. There was a stain around his genital area. He was leaking.
Outside his heat cycle.

Magnus was in heat again.

Chapter End Notes

So, what do you think is going to happen? Let me know what you liked, or did not like? I'll be here, or on Twitter. As always.
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

who is this Alpha?

Chapter Notes

The plot has begun since the last chapter. There were be chapters based on angst, and some will have minor fluff in between. The plot isn't very heavy but I hope it will make sense? And hopefully, Malec will be able to pull through everything. Together.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alec woke up from his intoxication and found himself in an unknown location. This wasn’t his room, but he had sort of been here before this. He groaned and rubbed his eyes, trying to clear his fuzzy vision. Did he recall asking Underhill to take him to his room – not this dungeon which was vaguely familiar? His head was throbbing with pain and his eyes couldn’t still focus on anything around him. Where was he? He was supposed to be at this party, with people that he cared about. He had to speak to Izzy about the secret she had been keeping. He had to confront his parents. And he had to see if Magnus had come back home from his hotel and rested enough. Why was he here, where there was absolutely nothing for him? He was wrapped in a blanket and so, someone must have brought him here. But, anyone who knew him... and had good intentions with him, would never bring him here.

Alec.

He heard that voice in his head, talking to his subconscious. The only other time someone had been in his head was when he communicated with Magnus through their mating mark. This voice was familiar. He had heard back in the bar, when he was talking to Underhill, asking him to drink more whiskey. Drinking that unusual tasting whiskey had been a bad idea. He rubbed his eyes in circles and opened it. There was no one there in the dark room. So, who was talking to him? What were they trying to do to him?

“Who is it?”, Alec rasped.

You miss him, don’t you?

The voice spoke again, this time closer to Alec than ever. He felt his hair erecting in his arms. It was an enchanting voice. A lady’s voice. She was trying to tell him something about someone that Alec apparently cared enough about. Who was him? Who were they talking about? Magnus…? Of course, he missed Magnus. Why wouldn’t he? But why would that concern anyone else but him? It really shouldn’t.

Come with me, I know where he is. I’ll take you to him.

Alec threw his eyes open at that last statement. If the person this voice was talking about was
Magnus, he knew where Magnus was, right? He was in New York...at the Plaza hotel? Working his shift. But what if he wasn’t? What if something had happened to him? Something really bad because Alec left him all alone? “Stop overthinking, Alec”, he muttered to himself, slapping his forehead lightly.

You may be right, Alec Lightwood. Magnus is not in New York.

The voice sounded again. Alec growled in fury as he sat straighter up on the couch. His muscles ached, and his senses were abnormally heightened. “Shut up!”, he yelled to whoever he could in his dark surroundings. His wolf instincts were alert. These candles, their blinding light, their nasty familiar smell – they were making him crazy. “I am going to find out who is behind this stupid game and rip you apart with my bare teeth. You will not know what hit you…!”, he hissed. His eyes shone signs of his Alpha rage, turning red. “Show your face, coward”, he roared again, holding his head that was hurting so much.

We just want to take you to Magnus. He is in pain.

Alec looked in the direction the sound had come from, hoping he would find someone in the shadows. Someone he could strangle. There was indeed no one there. He felt like he was in this void. Even his wolf senses couldn’t detect any heat signature around him. Whatever this voice was, it was just a voice with no physical form to it which only made it scarier. “What pain?”, he hissed, recalling the last thing the voice had told him. “Where is he? If you hurt him, I will make sure it is the last thing you do before you die…”, Alec growled.

All in due time, Alec Lightwood. All in due time. I know you’re exhausted right now. So, why don’t you go back to sleep for a bit? We’ll wake you up when it is the right time.

Alec wasn’t sleepy at all. Sure, he was exhausted by the party, but he wasn’t sleepy. Not at least when he knew that Magnus was somewhere in danger. He should be finding his fiancé now. But he felt like his eyelids were heavier ever since that voice had put the thought in his head. He felt like he should just close his eyes for a few seconds and then, everything would be alright. He wouldn’t sleep, just close his eyes. To rest.

Alec dropped back, messily on the couch and drifted into unconsciousness. The same shadow that had injected Magnus with the drug that had induced premature heat in him, appeared from a slit in the wall. There was a girl on his heel. “Ingrid. Go see how the Omega is doing. Prepare him for the ritual. I will make this Alpha receptive. Ask Pangborn to be ready for the transfer”, the shadow spoke to the girl. The girl hummed a reply and disappeared back into the slit. The shadow came forward and sat on his knees in front of an unconscious Alec Lightwood.

“Young Alphas. Always so rebellious. And you, with the righteous Lightwood genes.”, the shadow smirked. A red circle was glowing on his neck. Slow whistles were coming out of Alec’s mouth. Sweat beads were forming on his forehead.

... 

It was wee hours of the morning, and the party had almost ended. Robert and Maryse were seeing off the final guests in the party. The Banes along with Clary had already left for their home. Isabelle was sitting on her couch, exhausted after the night. Her elbow rested on the top of the couch and her head was dropped on it. She hadn’t heard from Alec for hours now. The last time she saw him, he was chatting with Underhill at the Bar. After that, she got busy with Clary and forgot about Alec altogether.

“Isabelle? Where is Alec? I haven’t seen him for a few hours now. Some guests couldn’t even meet
him”, she heard her mother walk over to her. Maryse Lightwood looked tired and ready to crash on
to the bed.

“I haven’t seen him since before midnight? He was drinking at the bar… with Underhill and then I
don’t know. I went over to the dance floor and Alec had vanished.”, Izzy sighed. She looked at the
time. It was 3:30 am in the morning. Alec should have been around.

“Did you say something to him? Something about his mating to Magnus?”, Maryse glared at her
daughter, looking slightly pale at the possibility of Alec’s absence being due to the truth that the
entire family was hiding from him.

“I told you I haven’t told him a word. I keep my promises, Mom. Opposite of what you expect! He
even tried to ask me about it before the party and I said that it wasn’t my place to say or my truth to
share. If he wanted to know, he could go and ask you or Dad”, she crossed her hands over her chest
and eyed her mother.

“Well, he didn’t. He didn’t come to me, or your father. Now, please help me find him.”, she rubbed
her brow and looked around, exhausted with how everything went wrong these days. Izzy nodded
and wrapped a leather jacket around herself to go look for Alec. Maybe she could find Underhill and
ask him. The man was the last person she had seen Alec with. Underhill was sitting in the backyard,
talking to Robert about The Alicante Press. Izzy spotted him from inside the house and practically
ran out to catch him before he left.

Underhill was picking his coat up when Izzy caught up with him. “Hello, Isabelle!”, he smiled when
he saw his friend’s sister.

“Underhill”, Izzy huffed, catching her breath. “Hey… did you enjoy the party?”, she smiled.

“I did. It was a great party”, he commented.

“Have you, have you seen Alec? I haven’t seen him since he was at the bar with you…”, she looked
around.

“Oh yeah, he had had a little too much to drink. So, I took him back to his room. He must be fast
asleep by now.”, Underhill pointed towards the Lightwood basement. Izzy furrowed her brows a
little, but she didn’t realize if there was too much to think into it.

“Oh?”, she replied. Glancing up at Alec’s room, the lights were still out. Underhill was probably
right. Alec must have gone to sleep. “I will go and tell Mom to stop worrying about him then”, she
smiled. Leaning forward, she pressed a kiss on his cheek and bid him goodbye as he was leaving the
party.

…

Magnus was lying on the bed. The man who had given him those injections was long gone but the
drug was still taking its effect. He could feel the slick leaking out of his genitals. His body was on
fire and he was sweating profusely. It hurt more because his natural cycle had subsided only over a
week ago and he wasn’t mentally ready to go through it so soon. But that was the least of Magnus’
worries – he could get used to his heat cycles and the pain it brought him. But he could barely move
his limbs. It wasn’t like he was not strong enough. But the medication made him feel like his limbs
were not responding to him. He wanted to slip out of the bed and run but he had no sensation below
his collarbone. Almost like paralysis and that scared the Omega. His subconscious was still widely
awake. He had tried calling to Alec, asking for help but there was no point. He couldn’t contact Alec.
Alexander, please… hear me out. I need you to find me. This place is so strange, Alexander. These people. I cannot move.

He called out to his fiancé.

They are bringing an Alpha here. Please, Alexander.

He couldn’t believe himself. He was begging for his life. But the truth was, he wanted Alec. He missed Alec. And he couldn’t wait for Alec to hold him and tell him that it is going to be alright. That they would be back in their apartment, cuddling on the couch and on the bed – planning the date Alec promised him. Everything will be fine. The door clicked open. Magnus flinched again. If there was another injection, he had no idea if he could ever survive it. The pain had already numbed him. His heightened senses heard the taps of a girl’s heels on the floor as she neared the bed. Magnus wanted to move away but he knew he couldn’t. He clenched his injured jaws and closed his eyes. There was no point in struggling. He felt the bed dip next to him. The girl gently tilted his cheek so that she could see Magnus.

“You really are beautiful…”, she smiled a little. She placed a basket next to her and picked out a cotton ball. Wiping the sweat off his face, she cleaned him of his own saliva and steam. His makeup had been smudged off from the sweat and tears because of his heat. She cupped his face and removed all his makeup. “Your Alpha will be so pleased to see you…” she smiled. Magnus moaned and pulled away from her.

“Magnus, don’t be a doozy. You know you need your Alpha too.”, she spoke in a mesmerizing tone. Magnus could hear it all the way inside his head. She cupped his jaw and Magnus groaned in pain. “Let me just fix your face a little”

Back off, Magnus wanted to tell her. She applied a simple coat of makeup onto his face and then proceeded to the rest of his body. She stood up from the bed and then straightened his body on the bed. She unbuttoned his shirt and then cut it out of him. She did the same to the rest of his clothes until he was absolutely naked on the bed. Magnus felt the gush of chill as his body was exposed to the temperatures of the cave. The fact that he was naked in front of strangers was the least of his problems. The duvet below his cock was drenched with his leaking slick and it was a matter of time before his scent excited whoever this Alpha was.

The girl leaned over Magnus and patted his cheek. “I will go and tell the chief that the Omega is all prepared for the ritual”

She walked out of the room, but the door did not lock behind her. Magnus closed his eyes and tears rolled down from them. There was no way he was getting out of this unscathed. He imagined Alec’s plight when he would come to know of Magnus’ kidnapping and whatever next was going to happen to him. Alec would never forgive himself. Hell, Magnus wouldn’t forgive himself either. How could he not put up a fight? How had he gotten so weak that he couldn’t even take care of himself? The footsteps sounded again, and Magnus was torn away from his thoughts. There were 2 sets of clear ones…and one sound that felt like something was being dragged on the floor. As the footsteps came closer, Magnus registered a familiar scent in the air. “Alexander”, he wheezed. It was Alec’s scent. He was here. The footsteps entered the room. The shadow threw something heavy towards the bed.

Magnus swallowed and tilted his head a little. It was a man. An unconscious man and he was emitting Alec’s scent. It was Alec. Magnus’ eyes widened. Alec was the Alpha these people had been referring to all this while. But why was he unconscious? Had they taken his fiancé hostage as well? Magnus tried to move and help Alec, but his condition didn’t allow him to. The shadow slapped Alec’s head and the man groaned, waking up.
Alec's eyes rolled around as he registered the surroundings again and opened his eyes finally. There was a disgusting scent of slick in the air. The scent was making his cock hard in his pants. He cleared his vision and looked around. He was half collapsed on a bed and there was someone lying in front of him. Someone naked. He gulped and pressed his fists onto the mattress to get up to get a clearer view of the man. And maybe just find the opportunity to run away and kill these people.

“Magnus”

Alec’s eyes rolled around as he registered the surroundings again and opened his eyes finally. There was a disgusting scent of slick in the air. The scent was making his cock hard in his pants. He cleared his vision and looked around. He was half collapsed on a bed and there was someone lying in front of him. Someone naked. He gulped and pressed his fists onto the mattress to get up to get a clearer view of the man. And maybe just find the opportunity to run away and kill these people.

“How dare you?”, he growled, gathering courage. “How dare you touch him?”

“Oh, we didn’t. But you can. He is waiting for you. We have made him nice and warm, and wet.”, the shadow chuckled. He moved his hand in the air and two guards captured Alec in their arms as he struggled.

Can you hear me, Magnus? Alec thought as he saw Magnus’ lifeless eyes looking at him with hope.

I can. I am so sorry.

Hold it, this is not the time. Or your fault. The Alpha assured. I’ll get us out of here.

“What the hell do you want from us?”, Alec hissed. “The Consul is my father, you let Magnus go. He doesn’t deserve any of this. You can have me to get my father to agree to whatever demands you have.”, The shadow came closer and grabbed Alec’s face to stop him from talking. Alec was weak from the alcohol and did not struggle.

“I want things to go back to normal. And for Robert Lightwood to see that he cannot mess with our traditions and values. For that, I need the both of you, Mr. Lightwood”, he growled. He squeezed Alec’s jaw and picked out another needle. Magnus saw the needle and his eyes widened. This wasn’t good. The shadow pressed the needle inside Alec’s neck and waited until it took its effect.

Magnus’ eyes were fixed on Alec. Alec felt a jolt of energy and a feeling as if he had been electrocuted. All of a sudden, Magnus’ Omega scent became unbearable for him to control. Magnus noticed this sudden surge of power that he had never seen before in the Alpha. His eyes changed their color from hazel to deep blood red. The Alpha red. The guards let Alec go and the shadow stepped away from him as he clenched his fists and took a deep breath – his chest expanding.

“There it is, the Alpha glory. The one you had been hiding for so long, Alec.”, the shadow gleamed. Alec growled under his breath and tilted his head to glare at him. The shadow raised his hands in the air in submission. “The Omega is all yours”, he whispered and hurriedly escaped the room, bolting it on his way out. The room had been vacated and locked. Alec was now staring down at a very naked Magnus and the only thing on his mind was how hard he was, in his pants.

Alec?

Magnus closed his eyes and called out to his fiancé. There was no response from the other side. Alec was looking at him with thirsty eyes. He sighed and rubbed his thumb over his lips, revelling
Magnus’ gorgeous body from head to toe. His mind was divided – the part that was screeching out to Alec, asking him to stop because this wouldn’t end well for him and his fiancé. And the part which just couldn’t wait to claim Magnus. “You’re gorgeous, Magnus”, Alec gasped. He sat on the bed next to him and leaned over. Magnus flinched and looked away.

Alec, please… you can control this. I know you can. Magnus thought determinately, hoping to persuade Alec through his words. He could trust himself to be able to get through to his fiancé. Find the will.

Alec placed his palm over Magnus’ cheek and rubbed his cheekbone. That girl had contoured his cheeks with a bronzer, and they were glistening with gold glitter. On any other day, Magnus would have loved this touch, this absolutely serene feeling of being caressed and adored by his fiancé. But he knew how bad this situation was, and Alec’s touch meant nothing it used to. He would never be able to get over it. Neither would Alec. This would tear them apart and he feared in a very permanent way. I don’t think I can control, Magnus. Magnus’ eyes shot wide open as he heard his Alexander’s voice in his head. He was still in there, trying to fight it. The urge is too strong. It hurts. He flinched.

I know, Alec. Just breath. Hold on. This will pass. Magnus gulped, daring to look at Alec who was staring at him with blazing red eyes. The ones that scared Magnus. The Alpha leaned forward and caught Magnus’ lips in his, taking a deep breath to inhale Magnus. It wasn’t bad. None of their kisses ever had been. This one was hot, and Alec pushed his lips onto his fiancé’s with his entire Alpha strength, but Magnus was also strong. He reciprocated Alec’s thrust. He could feel Alec’s heat radiating out from his body. Alec’s tongue found it’s way inside Magnus and he licked him, playing with the softness of Magnus’ lips. For a second, his own body gave in to the need of having an Alpha during heat and he raised his head a little to crash into Alec’s face as they kissed. Their hormones were getting the better of them. Alec used the roughness of his tongue to lick every part of Magnus’ upper lip, sucking it within his own and biting it here and there. Magnus felt sore and pink.

This is not right. This is not right. This is not right. I have to stop. I have to stop. Alec repeated. One of his hand pressed itself on Magnus’ neck and the other squeezed his shoulder as he climbed atop his fiancé, dropping his body on his Omega’s. His shirt brushed against Magnus’ naked chest as he deepened the kiss. Magnus’ hands that were locked up above him tickled to get hold of Alec’s head to pull him closer to him, and maybe dig his fingers inside. No. Stop.

Alec. Magnus called again. He wanted to help Alec control himself. Stop. Alec. Stop. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath as Alec’s lips trailed to his cheeks and started leaving a sloppy trail of deep, and violent kisses all around his face. Those would leave a mark for sure. Alec bared his teeth out and bit his cheek and licked on it. Magnus opened his eyes and looked at the ceiling. The pupils were flickering, and eyes glistened with pain and tears. Alec’s movements were getting wilder as he ground his hips against Magnus’ body. If Alec didn’t stop, and if Magnus let him do everything, things could end up being irreparably bad for these two. Fight it, Alec. Please…please fight it.

Alec pulled away from Magnus and stared at his naked chest for a while, deciding what his next move would be. His eyes looked like he needed him. He leaned and pressed a kiss on the base of Magnus’ neck, right between both the collar bones. Magnus shivered and gasped. Alec stuck his tongue out and licked a circle on it. Magnus pressed his head back on the pillow and started giving up. Alec’s teeth dug into his collarbone and shoulder and the man started marking his mate – in his true Alpha sense. Magnus could see that there was hardly any chance now. He knew how this was going to end. He prayed to whoever he could and then closed his eyes, after making himself a promise. No matter what happened tonight, he would never blame Alec, or let Alec take the blame for this. This was not Alec’s fault. One of Alec’s hand trailed off to the bottom, rubbing Magnus’ skin all the way. It reached the Omega’s thigh and Alec spread his
fingertips to spread the leaked out slick all around Magnus’ member, softening and lubricating it for what came next. Magnus felt tears run out to the sides as he felt Alec’s hand proceeding to his cock.

Alexander. He cried out the name again.

Alec froze where he was. His deep red eyes bore straight into Magnus’ perfectly carved out abs. What was I doing? He thought. The Omega could feel the color in his eyes flicker a little – the deeper red getting fainter and fainter. “Magnus”, he breathed out against the Omega’s abdomen. He was breathing heavily, and his skin was tingling because of the excitation drug that he had been injected with. This was the first time Alec had spoken his fiancé’s name. Tears formed in Magnus’ eyes as he recognized the familiar warmth in Alec. Alec moved up from where he was kissing Magnus before and Magnus felt how hard and plump Alec’s cock still was. Alec retracted his hand from Magnus’ thigh.

“Alexander…”, Magnus managed to utter, breathing in relief. His teeth were clenched onto each other, holding his emotions inside. The tears were clouding his vision, but he could see Alec and how apologetic he looked. Maybe the worst was over. Alec growled a little and then fist the bedsheet in his hands. He raised his chin up and screamed, letting out a part of his anger. The scream made Magnus shudder with fear. He shook and closed his eyes, pressing his head back into the pillow. Alec slipped away from him and Magnus felt the bed dipping again and rising. Alec was not on him or on the bed anymore. The footsteps went behind the bed and he heard another strong growl.

Alec pressed his fingertips onto the wall and pressed. The walls were made of stone and wood. He growled and screeched as he continued the pressure on the wall until it cracked a little. The sound of the wall cracking was masked by his heavy groaning. The shards of the wood and rock that made up the wall tore into Alec’s skin – ripping his nails apart. A trail of blood flowed down from his fingertips but that didn’t matter. He had to fight his urge to fuck Magnus. His eyes were blood red – but not with the need to be with Magnus but with the rage. He wanted to kill everyone who had dared to harm him and his family. His Magnus. He raised his chin and opened his eyes as his anger withdrawal broke the wall behind the bed. His gaze fell on the hooks that were keeping Magnus’ handcuffs in place.

Pulling away his hands out of the wall, he grabbed the chain and dropped his entire weight on it. The vein on his forehead popped out because of the pressure and rage. He tensed his biceps and pulled it. The hook dropped onto the floor with a loud thud. He was going to kill everyone who had been behind this. He pulled himself together and walked back to the bed, eyes still blazing red with fury. Magnus was observing his movements and he looked scared. Alec sat on the bed next to him and curled his hands around the handcuffs, giving it a hard squeeze – channeling his anger into breaking those nasty things. The metal cuffs clicked open a few minutes later and shattered, releasing Magnus from its shackles. Magnus gasped as he found control over his limbs again. He took a few calming breaths before looking back at Alec. Alec’s head was dropped in guilt with his gaze fixed on his lap. Magnus lifted his hand to cup his face, but Alec grabbed his wrist and stopped it mid-air. The rejection broke Magnus’ heart a little.

“I have to find who did this and end them. Kill them in cold blood.”, he growled. Magnus could hear two distinct voices. One of his beloved Alexander, and the other that reeked of pure Alpha anger. Alec stood up again and pulled a duvet on Magnus, covering him completely. “But first, you need to get the hell away from me”, he said, his voice soft again. Magnus gulped and nodded trying to get up, but Alec was already on his feet, his hands on his sides clenching in a fist. He wrapped the duvet around Magnus and picked him up, bridal style. Magnus’ breath hitched in his throat as he wrapped weak arms around Alec’s neck and inserted his head in the crook of Alec’s neck.
The Alpha was determined to kill anyone who came in his way of taking Magnus away to safety, but the place had been deserted. He simply walked out of the basement and turned up into the Lightwood backyard. That’s why this was so familiar. They had kidnapped him and Magnus in his own backyard. The lights in the mansion were out but Robert and Maryse were seated by the fireplace. Alec could see their silhouettes. There were remnants of the party all over the property. He adjusted Magnus in his arms and walked up the stairs. There was no time to go around the house and knock on the door. With a simple kick, he shattered the glass wall of the rear-end of the house and stepped inside, startling his parents. Robert stood up defensively and put himself between his wife and the unknown danger.

“Alec?”, Maryse gasped when she saw her son bloodied and tired. His hair looked like a mess and his fingers were leaving a blood trail on the floor. But that wasn’t all. She covered her mouth with her palm when she saw Magnus in his arms, emitting a god-awful scent.

“I am sure you must be thrilled now”, Alec hissed, walking inside the house, looking dead on the inside. “Hiding the truth from me and Magnus worked out well for you, right? It was for our own protection right.”, he taunted. The staircase to his room was right in front of him and he wasn’t in the mood for any more bullshit. Maryse came forward to help him with Magnus but Alec glanced at her with his still very red eyes and she had to step back. Alec glanced at his father as well who was looking at him with guilt.

“I am sorry son”, he muttered.

“Don’t be. I am going to solve this myself. Kill everyone who dared to hurt him”, Alec nudged Magnus and pressed him closer to his neck. Magnus moaned in pain and wrapped his arms tighter around his fiancé. “You and I, we’re going to talk tomorrow. Now go back to hiding whatever secrets you can.”, he ordered his parents. Maryse broke into a sob as she ran after Alec who took Magnus upstairs to his room. He placed a palm when she tried to enter the room and shut it behind him. He sat him on a stool in the washroom and let him lean back on the glass pane that separated the washbasin and the shower panel. Magnus was still very weak to control his limbs and he still felt partially paralytic. As he dropped his weight back to the glass pane, his body shivered because of how cold it was. Alec crouched in front of him, with a bucket of hot water and a set of towels. His eyes were still flickering between the blood red wolf color and his hazel orbs. Alec dipped one of the towels in the water and raised himself on his knees to wash and clean his fiancé.

Only a few hours ago, Magnus was being cleaned up by a girl who was offering him as bait to his own fiancé and Magnus had never felt dirtier in his life. But as he now saw Alec crouched in front him, cleaning him gently even though his eyes were blazing red with the drug that he himself had been given, Magnus couldn’t help but shed tears. This was the man he was falling for and he couldn’t be luckier to have someone like him to call a fiancé, a partner and soon, a husband. Alec clenched his jaw and cleaned the insides of Magnus’ thigh, removing any remnants of slick. Magnus’ body was still luring him in and he was doing everything in his power to resist the Omega. He changed the towel to clean his face and neck. Magnus’ jaw had darkened a little from the injury he had sustained from the man’s grip on it. He flinched when Alec pressed on it. Alec pulled away and looked back and forth between Magnus’ eyes and the bruise. The bones had maybe cracked a little.

S’okay Magnus thought. Alec took a deep breath and continued cleaning. When he was done, he walked out of the bathroom for a second and came back with fresh clothes for Magnus. Once Magnus was warm and clothed in a jumper and loose pajamas, he picked him up again and settled him onto the bed, between comfortable pillows and cushions. Alec disappeared again, leaving Magnus alone on the bed and he came back a few minutes later.

Magnus noticed that Alec had a weird thing dangling on his side which hadn’t been there earlier.
Pulling it out, he showed it to Magnus. “Take this”, he said. Magnus furrowed his brows, looking at the encased dagger. “I need you to use it on me if I ever come too close... okay?”, he breathed out. He reached out to give the dagger to Magnus, but the man shut his eyes and looked to the other side, crawling away from Alec.

“Take it away from my sight, Alexander.”, Magnus mumbled. He flinched in pain because talking meant parting his jaws and that hurt more than he wanted to admit in front of Alec. “I don’t want this.”, he huffed, turning away from Alec. The bed dipped next to him and Magnus felt a warm hand on his upper arm. The knife clanked on to the side table a minute later and that is when Magnus turned to look at his fiancé again.

“I want you safe Magnus”, Alec shook his head.

“I am here with you... in our room...”, Magnus throat bobbed, and his eyes flooded with tears again. “I am safe. I don’t need a weapon... not to save myself from you... take it away, throw it... melt it... but I don’t want to see it.”, he said, as a matter-of-factly. Alec’s eyes that were still mildly red and glowing flickered and tears appeared in his eyes.

“Magnus...”, he breathed out. He couldn’t form a proper sentence as to how he couldn’t trust his own self tonight. And he would die if he woke up knowing that he had hurt Magnus in any way. This dagger wasn’t just for Magnus to protect himself, but also for Magnus to protect Alec from the guilt of doing something he would regret his whole life. He swallowed and attempted to explain himself, but he couldn’t force anything out of his mouth without choking into sobs. He stared at his lap for a few seconds and then got up to leave.

He couldn’t leave though.

Magnus had held him back by his wrist. “I trust you with my life, Alexander”, Magnus managed to say and that was probably enough for Alec. The man walked over to the couch and turned off the lights. “Take rest, Magnus”, he whispered and dropped on the couch to close his eyes and sleep off the drug that he had been injected with.

Magnus woke up the next morning with a severe hangover. He lifted his hand to cover his eyes because the bright sunlight hit him hard. His body ached when he moved even a little, and his head was throbbing in pain. A groan and a deep breath later, the events of yesterday came back to him and he gasped. Gently opening his eyes, he looked around the room. The surroundings were not familiar and for a second he was shocked to not wake up in his own room in New York. Pressing his palms on the mattress, he pulled himself up to sit straight. He was covered in a very soft duvet and there were pillows all around him. The dagger that Alec had given him for his self-protection was still sitting on the side-table. His heart shattered for a moment when he recalled why Alec had done what he had done. He felt his jaw and to his misfortune, it still stung and felt swollen. Magnus rubbed his foggy vision away and looked around the room to find where his fiancé was. Alec was fast asleep on the couch, and light snores were coming out of his mouth. His legs were hanging out from the armrest and one of his hands was dropped to the ground. There were dark brown stains of dried blood all over his palms and forearms. Alec hadn’t cleaned himself last night.

He lifted his duvet up to check himself. It didn’t feel like he was in heat anymore. The warmth of slick leaking out of him was gone, and so was the tingling sensation in his cock as well as the burn that ran through his veins during his cycles. His stomach felt a little nauseous, and Magnus stepped out of the bed to use the washroom. He held his stomach when he stood straight up on his feet. The nausea was more severe than he had imagined. He trudged himself to the bathroom and as soon as he reached the commode, he collapsed and emptied the contents of his stomach in it. He knelt on the
floor, gasping for breath. *That felt good.* Emptying his stomach made him feel lighter and better. *He had been drugged on an empty stomach last night and probably the throw-up contained all the last remnants of his intoxicant.* His throat was bruised a little after the vomiting but that was okay.

Magnus came to Alec’s wardrobe and pulled out a fresh pair of his clothes for himself. He picked a towel and walked back into the washroom. Pulling his t-shirt out, he gazed at himself in the mirror. Alec’s kisses had left marks all over his collarbone and neck. Purple scars marred his torso, reminding him and Alec of what they had almost been forced into. He felt the marks with his finger pads and sighed. Some of them burned and stung on touch and some of them were just superficial scars that would dissolve and disappear soon, without leaving any mark. But what about the scars that had been etched in their hearts. Last night had altered their dynamic forever and it was scary to admit. Magnus knew that Alec and he had managed to dodge the worst-case scenario, but things had still changed between them. The extent to which this had happened would be visible a little later – maybe when they returned to New York. They had been forced to become exactly what both Magnus and Alec hated about themselves – the wolf wildness that came with their genetics and history. He turned the faucets and let the warm water wash him and relax him a little.

He came out after the shower while Alec was still snoring on the couch. The room looked like an absolute mess. The door to the balcony was swinging because of the wind and Alec’s wardrobe doors were wide open. Magnus looked at the bedding and decided to discard the sheets and the mattress that was drenched in his slick and sweat from the heat. He put them all in the discard area and then reached Alec and crouched on the floor next to him with a box of first-aid. The man was still in his black shirt and pants from the party and he reeked of sweat. One of his hands was lying on his stomach and was cut and smudged with dried out blood. The floor beneath his other hand also had spots of dried blood. Magnus flinched at the sight and opened the box to pick out cotton and antiseptic. He dipped cotton in clean water and lifted Alec’s hand to wipe the blood off his hands. Most of the cuts had healed because of his Alpha healing properties – something that the Omegas didn’t share. They took longer to heal themselves, which is why his jaw was probably still broken.

Magnus cleaned Alec’s fingers to check if there were any deep cuts that were yet to heal. Some of his nails had chipped off and the area around them was in various stages of healing. Alec moved his hand away in his sleep and Magnus had to squeeze it to keep it in place. He cleaned his hand and moved to the other when Alec finally woke up. He widened his eyes recalling last night and jumped away from his fiancé, sticking himself to the corner of the couch. “Magnus”, he gasped.

“Morning”, Magnus muttered without moving his jaws too much because they were still hurting. He ignored Alec’s protests and grabbed his hand to clean it. Alec was half-asleep, but he was still feeling guilty enough to not look straight into Magnus’ eyes. He was pulling his hands away from Magnus, but he knew he couldn’t really win against his fiancé. Magnus kept Alec’s hand steady in his and cleaned it up. He bandaged the unhealed cuts and threw the dirty cotton and gauge in the disposal.

Alec was standing in the balcony when Magnus returned from the bathroom after washing his hands and cleaning himself. He had purposely chosen a full-sleeve sweater from Alec’s wardrobe so that the marks on his skin won’t serve as the reminder of what Alec and he were probably trying to forget. He walked out into the balcony and joined Alec, leaning on the railing with their shoulders brushing together. Alec breathed out and wanted to step away, but Magnus squeezed his arm and pressed him closer.

*Talk to me.* Magnus thought.

*Magnus, I don’t think I can do this.* Alec gulped and looked away. He took a deep breath and then turned back to look at Magnus. His heart broke at what he saw. Magnus’ eyes looked exhausted and weak. His jaws had bruise marks and looked a little swollen than usual. Alec used his thumb to brush
his jaw. Magnus flinched in pain and shut his eyes. “I am sorry for everything. This shouldn’t have happened”, Alec blurted out. Magnus shook his head to convey his emotions and tried to smile but he couldn’t.

The door clicked open and Alec protectively put himself between whoever it was and Magnus. Magnus lifted his hand to Alec’s arm and squeezed. “I’ll be alright. Please calm down.”, he whispered. It was Alec’s sister Isabelle. Magnus smiled and moved forward to greet the girl, but Alec held him back with his wrist, pulling him behind his back for protection. Magnus widened his eyes at the gesture but didn’t protest.

“Alec, I am so sorry”, she gasped, looking at a very bruised and injured Magnus.

“For what...?”, Alec crossed his hands on his chest and squinted his eyes. “I am sure you did nothing wrong. And it wasn’t your place to do anything, right?”, Magnus closed his eyes, anticipating Alec’s anger.

“I didn’t know that something like this could even happen.”, she covered her mouth with her palm and tears formed in her eyes. Magnus squeezed Alec’s arm, requesting him to go softer with her but the man was furious.

“Isabelle”, Alec breathed out his sister’s name. “I need you to leave the room”, he waved his hand, gesturing him to leave.

“Izzy, please let me explain”, she cried.

“I wanted you to. Last night, I wanted you to tell me, warn me. And you made yourself clear. Now, I’d like you to leave me and my fiancé alone. Magnus needs to rest, and I have got wolves to kill”, Alec said, as a matter-of-factly and walked past Izzy to open the door for her. Izzy sniffed, fighting the tears in her eyes and looked between Alec and Magnus. Magnus felt his heart breaking for Alec’s little sister. He had one of his own and so he knew exactly how she was loaded with guilt and anger for her own self.

“I am really glad you’re okay”, she bit her lip, turning to look at Magnus. Magnus came forward and squeezed Izzy’s shoulder, plastering a smile on his face. Izzy relaxed in her brother-in-law’s touch and forced a smile on her lips too. “I spoke to Clary this morning. She’s coming here, as soon as she can”, she informed. “I am really sorry”

“It wasn’t your fault”, Magnus assured. He looked over her shoulders and saw Alec standing by the door, leaning on the frame. His hands were crossed on his chest and his lips were pursed together in frustration.

“It is. I should have warned Alec. I should have anticipated that something as horrifying as that could have happened”, Izzy wiped her tears away. “But, I am glad you’re okay. You are okay right?”, she asked.

“I’ll be alright”, Magnus nodded.

“How will I ever explain all this to Clary? She’ll be so pissed. I didn’t even tell her about what I knew and...”, Izzy held her hands on her forehead and sighed.

“Biscuit will understand you. She’ll understand your reasons. Don’t worry about it, okay? Until then, if you feel like talking to someone, I am right here”, he nodded. Izzy glanced at Alec for a second and then looked at Magnus. Magnus understood what she was thinking.

“Give him time.”, Magnus whispered. “Last night was tough on the both of us. But, Alec will come
around”, he assured. Izzy nodded and turned around, leaving the room. Alec shut the door behind her and placed his fists on it.

Leaning his head on the door, he closed his eyes and found tears trickling down his cheeks. He drooped his shoulders down as they shook, breaking Magnus’ heart. Magnus watched him from afar, a tear escaping his eyes. He stepped forward and slipped his hands to Alec’s chest from under his arms and fistfisted his shirt. Leaning his forehead on Alec’s collarbone, Magnus let his own tears fall too.

Chapter End Notes

Don't forget to let me know what you thought about the chapter? The updates might be quicker from now onward, just because I have some time on my hand to write.
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Magnus and Clary spend time together, Alec is furious, and the truth starts uncovering... bit by bit.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Lightwood and Bane families were assembled in the Lightwood living room. Clary and Kaya had rushed in after they heard what happened with Magnus and Alec while Asmodeus was away on a little Clave business. Clary now sat on the couch, with her head buried in her brother’s neck and her arms around his waist. She had tears in her eyes as Magnus rubbed her back and consoled her. She couldn’t even comprehend that her brother was so close to her last night and she didn’t realize it and let all that happen to him. Alec stood near the fireplace with his elbow leaning on the mantle. while Maryse and Robert were seated on the couch opposite Magnus and Clary. Kaya was sat on the armchair next to Magnus while Izzy was standing all the way in the dining room, unable to look in any one’s eyes.

“We were all right here when all this went down. How come no one saw Magnus being brought in or Alec being taken away? We were right here”, Clary fumed, wiping her nose. Magnus used his thumb to wipe her tears and shook his head, gesturing her to stop blaming herself for last night.

“That basement”, Maryse took a deep breath and pointed. “It is actually an ancient dungeon. It was built by Alec’s great great great grandfather to facilitate Omegas in heat. One of his own sons was born one and he couldn’t let him suffer from all the Alphas hogging by his bedside every time his cycle hit. The knowledge was buried with our ancestors and Robert’s father had it shut down and renovated to suit the modern age, but it was built to withstand the loudest of noises and none of the Omegas emitted any scent that reached out of the cave – which is why it was safe from Alphas looking around for pleasure”, she explained. “For years now, we’ve been using it as a basement, and a storage room and Izzy and Alec used to throw their slumber parties when they were here as children, but since then... it hasn’t been in use although I do get it cleaned on a regular basis.”, she rubbed her eyebrow. “I don’t think anyone of us has been in there since Izzy’s 16th Birthday?”

Kaya reached out to Magnus, holding her palm flat up. Magnus placed his free hand in hers and she gave him a squeeze.

“The architecture of the basement explains why neither of us sensed Magnus here or heard his screams or Alec’s for that matter. They were practically locked away in a sound-proof box. But it is your family’s secret. No one else must have known about this place other than the Lightwoods, and even if they did, they couldn’t possibly know about how they could have misused this place to harm my boy”, Kaya arched a brow, staring at Maryse.

“Kaya... are you insinuating that we knew about Magnus’ abduction or we sort of had a part to play in it?”, Maryse gasped. Alec was playing with a stone in his hand when his head snapped up and he looked at his mother and mother-in-law.

“You yourself admitted that only the Lightwoods had been privy to the secrets of that dungeon. It is
not a matter of common knowledge. I am not insinuating anything out of thin air, Maryse. Like anyone else in the room, I am trying to make sense of why this happened. My son was drugged and injected with a chemical that induced his heat, practically made Alec tempted to make a move on him. I have the right to question and doubt anything that threatens his safety. You would agree with that instinct, wouldn’t you? You’re a mother of three very bright children.”, she taunted, her voice getting snarkier by the second.

“None of us could possibly even think of harming Magnus. He is our family. He is going to be my son-in-law one day. And Alec was drugged too, none of us could do that to them.”, Maryse gasped. She looked horrified at the accusation and looked up at Alec hoping for some support but as soon as their eyes met, he looked away, choosing to look at some photographs placed on the mantle of the fireplace.

“Mom, I don’t think we will be able to get to the bottom of this if we blame each other. Mrs Lightwood is Alec’s mother. Like she said, I don’t think she will have her own son drugged to force him into non-consensual sex with his fiancé?”, Magnus interrupted. Kaya stared at Magnus for a second and then pulled her hand away, leaving Magnus’ stranded mid-air. Magnus sighed and dropped his gaze back on his lap.

“I think Mrs Bane is being sensible, Magnus. We have to consider everything – every goddamn possibility if we’re to find the culprits and punish them. It is a fact that only the family members here knew about the actual use of that basement...”, Alec cleared his throat, fiddling with his engagement ring. Maryse widened her eyes as she looked at Alec who was now standing with his hands crossed on his chest. Alec hadn’t accused the Lightwoods directly, but he hadn’t shown support for them either. Magnus closed his eyes, unable to take this coldness in Alec. Alexander, what are you doing? He thought.

Magnus. I have to find the people who did it. If they happen to be my parents, then so be it. I wouldn’t let them go without interrogation. Alec thought back. Magnus took a deep breath, pushing this much-needed conversation with Alec for another day and focused on what they were supposed to do now. “The man who drugged me...”, Magnus cleared his throat. “He kept saying that he was trying to put everything back together. That he was righting the wrongs in the society?”, Alec flinched when he heard this. He recalled the man saying something very similar to him too. “I can’t really say... but how does forcing Alec and I to have sex right the wrongs in our society?”

Maryse and Kaya looked at each other, the colour of their skin fading. Alec noticed this exchange of looks and he furrowed his eyes. His gaze wandered over to Izzy who was looking away towards the windows, hiding her face because she knew what Magnus was talking about as well. She knew it very clearly. But she wouldn’t say a word. None of them will. This was the big secret they had been hiding from the two of them for months now. “They’re lunatics. That’s all they are. They believe that still living in the 14th century and following age-old customs is the right way to preserve our legacy.”, Kaya stuttered, attempting to do damage control. “Don’t read too much into what they were saying, Magnus. Your father and Consul Lightwood don’t share the views of the community we belong to and as long as they are here with us, we don’t need to worry about all the drama of the Clave.”, she waved it off. Magnus nodded, even though he looked unconvinced with the answer.

“You know that’s not true, Mrs Bane. Dad and Uncle Asmodeus have been failing at whatever they are trying to do. It has been the same for weeks now.”, Izzy spoke up, clearing her throat. Alec widened his eyes. Failing at what they are trying to do? Alec thought. What could that possibly imply? What were his father and Uncle Asmodeus trying to fix and failing at? How was everything connected to him and Magnus? They hadn’t even been in Idris for the last 4 months and somehow, they had angered people already.
The Beta wolf stepped forward until she reached the couch and dropped her hands on the backrest.

“Mom... you and Dad almost let Magnus and Alec lose a part of themselves last night. I think it is time you tell them what they deserved to know since the day you decided to have them married and mated. It is not safe for them to not know what risks they are in if they stay in Idris any longer.”

“Tell us what? Is this why you summoned Alexander to come to Idris for the party?”, Magnus asked, looking at Isabelle. Izzy took a deep breath and nodded. Clary pulled away from Magnus’ chest and looked between his mother and Isabelle who she hadn’t spoken to since she found out about last night. She had been angry at the girl for hiding a truth that almost killed her brother, but she knew that it wasn’t Isabelle’s fault. If at all, it was their parents’. Maryse looked at Kaya and then at Alec, before taking a deep breath.

“We thought that you wouldn’t need to know the details because you were not going to come back from New York until much later.”, Maryse took a deep breath. Alec stepped forward and stopped right behind Magnus. Magnus felt him come close to him and smiled. “The mating ritual between two wolves is an intricate process involving all the four elements of nature which play a very crucial role in unifying the two souls for the rest of their mortal lives, and if they are lucky, for the eternity so that every wolf finds their mate in every life. There are two stages of mating – the marking and the union. When you marked Magnus on his neck, during the full moon in November, you were surrounded by the moonlight that gives us wolves the power we need and air, which gives us and the mundanes oxygen. That initiated the mating ritual, but it wasn’t all.”, she explained, looking directly into Alec’s eyes as she spoke.

“The second part of this ritual involves the union of the two wolves”, Maryse choked. “It is a very intimate affair, and no one talks about it because of how private it should be. Which is why it is not talked about in our historical records. Both the marked Omega and the marker Alpha are taken into an isolated space, bathed in the water from Lake Lynn prior to the rituals and smoke of sage which is lit by fire. The private space usually is a cave, barely lit by candles and the wolves are allowed some time to unify their bond, on the ground”

“Unify our bond, how?”, Magnus gulped.

“The Alpha has to knot the Omega so that a new pack is born with the mated pair at the centre of the Leadership.”, Kaya looked away as she mumbled. Magnus gasped and felt his jaw hurt as he clenched it. “Magnus, you weren’t born to us after our marriage. You were the result of your father knotting me during our mating”, she admitted. Magnus felt his pupils widen and his breath hitching in his throat.

Alec felt disgusted. He knew he hated the rituals that his community forced him to perform but this was downright bullshit, to begin with. How could he have knotted Magnus on the night he marked him? They barely knew each other then, and Magnus almost hated him. Alec gulped and looked at Izzy who was staring at him with apologetic eyes. She nodded, corroborating their mother’s story. “We didn’t tell you...”, Maryse cleared her throat and Alec and Magnus focused their attention back to her. “Because you and Magnus barely knew each other... unlike us who were friends way before we had decided to mate. And we thought that you will get closer in New York and this ritual will just become a formality for another time. Marking would have sealed your partnership and that is just what we wanted for the two of you...”

“It isn’t a formality to the rest of Idris, is it?”, Alec rolled his eyes. “The Clave is pressuring Dad and Uncle Asmodeus to have us fully mated and begin our pack?”, he arched a brow. Maryse took a deep breath and nodded, unable to make up stories in front of her son. “And you couldn’t have Isabelle tell this to me before, because...?”
“Because I thought we could handle it here. You and Magnus would not have come back to Idris until after you were done with your work and we would have kept the Clave in the dark”, she dropped her head on her palm.

“Us being in NYC didn’t stop them from getting to us. Did it? Magnus was abducted on his way to work, in Manhattan”, Alec screamed. “And had just you told me... warned me about this impending danger, I wouldn’t have left Magnus’ side, and stayed to keep a watch on the both of us. This would have never happened.”, he was furious, his eyes beginning to flicker to their blazing red shade. “I asked Izzy and you... time and again since I flew here, and you just stood there... lying to me that everything was fine and under control... that you and Dad could handle it. And they took Magnus, drugged him... and broke his jaw while trying to make him look like a bait for me”, he growled. Clary shuddered a little at the outburst of anger and looked at Magnus who was staring at Alec.

“Alexander”, Magnus muttered under his breath. Alec was losing his temper. “They handcuffed him to hooks... who does that to another person? They injected him with something so awful that was fucking paralyzed and unable to defend himself. You cannot even begin to imagine what Magnus must have felt, his cycle had barely ended last week... or how it felt for me to watch him lie there, helpless and weak, unable to move and crawl away from me while I looked at him like he was my food. You let this happen...”, he stepped forward. Clary stood up defensively, taking a cover for her mother and Alec’s as the Alpha’s anger started threatening the mothers’ safety. Magnus stood up abruptly from the couch and walked around to reach Alec before it got any worse. Alec stepped back a little, but Magnus found his grip around Alec’s elbows, and he pulled the Alpha close without fearing for his own self. Truth be told, Alec was so angry that he could have attacked anyone, but Magnus didn’t care. “How could you let this happen to your own sons? How could you lie to us? Or force Izzy to lie to me... and her friends because you were too scared... or too confident?”, he accused his mother who was in tears now, and slightly taken aback and scared of Alec’s temper. And Alec would have done something really bad had Magnus not been holding him – keeping his emotions in check and his body grounded. Magnus curled his fingers around Alec’s jaws and stroked his jawline rhythmically.

Calm down, Alexander.

Alec tore his gaze away from his mother and looked at Magnus feeling the strokes on his jaw. He needed to see him. He never wanted to stop seeing him. Calm down, darling. The boy’s heart melted at how endearing Magnus’ face was and how his voice in his head brought him so much peace. Magnus pushed his neck forward until their foreheads brushed together. Alec instantly relaxed in his fiancé’s touch and wrapped his arms around Magnus’ waist. Breathe with me. Magnus gently instructed. Alec was burning up with fever – his veins popping out in his forehead. Magnus kept his gaze fixed on Alec as he gestured him to take a deep breath from his mouth which was curved in an o. Alec nodded and followed Magnus as they expanded their chests that were pressed together. They paused for 5 seconds, Magnus counting them on his fingers, and then let that breath out together. Alec’s hands dropped to his sides. He felt lighter and less furious.

Breathe in again. Slowly. Magnus instructed. Alec nodded and obeyed not tearing his gaze away from Magnus’ deep brown eyes. Alec’s eyes returned to their normal colour and Alec’s breathing pattern relaxed as well. Magnus’ presence was doing wonders for his body. They were so lost in each other’s gaze that they didn’t realize that their entire family was right there – staring at how perfectly in sync their bond had become. Maryse was surprised to see how well Magnus understood her son and even though they weren’t completely mated, they bonded better than actually mated wolf pairs. Clary relaxed her stance and took a relaxing breath. It was a beautiful sight to watch her brother have so much control over his fiancé and Alec look at him with such adoration and trust. Her
brother deserved that.

_Breathe out. You’re doing so good, Alexander._ Magnus smiled. He leaned forward and pressed a sloppy kiss on his Alpha’s cheek. _We will get through this, together._

Robert returned to the house with his trusted guards of the Clave. The Council had expressed their condolences over what happened to Alec and Magnus and promised support to the Consulate in finding out the true culprits. Alec had had to unwillingly let Magnus go to his own house because Clary and Kaya insisted that they wanted to spend some time alone with him before the couple returned to New York to resume their lives. He was hesitant because the people who had abducted Magnus were still on the lose and if they attacked Magnus again, or harmed him, he wouldn’t be able to control himself and stop blaming himself. The guards were now scanning the Lightwood property, looking for anything that could serve as proof or evidence. Alec was with one of them when they opened the basement again. Magnus and his scent were still in the air and Alec felt hard and warm when he stepped inside. The basement was well lit during the day and they discovered blown out candles and syringe barrels lying around the corners. There were empty and discarded bottles of whiskey and gin everywhere. Robert picked up one of the bottles and took a whiff.

“It has been spiked with wolfsbane”, he coughed as the remnants of the poison stung his throat, turning the neck of the bottle away from his nose. Wolfsbane – the werewolf poison. Alec had heard stories about the ancient society of Werewolves using wolfsbane to poison prisoners but in minute amounts – it also served as an intoxicating and hallucinating drug. PPM amounts of the substance rendered a wolf prone to suggestion, much like alcohol or opiates. If Alec’s drinks had been spiked last night, it explained how he didn’t put up a fight when they were injecting him with excitation hormones to make a move on Magnus.

“What was the catering company that we hired the bartender from? It looks like these bottles were prepared specially for Alec.”, the Consul enquired from his wife. Maryse bit her lip and tried to recall the names.

“The bar was set up by the *Seelie Realm.*”, she informed. Seelie Realm was an upcoming pub in Idris and they had approached the Lightwoods to let them bartend the night so that word about their restaurant and pub could spread among the masses. They knew how influential the Lightwood family was and this was their chance to make a name for themselves. “But the manager called me in the morning, stating that the man who was supposed to bartend last night called in sick and they were sending a replacement. Her name was _Ingrid_, I suppose. I am not sure but I’ll have someone check and let me know...””, Maryse added. Alec heard the name and his head snapped in his mother’s direction.

“What did you say her name was?”, he asked.

“Ingrid. Do you know that name?”, Maryse gasped.

“When I was here...last night. When they brought me here, there were two people... and one of them was a girl... and I am pretty sure her name was Ingrid”, Alec breathed out. He had scattered memories of people talking around him last night and they were slowly coming back to him. “I have never heard that name in our circles before and yet, by the way she was speaking to this other shadow, it seemed like she knew everything about our world.”, Alec rubbed the scar on his brow.

“And yet, it doesn’t explain how the information about this dungeon reached those people. For all our friends and families, this place is a regular basement used for slumber parties. No one knows what this was intended to be used for, when it was built in the early 19th century?”, Robert furrowed
his brows. His eyes were glowing in his Alpha color as he sniffed around to register any peculiar scent he could pick up. Alec was doing the same. He kicked open the door to the room he had been taken to – the one where Magnus was being kept and he felt nauseous when he pictured Magnus lying naked on that bed in front of him. He wanted to throw up. The bedsheets hadn’t been changed since he rescued Magnus.

In the daylight, he saw the name of his ancestor Benedict Lightwood carved outside one of the windows in the room. Benedict Lightwood had been the one to build this place for his Omega son. Every quarter, he hid him in here and bolted the locks so that no Alpha could ever find out about him or take advantage of him. The information and the secrets were passed down in the Lightwood family. And then, during the time Christopher Lightwood lived – this place was deserted and never used again until Robert Lightwood renovated it. The Lightwood family journals spoke about this secret place until Christopher Lightwood and then it had disappeared from the records, only to be passed on in form of stories. Alec had heard stories about the same from his grandmother and his mother.

“They couldn’t have risked bringing Magnus here until they were sure about the place.”, Alec snapped out of his thoughts and turned around to face his father. “We need to list down the people who know... or who could?”

“That’s a start?”, Robert nodded. “Let us go back inside and figure while the guards search this place for clues, okay?”, he added.

“No...”, Alec shook his head. “I don’t trust any of you right now. No one.”, he said, crossing his hands over his chest. “I am going to lock this place up and search it myself. No one enters, but me”, he nodded.

“Alec, I know these men”, Robert waved his hands.

“I knew you too”, Alec deadpanned. “...and yet you kept a part of my relationship to Magnus a secret for 8 months. So, why don’t we get over all that! I will not ponder over the fact that you betrayed my trust as long as no one enters this basement but me. If you can work with that, I can work with you, putting all this behind me...”, he added. Robert was shocked to see this side of Alec. He had always known his son to be the least bit interested in showing his true self to people and here he was, commanding and being the leader that he was born to be. A part of Robert Lightwood was proud of him, but it also made Alec dangerous... and ruthless. Both him and Maryse knew that Alec fiercely protected people he cared about, but they had never seen him so determined – for another man. For someone, who wasn’t a Lightwood by blood. It filled them with pride but also made them worry about the Consulate’s future. “So, are we okay with that?”, Alec squinted his eyes and stared at his parents.

“Fine. We’ll do this your way, son, only because we want you to trust us when we said that we were trying to protect you.”, Robert pursed his lips. “But I am still the Consul of the Wolves in the city. You have to report everything you see and find here. That is the rule, Alec.”, Robert shrugged. Alec nodded. Robert took a deep breath and looked at the Guard and gestured them to leave. Alec followed everyone out and then bolted the doors of the basement, keeping the keys with him.

... Magnus was sitting on his bed, in his own room in Idris after months. He was playing with the rings in his finger and staring at the large window that opened into the forests outside. This particular feature was a characteristic of all the houses in Idris. It facilitated them to pounce on their rooms and transform into their wolf counterparts anytime they liked. He had missed this place so much, but he wished he had been there under better circumstances. Clary was trying to fish some movie out of the
cupboard for them to watch. Alec had hesitantly let Magnus go away for the day, but he had promised to spend the night with his fiancé.

“Biscuit?”, Magnus looked back from the window. His vision darkened for a little as his eyes adjusted to the dim light inside the room.

“Uhm?”, Clary peeked out from the cupboard and asked.

“How is going with Isabelle?”

Clary licked her lips and colour vanished from her face. She could lie and say that everything was fine, and she hadn’t told Isabelle about her feelings but there was a fair chance that Magnus would see right through to her. She was about to shake her head and tell him it was all good when Isabelle walked into the room with a tray in her hand. She was wearing oven mittens so whatever she was holding, was scorching hot. Clary cleared her throat and stood up. She hadn’t spoken to Isabelle since everything and things had been a little awkward.

“I... Mom said that this would help with the pain and push the swelling down as well. Your mother is very angry with us, but she allowed me to make it...”, Isabelle muttered nervously, placing the tray on the side-table. Magnus peeked into the bowl. It smelled of camphor... and there were a few other things in the concoction. “It’s Camphor oil and crushed camphor... with eucalyptus essence and a few other herbs.”

“You didn’t have to do this, Isabelle. I feel a lot better already. A few nights’ sleep would completely heal me, alright?”, Magnus sighed. “Come and sit...”, he patted the bed next to him. Izzy glanced at Clary who was looking away from her and sighed before sitting down next to her brother-in-law.

“I wanted to do this because this is my fault. Alec is furious at me... and for good reason. He wouldn’t even let me apologize to him, and he is allowed to do that... show me a cold shoulder.”, she gulped. “I messed up. And I got you hurt. I got him hurt as well.”, she choked. “I just want to help, Magnus...”, she pleaded. Magnus reached out to hold his sister-in-law’s hand. Magnus looked at Clary over Izzy’s shoulder and she was smiling at the Lightwood girl. Magnus could see the affection in his sister’s eyes and it was warming his heart.

“None of us were aware of how serious this was, okay?”, Magnus narrowed his brows. “It is not your fault. It is no one’s fault. Sometimes, bad things happen to good people... and it’s okay. That’s how we get stronger in life”, he added. “Now what is that? As long as you’re injecting this in my carotid... I am okay?”, he joked, pointing at the little hump on his neck from where he had been drugged last night. Izzy’s smile vanished for a second until Clary came forward and slapped her brother’s arm.

“You have a terrible sense of humour, brother”, she scorned. Magnus grinned wide, attempting to throw his head back and laugh but his jaw ached when he opened it. “Ow. Stop making me laugh, it hurts”. Clary broke into a chuckle at the comment and dropped on the floor to continue searching for a movie. Izzy’s lips finally curved into a wide grin as she picked up the bowl and used two fingers to take a lump of the mixture.

“Take off your shirt, Magnus”, Izzy instructed. Magnus rolled his eyes and pulled Alec’s sweater out of him to reveal his toned chest marred by purple hickeys. Izzy flinched when she recognized how the marks must have gotten there but the time to lament and being guilty over this was over. She had to be of help to her brothers. She rubbed the mixture against Magnus’ jaw softly, massaging his bruise. She applied the mixture to all the marks and then blew air onto them until they dried out.

“Is it supposed to smell this bad?”, Magnus scrunched his nose. Clary chuckled and threw herself
back on the floor when she heard that.

“Oh yes, it’s awful”, she added. Magnus tilted head and stuck his tongue out at his sister who just responded in kind.

“A little”, Izzy bit her tongue. Magnus rolled his eyes and nodded.

“Oh God. Your brother will forever avoid me if I cannot get this off of my perfect body”, Magnus waved his hand, dramatically. The girls barked out a laugh when they heard him. After the mixture had dried, Magnus pulled his sweater back again while Isabelle prepared to leave. As soon as she stepped out of the room, Magnus gestured his sister to go and speak to Isabelle. Clary sighed and ran after her best friend.

...Isabelle was wrapping her stuff in her backpack, ready to return home and maybe talk to Alec... apologize once again, when she heard Clary’s footsteps approaching her. Her heart fell out of her mouth. They hadn’t spoken since morning since last night to be exact. “Can we talk?”, Clary swallowed, catching her breath.

“Yeah... sure?”, Izzy smiled.

“I wanted to apologize?”, Clary scrunched her nose.

“You...wanted to apologize?”, Izzy gasped. Her eyes poked out of their sockets. “Why?”, she crossed her hands over her chest.

“For the record. I don’t blame you for what happened to Magnus?”, Clary shrugged. Isabelle’s shock vanished from her face and guilt took over. “So, if I made you feel like I did... I apologize. It wasn’t my intention, Isabelle”

“But you should blame me?”, she mumbled.

“But, I don’t...”, Clary iterated. “You had been honest with me... you have told me that there was a secret that you knew – one that you couldn’t share with anyone... right? You didn’t hide anything...”

“I also told that it was manageable. That no one would get hurt... and your brother did...”, she gulped, swallowing the tears that were forming in her eyes. “So, you may not blame me... but I did fuck up...”

“Alec got hurt as well, okay?”, Clary gasped. “...and even if he didn’t... it wouldn’t still be your fault because you could not know... our parents hid that information from us, and that’s their fault. They should have known. Not us. Not you... or Magnus... or Alec?”, she came forward and squeezed Isabelle’s shoulder. “I was angry in the morning... I admit that. But that was because I saw my brother bruised and injured, and for a second... my anger got the best of me.”, she looked up in Isabelle’s eyes and found tears streaming down her face. Clary used her thumbs and rubbed them away. She leaned in and placed a chaste kiss on Isabelle’s lips. “Stop feeling guilty, okay? We’ll figure it out... you, me, Magnus and Alec... together”, she dried away Izzy’s tears and pulled her into a hug.

“We will”, Izzy nodded in Clary’s neck. Izzy pulled back and placed a kiss on both of Clary’s cheeks and bobbed her nose with her fingers. Clary giggled and let Isabelle go. “Now, let me go and try to make my brother talk to me...”, she rolled her eyes.

“He would... just give him some time. I am sure he is just as shaken up as my brother, if not more”,
she shrugged. Izzy took a deep breath and nodded.

...  

Alec was standing on a ladder, looking for the Lightwood journals in his Dad’s private office in the house. Robert was sitting on the desk below, analysing and jotting down the names of people who could have known about the dungeon. So far, the list only comprised of himself, Alec, Maryse, Isabelle, and his mother Phoebe. Phoebe had been living with Maryse’s parents in Dublin, ever since Robert’s father Andrew Lightwood had passed away, and he made a mental note to ask her if she had mentioned anything related to the dungeon to Maryse’s parents or anyone else in Dublin... or Idris.

“I found Grandpa’s old scribbles... and Gideon Lightwood’s journals. Where are the rest of them? There are supposed to be tons of these, right? The Lightwoods were always passionate journal keepers”, Alec poked around. Robert looked up at his son and sighed. Another secret that he had kept from the family.

“Some of them are in the safe in our room”, he announced.

“Why is that?”, Alec snapped.

“Because they had sensitive information. It would have passed on to you when we thought you would be ready... to handle all that? Until then, I didn’t think it was necessary to burden you with all this information. It would have only put pressure on you”, Robert tried to explain but Alec raised his hand, asking him to stop.

“Add it to the list of things you thought wasn’t appropriate to let me know. Maybe I will refer to it when something happens to me or Magnus because we weren’t warned”, he sassed his father and turned his back to him.

“You would have inherited them eventually”, Robert sighed.

“I don’t want them. Ever. Keep them. Throw them. Burn them. I don’t care.”, Alec sighed, stepping down on the floor from the ladder and dusting his shirt and knees. “I am taking these with me to my room. Gideon Lightwood’s journals mention his father Benedict... so they might have a clue on if this information was given to someone else outside the family during the time this dungeon was built. If you think that those journals in your safe have sensitive information, look for something that suggests who else knew about this place. I am calling it a day. Text me if you need me”, he announced. Maryse furrowed her brows.

“You’ll be in your room, right?”, she asked. “Alec, please eat something. You haven’t eaten anything since morning”  

“I am going to Magnus’. I am not hungry. If I feel so, maybe I’ll eat something there.”, Alec informed. “Can’t leave him there... who knows what is hiding in these shadows”, he rolled his eyes and walked out of the room.

...  

Magnus was sitting on his bed. There were boxes of pizza open in front of him and Clary who were both dressed in soft and adorable onesies – Clary opted for a Unicorn one and Magnus wore a giraffe one. It was their school time tradition when they called friends in for a slumber party, dressed in their favourite onesie and watched a movie and ate pizza all night. It was just Clary and Magnus for the night, but they were following traditions. Clary’s unicorn ears were flanked by her fiery red hair. She
was huddled up in one corner of the bed, her knees sticking to her chest and a box of pizza resting on them.

“We’re watching *Princess Diaries*? Clarissa Morgenstern Bane, do you have any regards for the fact that I am older to you... and we can watch something that I prefer? Can we watch something, less *princessy* maybe?”, Magnus stepped groaned, throwing his head back into the wall, almost hitting it. Clary smacked him across the chest handed over his box of pizza. Magnus adjusted his own hood and settled under the covers as the movie began.

“You remember the time you dressed up as Mia...”, Clary spoke with pizza in her mouth. She leaned back and dropped her head on Magnus’ shoulder. “At the hospital... when I broke my leg right after the movie released...?”

“Yeah... how *do* you remember it? You were 5, Biscuit?”, Magnus gasped, nibbling on the back crust of the pizza.

“I don’t know how ...but, that memory of you dancing around in that gown is kinda etched in my brain”, she chuckled loudly. Magnus rolled his eyes. “…and then remember when you dressed *me* as Mia for that annual Ball at school... and every other girl was jealous of how pretty I looked and how gorgeous that gown was...”, she smiled at the recollection.

“You didn’t need to cosplay Mia to look beautiful... you’re anyway the prettiest girl I know, and I am sure half the people at that Ball realized that way before you donned on the gown and went all royal. But, I did good... right? You did look all *princessy*...”, Magnus mumbled, pressing a kiss on her forehead. Clary nodded, swallowing the pizza in her mouth.

“I miss you here sometimes...”, she cuddled closer to her brother. The temperatures outside dropped significantly and the blanket felt warm and cosy. “This house isn’t the same without you... and both Mom and Dad feel it too. None of us really admit it out loud... but your energy was contagious, big brother. Now it’s a bunch of boring wolves eating together, every night.”, she murmured. Magnus lifted his arm and wrapped it around her shoulder.

“I miss you too, Biscuit... so much”

“You’re lying...”, Clary rolled her eyes.

“Why would I lie about missing my sister?”, Magnus pressed his palm on his chest, pretending to be offended.

“You and Alec cannot possibly miss anyone in New York?”, Clary huffed, releasing a scoff from her mouth. Magnus pulled away from his sister and gasped.

“Because Big Apple is that good a place?”, he retorted.

“Because you both have what you want the most”, Clary sat straight up and wiggled her brows.

“And that is?”, Magnus furrowed his brows.

“Each other...”, she shrugged, a tiny smile appearing on her face. “You’re so disgustingly in love with each other that sometimes, *I* get a little jealous”, she rolled her eyes. Magnus felt red in his cheeks when she spoke of Alec.

“First of all...”, he cleared his throat. “Alec and I are not in love with each other... why would you even...?”, he raised his index finger to make a point. “And second... why would *you* get jealous if we did?”, he raised his brows. Clary bit her lip and hid a smile.
“Have you seen the way he looks at you?”, she chuckled. “And you don’t know the way you look at him either”, she shook her head and click her tongue, dropping back on her brother’s shoulder. “I get jealous because you’ve been my brother all this time, and now no one else matters to the two of you when you’re in the same room. He looks at you... like the moon and the stars are right there, in your eyes...”, she cuddled closer. “And I think that is so beautiful, big brother. It is what anyone would wanna have... it is what I would want...”

“Isabelle to look at you like?”, Magnus completed the statement for her. She smiled and nodded on his chest.

“Alec is just... so wonderful”, Magnus sighed, leaning back on the bed. The movie was rolling on the TV, but no one cared. “He has a beautiful soul, that is still unscathed by malice and hatred for anyone. I could not believe that he was that wise in his thoughts for the first few times we met and I regret saying mean things to him. Now, when I look at him... he makes me feel confident... he makes me feel like I matter in this world...”

“You do matter to us. I am glad Alec made you realize that”, she whispered.

“I feel like myself when I am around him. Like I could be who I am... and not fear that he would reject me for it... I have never felt happier and prouder of being an Omega.”, Magnus felt his lips curve into a smile. “He could have done anything he wanted to... he was drugged and excited enough to do so last night... and yet, he stopped”, Magnus’ smile vanished. “He controlled himself... and...”

“As an Alpha myself... I can vouch for Alec that the pain must have ripped him apart Magnus”, Clary’s voice was very soft. “When I say that he loves you, I mean it... only true love and affection can give Alec the strength he got to pull away from you... to do right by you. It takes a lot of physical strength to go against your true nature. To have the courage to fight your own body. I always knew he was a good man... but hearing what he did... I have immense respect for him”, she lifted her chin up and pressed a kiss on his chin. “You’re so lucky that you mean the world to him...”, she smiled.

Magnus blushed at the thought. He was lucky though. He was lucky that Alec Lightwood considered him important enough. “He means the world to me too...”, Magnus admitted as the image of Alec grinning flashed in his mind.

“You’re so madly in love with him...”, she shook her head and smiled. “The Lightwoods have ruined the Banes”, she sighed. Magnus threw his head and laughed at the comment. But she was right.

“Oh... and do take a shower first thing tomorrow morning. That thing Izzy made... it stinks”, she scrunched her nose.

Chapter End Notes

Cannot wait for TCAs, we'll be fed with ShumDario content <3 <3
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

magnus is still wearing that giraffe onesie, and alec visits him at his house. So? "stuff" ensues!

Chapter Notes

Ok guys. So, long story short... the next 10 chapters will be heavily loaded with plot/angst and yes, fluff too. I am moving to the UK next month and I would like to finish this story up before that, so that I can focus on my studies. I am not rushing into anything. Been writing a lot...since I am high on inspiration, and there would be 2-3 updates every week now. Until the fiction is done with.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Magnus looked at his sister and smiled. Clary had fallen asleep on the pillow next to him on his bed. The hood of her unicorn onesie still loosely hung on her head. Her cheek was squished against the pillow and one of her arms were wrapped around the cushion tugged close to her chest. Magnus pulled a duvet over her to warm her up. She smiled and pulled the duvet closer, dozing off into deep slumber. Magnus pulled out his phone from somewhere in the covers. There were no new texts from Alec since the one in the evening where he asked how Magnus was doing. Magnus had informed him about Isabelle and her home-made therapy, which Alec chose to ignore – still furious at the girl. He advised Magnus to stay safe and keep hydrated – very typical Alexander. Magnus stood up from the bed and went to the washroom to brush his teeth and crash on the bed because it was late, and he was exhausted. Everything had been so dramatic in his families all day that his brain was refusing to function anymore. Maybe Alec had fallen asleep too. He pulled the hoodie of his onesie off and started brushing his teeth in front of the mirror. His jaws were still purple around the bruise but the marks around his neck had started fading. Was it his healing or Isabelle’s weird therapy? After he was done removing his makeup and moisturizing his face, he turned the lights off and came out of the room, readjusting his giraffe hood back on his head.

It was dark in the room as well, and his nose collided with something as soon as he shut the bathroom door behind him. Magnus protectively grabbed the closest thing he could find and raised it above his head to launch an attack, after nearly cornering whoever it was between the wall and him, when he realized that it was Alec, sneaking in into his room from the window. Magnus gasped when moonlight hit Alec’s face and lit it up in a beautiful blue hue. He looked at his own hand and saw that he was holding a remote control for his protection. Absurd choice of weapon. Magnus thought to himself.

“Alexander”, he whispered.

“Hey...”, Alec furrowed his brows. “What is your sister doing here? Isn’t this your room? I thought I had miscalculated and jumped into your sister’s room by mistake.”, he hissed, blurt out everything he had to say in one single sentence.
“You jumped into the right room. Clary and I had a movie night earlier this evening and she fell asleep on my bed. I didn’t have the heart to pick her up and drop her back in her own room. We’ve not spent time together like this in so long”, Magnus shrugged. “What are you doing here? I didn’t think I would be seeing you tonight which is also why I didn’t let Clary leave. I thought you would be spending time with your family”, he asked.

“I couldn’t stay back in my room knowing that you were here, alone? Even unprotected maybe...”, Alec rubbed the back of his neck and admitted. ‘That... and I cannot spend time with my parents... or my sister...or in the house for that matter. Not without getting reminded of everything they hid from us, and made you go through...”, he licked his lips and tore his gaze away for a moment to calm himself down. Magnus couldn’t really see Alec properly in the dark, but his hazel orbs were shining against the moonlight and he had missed them so much. As odd as it sounded in his head, it had only been a few hours since he had last seen or heard from Alec, but it sure felt like forever.

“I am not going to disappear, Alexander”, Magnus smiled. He moved forward and placed his hand on Alec’s cheek, stroking his cheek lightly. Alec leaned into the touch and closed his eyes. “Worry a little less...”

“I tried to... look what happened. I left you alone for a few hours, and you got abducted”, Alec rolled his eyes, faking how unaffected he had been. Their heads snapped towards Clary together when she moved and murmured something in her sleep. Magnus gestured that maybe they should talk somewhere else and let Clary sleep peacefully. He grabbed Alec’s hand and pulled him out of his room and into the living room on the first floor. Groping for the switches he turned on the lights and turned around to look at Alec. Well, the guy was already staring at him. Magnus saw Alec from head-to-toe. He was wearing blue denim shirt and black pants. There were dark circles beneath his eyes from overworking and stressing himself out. Typical Alec. Overthinking everything.

“Oh my God. What the hell are you wearing?”, Alec pointed at the onesie, grabbing Magnus’ attention from his clothes. It was a bright orange onesie with a giraffe print. The hood had a face, the ears, the nose and even the little horns called Ossicones that the animal had. There was a huge white patch on the torso and abdomen that represented the giraffe’s underbelly and a tail that hung near his ass. Alec’s eyes were wide in surprise, shock and horror, all at once seeing Magnus wearing something as weird and adorable as that as that. His lips broke into a grin as Magnus flicked his giraffe ears away from his forehead and twirled around to show his complete outfit to Alec.

“It is my onesie. Well one of many... I have almost every animal print you can find.”, the man admitted, albeit proudly. “I didn’t pack them for New York... and seeing them in my wardrobe today, I thought that maybe I should have. They’re cute and I miss them back there. I am definitely taking them to Manhattan with us... and you cannot argue...”, he said, hugging himself. Alec bit his lip as his grin inevitably widened. His facial muscles lost the war against smiling. Magnus stopped talking to look at his fiancé and found him hiding his chuckle. He rolled his eyes and decided to taunt him. “Save your mockery for someone else. I will wear what I want Alexander. I don’t care how funny I look to you...”

“I could never mock you.”, Alec shook his head, his adoration for Magnus showing in his eyes. Magnus smiled when he looked at Alec. He looks at you like moon and stars are right there in your eyes. He recalled Clary’s words to him. Maybe Clary was reading too much into it... and maybe Magnus wanted to believe her. But he and Alec had been really good friends, and great partners. There was something developing between them, for sure, but he really couldn’t call it love... or could he? “You look handsome... just like you always do...”, Alec gulped. Magnus saw him drawing circles on the back of his hand with his thumb and realized that the conversation was making Alec very nervous.
The events of last night had changed the comfort level they shared with each other. Since morning, he could feel this awkward tension growing between them. Alec wasn’t open to him about his feelings... not since morning. It didn’t look like he felt free and easy to talk to Magnus, and vice-versa to some extent. Silence befell the conversation and both of them stood there, looking at things around them, wanting to talk but not knowing how to anymore. They should talk about this.

“Did you eat something, or have you been digging your head in books all day?”, Magnus spoke up, finally ending the silence between the two men. Alec dropped his gaze on the floor and sighed, shaking his head in a no. He had left his house without eating, and now that Magnus had reminded him, he could feel rumblings inside his stomach. Magnus tilted his head and sighed. He reached out and grabbed Alec’s hand, pulling him towards the staircase. It was dark and quiet downstairs. Kaya must have already retired to her room as well. Alec had been to the Banes’ house before, but he didn’t remember it very clearly. It was on the other side of the river, and the view was magnificent.

One could see the Idris hills and their peaks if they stood outside Magnus’ house and the entire range from the second floor. Half of their living room was open, with a portico extending out into the forest floor. There were recliners and carpets decorating this lounge area. Inside the glass walls, a huge dining table overlooked the forests and mountains on the other side. There was an open kitchen on one side, and a bar on the other. Wine glasses were hanging upside down. Magnus pointed at the dining table as he let go off Alec’s hand. The wooden floorboards creaked below their feet. Alec did as he was directed and watched Magnus light the fireplace up because it was very cold and wet in here. He washed his hands and pushed his sleeves up to open the fridge and take out some leftovers from lunch. Kaya had made crispy noodles with stir fry vegetables – Magnus and Clary’s childhood favourite. He put the vegetables in a pan to heat them up and give them a little bite and then took out the bowl containing boiled noodles. He deep fried them side by side as the vegetables warmed up.

Magnus transferred the crispy noodles onto a new dish and poured the veggies and sauces on it. The sound of hot oil simmering over the noodles made Alec crave food more than he already was. Magnus cleaned the counters and put the remaining food in the fridge before taking the plate to Alec and pulling out the chair next to him. Alec was starving by the time Magnus gave him food and he almost snatched the plate from his fiancé. Magnus dropped on the seat next to him and crossed his hands on the cold glass top of the table, watching Alec attack the meal like it was a piece of raw meat.

“Just for the record, Alexander? Have you eaten... anything all day? Anything at all?”, Magnus asked. Alec gulped and stopped chewing for a second. He looked up at Magnus who was staring at him – almost calling him out on his mistake.

“I wasn’t hungry...”, Alec waved his hand and dug his knife back in the crispy noodles. There was a good chance that he was gonna get scolded by him “And the house was suffocating me. I couldn’t be there. I couldn’t eat anything out of that house.”, he shook his head, refusing to accept the possibility of staying the night in his room with Magnus or accepting food that was cooked by his mother... or his sister. He sniffed and closed his eyes and Magnus understood that Alec didn’t want to talk about his family. He was too furious for it. For now, he just wanted a quiet night with the man he was in love with and the man who was his family more than anyone else right now. Was it too much to ask?

Alec swallowed, and his eyes went back and forth, observing everything on the table around his plate until they fell on Magnus’ wrists which were exposed because Magnus had pulled his sleeves up. There were lines and cuts that were red and inflamed. The handcuffs had hurt Magnus and broken his skin in multiple spots. Alec felt his eyes water at the sight and he looked away to wipe his nose. Magnus noticed Alec’s eyes on his scars and he understood everything. He reached the sleeves and pulled them back down to hide the marks away from Alec.
“Hiding them doesn’t make them go away”, Alec mumbled, under his nose.

“Healing will make them go away...”, Magnus retorted. “And they will heal, sooner or later...”, he assured him. Alec snorted and rolled his eyes.

“How is this not affecting you?”, he shook his head, rubbing the scar on his brow.

“How can you say it isn’t?”, Magnus deadpanned. “Everyone has their own way of dealing with things, Alexander. Doesn’t mean that it affects them any less”, he sighed. Alec bit his lip and nodded. He knew he was being a little mean about all this. “I know that the more I talk about it... the more I will think about it... and I don’t want to think... I don’t want to relive all that”, tears stung at the back of his eyes. “Ever”, he sniffed and looked away towards the glass walls, wiping his nose.

“I am sorry. I didn’t mean it like that”, Alec mumbled.

“I know you didn’t”, Magnus gulped.

“I will get to the bottom of this...”, he took a deep breath. Magnus gave him a weak smile. He knew Alec would. But tonight, for one night, Magnus wanted Alec to take a deep breath and relax. He had anticipated that the next few days were going to be extremely taxing on their relationship. If they could relax, just for a few hours... it would be so good.

He nodded and gestured Alec to finish his food. Alec smiled and continued eating. Magnus got up again and came back with a glass of water once Alec was done eating. The man muttered a heartfelt thank you and drank all the water in the glass. Alec took the plate to the kitchen where Magnus took it from him and washed it quickly. He turned the lights off and grabbed Alec’s hand again to guide them to the living room where fireplace was still alive and bright. “Are you sleepy yet?”, Magnus asked. Alec scratched his stubble and shook his head. He was tired, but he couldn’t sleep yet. Or rather he didn’t want to sleep. Spending the entire day without Magnus, and around his family had been hard and he wanted some time alone with his fiancé. Magnus gestured him to take a seat on the couch in front of the fireplace and he followed.

Alec pulled his wallet and mobile from his pocket and placed it on the coffee table. He rubbed his palms on his thighs and sat down on the couch. Magnus took a seat next to him and pulled his legs up. Alec relaxed a little and leaned his neck on the backrest, tilting his head to face Magnus who was staring at him. His shoulder rested on the backrest and his head was pressed against his wrist and the upper arm was folded over the edge. “Did you talk to Isabelle?”, he asked. Alec blinked and shook his head.

“She didn’t know how risky all this was?”, Magnus reasoned.

“I was begging her to tell me before the party. She could have trusted me?”, Alec deadpanned. “You wouldn’t have gone through all that...”

“You cannot know that? They would have kidnapped me some other day, Alexander? You coming to Alicante alone was just a surprise opening they got. It could have been any business trip, or a project that involved you going away from New York. They would have done what they did some
way or the other. You cannot blame anything else but circumstances for this tragic mishap”, Magnus stroked his fiancé’s forehead. “The people who did this to us... they are also the ones you should blame. Not Isabelle.”

Alec closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He knew Magnus was right. But what if he said that he wasn’t ready to forgive people just yet, even if he knew they hadn’t been completely unjust in the situation. In their own twisted way, they were trying to protect Magnus and Alec by keeping them far away from Idris and their traditions. Also, it had been Alec’s decision to surprise his parents for their anniversary party. He tilted his head towards Magnus and let his cheek land on his palm. “Magnus... I can’t do this...”, he stuttered.

“It’s okay. Take your time... but don’t shut your sister out, okay? Talk to her... and your parents. Just let them explain... when you are ready to listen to them.”, his voice was soft and understanding. What if something had happened to Magnus last night? Alec would have never gotten over it. The Alpha shuddered at the thought and looked up at his fiancé just to make sure the man was alive and breathing next to him. Magnus’ caramel skin glowed against the light of the fireplace.

“If something would have happened to you last night... I swear to God, Magnus”, Alec spoke, looking right in Magnus’ eyes. It looked like he had no control over what he was saying but that the thoughts were honest and truthful. “I wouldn’t have survived...”, his throat bobbed, and Magnus saw his lips tremble as he fought back his own tears. Magnus shut his eyes and leaned forward, trapping Alec’s lips for a quick kiss to comfort his aching soul. Alec stopped breathing for a second when he felt Magnus’ soft lips on his and then wheezed as his lungs found their function back again.

“I am here... safe and sound”, he murmured against the Alpha’s lips. Alec moaned in response to it. “Nothing happened and as long as you and I are here for each other, nothing will happen...”, he stroked Alec’s cheekbone. Alec’s eyes were still closed as he processed Magnus’ kiss. He nodded and guided himself forward, burying his head in Magnus’ chest. The Omega’s heart thudded in his chest as he wrapped his arm around Alec, pulling him closer. Alec heard the rhythmic sounds of Magnus’ heart beating and he sighed in relief. He needed to hear that. Magnus bent his neck and kissed Alec’s hair.

Alec curled his fingers around Magnus’ arm and pulled it closer to his chest. “We will be ok, right?”. It was a simple question and the answer should have been fairly simple as well. But it wasn’t? Magnus wanted to tell him yes. But that would be lying... they were ok... for now, but who knew what the future held for them. Especially now when someone in the shadows was lurking, watching their every move... planning their next misdeed. He merely hummed in response and took a deep breath, pulling Alec closer to him. Alec closed his eyes and relaxed in Magnus’ embrace. The closeness brought him comfort and he finally felt his muscles giving in to the exhaustion.

“Alexander, you need to sleep”, Magnus mumbled, noticing Alec’s breathing pattern. Alec was almost on the verge of falling into slumber. He nodded and nuzzled closer in Magnus’ chest. Magnus tilted his head to look at Alec. The man’s eyes were drooping shut with slumber. Not only had Alec not eaten all day, he must have probably not rested...which is why he was so exhausted. He could either let Alec sleep here on the couch or take him to the room. His rug was comfortable enough and he had a spare mattress. So, the room sounded like the better idea. Magnus gently let Alec drop on the couch, resting his head on the cushion and tiptoed upstairs where Clary was asleep on one end of his bed. Magnus quietly spread the mattress on the rug next to his side of the bed and placed pillows and blanket on it.

He came down afterwards and lifted Alec up in his arms. Alec wasn’t a very heavy man but because he was so tall, it was a little tricky to carry his long horizontal frame through the narrow gallery that led upstairs without the danger of hitting his feet or head against the wall. Magnus climbed the stairs
keeping Alec parallel to the walls of the gallery and finally dropped him on the rug very gently. He pulled the duvet on Alec and the man snuggled into a deep slumber. Magnus crawled on the bed next to his sister and dropped dead on the pillow next to hers. It had been an exhausting day and he started snoring in no time.

... 

Clary stretched a hand out of her duvet and cold air gave her a little comfort from the warm and cozy duvet that her body was cuddled in. Sunlight was peeking through the windows. She could hear water drops falling on puddles. It had rained last night. She blinked her eyes open and took a deep breath as a yawn escaped her lips. Last night had been a good one. She didn’t remember the last time she had spent such an amazing time with her brother. Lifting her head up, she turned around and saw Magnus asleep under the covers next to her. He was still wearing his onesie. She heard soft snores in the room... which was weird because Magnus didn’t snore. Rubbing her eyes, she pulled herself up on the bed and yawned.

Ok... what was that scent in air?

She whiffed and looked around. There was Magnus’ scent... and the scent of wet mud and forest floor from the outside. But there was another scent. Another wolf in here... another Alpha. She gulped and widened her eyes. There was no one visible in the direct line of her eyes. She poked around the bed, following the scent and the sound of snores. Brown hairs were peeking out from a bundle of blanket on the rug next to Magnus.

Alec?

Clary gasped as she recognized her brother-in-law’s frame sleeping next to Magnus on the floor. So, Alec had come by... and stayed overnight. That was sweet. She smiled and rubbed her cheeks to wake herself up. She had to be out for her morning run in 15 minutes and then to her classes. Oh, Monday mornings. Opening the duvet, she dropped her legs out of the bed and found her furry slippers. She walked around the bed and then crouched on the floor next to a heavily sleeping Alec. She lifted the duvet a little to find his shoulder and nudged it, whispering his name. Alec mumbled gibberish and pressed his nose further into the pillow. She gave him a hard push again and hissed his name. Alec’s eyelashes fluttered a little and he opened one eye.

“Good morning”, Clary whispered.

“Clary?”, Alec rasped.

“Hi...”, Clary chimed, still whispering.

“You have the wrong Lightwood. I am not my sister...”, Alec mumbled, turning away from the redhead and attempting to fall back to sleep. Clary gasped when she heard that. Alec was about to pull the blanket over his head when Clary grabbed it and lifted it up, letting cold air rush in, chilling Alec to his bone

“Did Izzy tell you?”, she hissed.

“I am not blind, Clary. I can see”, he rolled his eyes. “Now, go away... I still have some time to sleep”

“I am headed out for a run... go and sleep on the bed. There’s plenty of space...”, she pointed at the bed. Alec rubbed his cheek, still half-asleep and lifted his head up. Magnus was fast asleep on the bed. “Go... Magnus will be really happy...”, she smiled. Alec yawned and nodded, pulling himself
He gently fistbumped Clary and then picked his pillow and blanket up. Walking around the bed to take Clary's place, he lifted the covers and squeezed his way in, without waking up Magnus. Wrapping an arm around his waist, Alec pulled Magnus closer. The man's back brushed against his chest. Alec pressed his nose against the back of Magnus' neck and entangled their legs together. Magnus relaxed in the hold and mumbled something.

Clary came out of her room after brushing her teeth and washing her face. She pushed the door to Magnus' room open and found Alec and Magnus sleeping together, with a smile on their face. Her eyes fluttered in joy as she locked the room again and stepped out of the house to start her own day.

Magnus stretched himself inside the blanket after he heard his mother calling his name from the kitchen. He peeked one eye out to check the time – it was 9:20 am in the morning. Gasping for breath he pulled the blanket off his face when he felt something warm against his back. He swallowed and looked over his shoulder. Alec's breathing sounded in his ears. He turned around with Alec's arm still lying over his waist to come face-to-face with his fiancé whose face was buried deep below his pillow.

He lifted his hand to clear of Alec's hair from his forehead and eyes and then rubbed the cheekbones. Alec swallowed and moved a little, rubbing his body against the mattress and sighing. “Morning”, he mumbled. Magnus smiled and moved forward, hitting his nose against Alec's. He hummed a response.

“My mother is calling us for breakfast... wake up, Alec”, he whispered, lifting himself on his elbow. Alec opened his mouth to let out a noisy yawn and stretched his arm that was lying around Magnus’ waist out in the air. Magnus caught hold of Alec’s hand and he inspected the injured fingers. Most of them had healed up. “I’ll change the dressing today, alright? After I pack my stuff and come home later today”, he mumbled. Alec blinked his eyes open and licked his dry lips. He rubbed the pads of his fingers against Magnus’ jaw. Magnus’ onesie had unzipped on his chest and Alec could see fading purple marks on his collar bone from whence he had bitten Magnus. His eyes wandered over to the nape of his neck... there were more marks, and some of them probably still hurt.

“Still hurt?”, he asked. Magnus shook his head, mouthing a mute not as much. Alec’s eyes shut for a second as guilt took over. But he couldn’t let Magnus know about it. So, he carefully covered it up with the brightest twinkle in his eyes, just for Magnus. They heard Kaya call out their names again and Magnus lifted the duvet up, making Alec groan as he threw his head back in the pillow. He leaned to press a kiss on Alec’s cheek and then jumped out of the bed, heading straight into the bathroom.

They walked down to the living room, after freshening up, to find Clary and Kaya sitting on the table. Magnus had showered and changed into clean clothes while Alec was still in the purple night-suit that Magnus had lent him from his wardrobe. Clary and Kaya shared a mischievous look when they saw Alec’s clothes but said nothing after Magnus noticed them and shot a taunting glare. Kaya had made glazed Bacon Beignets for breakfast. She poured hot coffee for both Alec and Magnus as they sat on the dining table and then left the kids to eat peacefully without her interference.

“Izzy gave me fresh clothes for you... during the morning run?”, Clary mumbled as she lifted her mug of milkshake to her lips. Alec looked at the duffle bag and nodding.

“Thank you”, Alec acknowledged.
Clary looked back and forth between Alec and Magnus and realized that although she knew Alec much better now, thanks to Izzy... but they have never had a proper conversation in person. She had heard about him... and he was all that Izzy had described, and more. Of course, their Alpha energies clashed in a way, but the fact that he and Magnus were together, softened the rage a little bit. But as a person, Alec was scary and intimidating. With his towering height and a muscular body frame, he commanded respect around him. And that was a little weird because Magnus was only a few centimetres shorter than his fiancé, but she had never been intimidated by him. Or maybe that was because he was her brother, and they had grown up together.

“So... you and Isabelle?”, Magnus cleared his throat to end the silence between the three of them. Clary choked on her shake when she heard their names together. Magnus shook his head. “No... I meant... do you guys go on morning runs a lot?” he asked. Alec heaved a sigh of relief because he couldn’t talk about his baby sister’s romantic life.

“Y-yes...”, Clary smiled. “I was ashamed that I had no idea about so many beautiful locations in Idris... and Izzy promised that she would show them to me... one by one, in the mornings because that’s when our city is the most beautiful...”

“Did you happen to see Lake Lynn yet? It is a must-visit if you ask me...”, Alec joined the conversation. Clary widened her eyes in delight and nodded.

“That was one of the first places she showed me. The waters are so clear. I mean you could see all the way through to the floor... it’s crazy. Magnus and I have lived in Idris our whole lives and this gorgeous eighth wonder of the world was hidden in plain sight for almost 22 years of my life...”, she chimed. Alec chuckled at the way she exclaimed. Her mouth widened to its maximum and her eyebrows were stretched up to reach her hairline. “It was magnificent”, she fanned herself.

“I feel like the odd one out for not having been there yet...”, Magnus rolled his eyes. Alec looked up from his plate at him and wiped off the glaze from the corner of Magnus’ lips.

“I’ll take you...”, he smiled. Magnus blushed and tore his gaze away from Alec, but it landed on Clary who was smiling at him... and wiggling her brows. Moon and stars... she mouthed. Magnus shook his head, chuckled and looked away. She rolled her eyes herself and focused back on her plate of food.

After breakfast, Alec and Magnus returned to Magnus’ room to get on with their day. The Alpha showered and changed into new clothes that Izzy had sent over while Magnus took out an old bag to pack up a few more things he wanted to take back to New York with him. He was supposed to stay over with Alec tonight because Robert wanted to have the entire family over for dinner – something that he had missed doing when Alec and Magnus still lived in Idris. Their friends back in the city had been notified about this sudden change of plan. A very worried Catarina had called on Alec’s number last night because Magnus’ phone had been stolen after abduction, but she couldn’t know about all of that. Alec lied and said that Magnus had had a little accident at home and he was healing and resting. She insisted on coming over to check on Magnus, but Alec refused saying that he had driven Magnus back to their parents’ house for an impromptu visit. She must have informed Luke in the morning because the Alpha rang Alec’s number to speak to Magnus. Magnus informed him truthfully about the abduction and told him that he would like to join back the hotel from Wednesday.

“Izzy told me that she found something in Lightwood journals last night and wants to have an audience with me personally before she tells everyone else. I will be on my way without wasting time...”, the Alpha came out, buttoning up his cuffs. He straightened his shirt with his palms and
spoke through his reflection in the mirror, while Magnus packed. Magnus hummed a response, still busy folding his clothes. Alec furrowed his brows and looked at his mate. He didn’t look interested.

“Do you not want people to be punished for this?”, the Alpha gasped.

“I just don’t want anyone else get hurt or for you to lose your mind”, Magnus rolled his eyes and shook his head, stating his opinion. He could see how finding the culprits was becoming an obsession for Alec and Magnus feared that a wrong decision would endanger his life. He gulped and looked away because this was beginning of an argument and that was the last thing he wanted with Alec.

“I want to know who did this to us”, Alec muttered.

“I do too... more than anyone else...”, Magnus said, as a matter-of-factly and turned around on his heels. “But do I want to lose you to darkness in the process? No. But I am afraid that you’re losing it... you’re not controlling your anger and you’re letting it get the best of you”, he said, crossing his hands on his chest. His pupils flickered as he fought back his anger and fear. Alec took a deep breath and pursed his lips.

“I...”, Alec gasped. “I have not been able to stomach the fact...”, he scrunched his nose and sniffed, rubbing his palms together. “That there are injuries on your body because of something I did. That you’re hurt because...”, he stuttered. Magnus flinched and protectively pulled the two ends of his collar together to hide his skin. He scratched the back of his neck, a habit that he picked up from Alec.

“It wasn’t your fault”, Magnus parroted for the umpteenth time since the incident. Alec licked his lips and lifted one hand to his temple and the other landed on his hip as he turned away from Magnus.

“Magnus... I still did those things to you...”, he uttered, rubbing the scar over his brow and shaking his head. He couldn’t believe for a second that Magnus was not holding Alec accountable for anything.

“You had no control over yourself”, Magnus shook his head. “Like me... you were also drugged and-”, he waved his hand to explain.

“Doesn’t change the fact that you’re hurt... and I put those marks there on your body”, Alec interrupted his statement

“My injuries will heal...”

“They wouldn’t have been there in the first place if...”

“Alexander, I will not blame you”, he said, almost shouting. “No matter how hard you try... I will not put this on you...”, he huffed out an angry breath.

“MAGNUS! I WANT YOU TO BLAME ME”, Alec shouted at the top of his lungs. Magnus shuddered at the tone and stepped back. Alec wasn’t angry. His eyes were still his normal color but he looked defeated and disgusted at himself. “I should have not done those things... I shouldn’t have forced myself on you...”

“If you want me to blame you, Alec?”, Magnus gritted his teeth and stepped forward, equally annoyed and angry. “Then you have to blame me too... if you gave me those marks... then I put myself in that position. I lured you... my body lured you into this... and made you leave those marks on me. That makes me just as guilty as you darling...”, he stated. Alec closed his eyes and threw his head back.
“You didn’t...”, he muttered. “You were kidnapped...”

“So, were you, Alec? So were you...”, he gulped. He turned his back to his partner and walked over to the window to calm himself down. “Go... you have to meet your sister. You shouldn’t be late”

“Magnus...?”

Magnus raised his hand in the air, gesturing Alec to stop talking. Alec froze when he saw the hand and swallowed. *He shouldn’t have argued with his fiancé.* This wasn’t about them. He covered his eyes with his fingers for a second and took a few breaths. When he looked at Magnus again, the man was gazing at something outside the window. His hands were crossed on his chest and his body was tense. He stepped forward to talk to Magnus... or maybe just kiss him before he left but then he stopped.

He took a deep breath and walked out of the room without saying anything more.

...

Isabelle was sprawled on her bed in her room, wearing a pair of comfortable shorts and a tank top. She had a pencil in her hand. Alec stepped into her room and she sat straight up, fearing an outburst from her brother. He hadn’t given her a chance to explain herself or apologize and she just missed her brother smiling and talking to him. To make matters worse, Alec looked like he was in a really bad mood. She wondered why because Clary had told her how Alec had spent the night over at her place and she had found him sleeping on the rug next to Magnus.

“What did you find out?”, Alec cleared his throat and sat on the bed next to his sister. She opened the journal hastily, not wanting to irritate Alec by wasting any more time. There were certain pages she had bookmarked and added colourful tags to.

“I... was going through Alexander Lightwood’s first journal... where he mentioned about his ailing mother”, she cleared her throat, pointing at an entry dated in the late 1930s. Alexander Lightwood was one of Alec’s ancestors who he shared his name with. “His mother... Cecily Lightwood died of a terrible disease that gradually took away her memories...”, Izzy pointed at the diary entry.

“I see her look at me as if she is meeting me for the first time, as if she never fed me her milk... as if she never gave me her hand when I was learning to walk... as if hers wasn’t the shoulder I cried on when Father beat me for not behaving like a true Alpha. She looks at me as if her womb isn’t the one I came from. She doesn’t call me Lex anymore... and it hurts to see her deep blue eyes look at everything with suspicion. Father believes that she angered the Moon Gods and they took away her memories of us, but I am sure that it is not true. She is one of the kindest people I have known and there is no way on earth that I will believe that Lady Cecily, my mother can possibly anger anyone...”

Izzy read the entry out loud with proper expressions. Alec sighed. The entry was a sad one. He felt guilty for prying into his ancestor’s lives, looking for clues but it had to be done. He looked up at Izzy, asking her to continue.

“Uncle Will says that my mother is just another victim of the disease that runs in their family... her grandmother died of it years ago and that now, the disease is consuming my mother. I don’t want to believe that? I shouldn’t, right...? Because that means, I have lost hope. And I haven’t... As long as my mother is breathing and alive, I will not stop at finding a cure for her”, Izzy stopped and looked up at her brother.

“Lex spoke about an Uncle Will? I read further about Lady Cecily’s family in Gabriel and
Benedict’s journals... Uncle Will... is Will Herondale – one of the Herondale pack ancestors. Cecily Lightwood was actually Cecily Herondale before she got married to Gabriel Lightwood.”, she informed. “The dungeon was built for Gabriel’s Omega brother... Gideon Lightwood... who was Cecily’s brother-in-law and that means, she knew about it...”

“The Herondales. Of course, it is them. I should have known. There could have been no one else capable of this evil”, Alec gasped. “Stephen Herondale knows about this dungeon. He is the only living Elder from the pack... right?”, Alec fumed.

“Yes... and after he abandoned Jace for falling in love with a mundane... he is the only remaining member of the Herondale pack. The bloodline will perish with him and Jace... no matter what happens”, she gulped.

“The secret has been in the Herondale family... for as long as it has been in ours.””, he gritted his teeth. “The son broke my heart... and the father is trying to break my soul... oh my destiny”, he swallowed, closing his fingers together in a fist. He chuckled in desperation and rolled his eyes at the irony that was his life.

“Alec... you know this doesn’t prove anything, right?”, Izzy took a deep breath.

“How does it not, Izzy? Other than us... the Herondales are the only people who knew about this dungeon... and therefore, they’re the ones who got Magnus kidnapped. Stephen Herondale is behind all this... maybe even Jace. Who knows at this point?”, Alec bumped his clenched fist on the bed.

“We’re talking of the 20th century, brother. Who knows how many people Cecily told... or Will... we don’t know that the Herondales kept it a secret within their family... or flaunted it to anyone they met? You cannot track the people down... especially now that we are sure that the secret wasn’t such a heavily guarded one.”

“Izzy... are you listening to yourself? Stephen Herondale not only knows about this dungeon... but he had proper motive for doing this. His own son is dating a mundane boy... the one who used to date me. He blames me for introducing Sebastian in Jace’s life... and it’s a proper motive to want to destroy my life... after I supposedly ruined his boy’s life... We have a clue. It’s solid evidence that puts Stephen Herondale as the one guilty of all this.”, he scoffed at himself... and rubbed his eyes violently.

“I don’t think you should make that conclusion based on a theory. I just told you what I found out. This is merely a clue... which will help us unravel the truth. It doesn’t prove anything on its own. The secret of the dungeon was known by the Herondales as well as the Lightwoods. And that’s all we’ve got right now. It is a good start, but we don’t know if they used the secret for their advantage. We need to keep digging until we have proper proof or evidence for everything.”, she tried to reason.

“Are you trying to protect them?”, Alec fumed.

“NO! I am trying to protect you...”, Izzy yelled. “I am trying to protect you from making a wrong decision and feeling guilty later... I am trying to make think rationally before coming to any sort of conclusion.”

“Why does everyone think I need protection? BREAKING NEWS: I DON’T.”, he stood up and straightened his shirt.

“You don’t need protection... but ever since the incident, your anger has been on the lose... we’re trying to keep you in check, Alec”, Izzy scrunched her nose. Alec wiped his palm over his face and blew air out of his mouth.
“It feels like I am the only one who cares about the brutality of this situation that Magnus and I were put in... and nobody else cares... Magnus is more invested in keeping me away from danger than realizing that he has been hurt gravely because of my actions... nobody even bothers to care about how cruel this was...”

“ALEC LIGHTWOOD. DON’T YOU DARE PLAY THAT CARD”, Izzy fumed and stood up on the bed, rising in height above Alec’s tall frame. “All of us are shaken to our core... and we all have a different way of coping with it. Not all of us have the luxury to shout at the top of our lungs... or use our Alpha rage to get out anger out. And you cannot possibly blame Magnus for wanting to keep you away from danger...”, she yelled, pointing an index finger at her brother. “We accept that it was our fault... it was MY fault that I didn’t tell you... or warn you... but do NOT come at us for trying to protect you...”, she screamed alerting the entire house. Her eyes glowed bright purple in rage.

“I am sorry that I hid the truth from you... okay?”, she choked. “But I won’t you act without thinking and start a war with the Herondale pack... nor would I stand here, and have you talk shit about Magnus and his concerns for you. The man suffered more than you did... and it is not his fault that he doesn’t blame you. He was stripped off of all his self-respect and yet he has the courage to think rationally... and you’re blaming him because he’s choosing his concern for you over his urge to get revenge?”, she raised her voice again. “And if making you realize this means that I lose my brother... my confidant... my support forever, I am willing to take the risk”, she huffed. Jumping off the bed, she wore her slippers and ran out towards the roof, leaving Alec alone with his thoughts.

Chapter End Notes

Head over to my Twitter (@mymalecstories) if you want sneak peeks and little snippets, and uhm... also if you wanna yell at me, do so in the comments or my Twitter. Just don't be mean, okay?

[Next]

“Sometimes the best things happen in the most unusual ways...”, Alec rolled his eyes, lifting his free hand to spread out on the backrest.

“Yeah... and I am glad this happened... and both of you agreed, for your own reasons... obviously... but Magnus is... he is good for you”, she smiled. Alec looked at his lap and nodded. He had a smile on his face thinking about all the nights he had spent at the apartment in Manhattan... laughing and giggling... and bonding with his fiancé.

“Yeah... he is the best life partner I could have got... and I am an idiot for fighting with him”, Alec scratched his stubble and groaned.

“Talk to him today... apologize and see what happens next. Maybe he will forgive you, if you have some honesty in your words”, Maryse suggested, raising her eyebrows.
Isabelle sat on the roof, hanging her legs from the edge. It was almost afternoon and the skies above her were cloudy. It was getting darker with every passing minute as clouds were gathering over the Broselind Forests. It was going to start pouring any minute. And if her senses were not deceiving her, there was also storm coming. She could feel it in her bones. There hadn’t been a forecast yet, but the way the winds were blowing, and the smell they carried – all indicated towards a severe storm that was heading for Idris. Later in the evening, or tomorrow morning – the Beta wolf predicted. She hoped that it wouldn’t come sooner than that.

That argument with Alec had drained her of all the energy and she wanted to spend the rest of the day and the night here, to avoid any interactions with her family, especially Alec. She wanted to stay here and admire the nature, maybe call Clary and ask her to join her on the roof if she wasn’t too busy spending time with her brother. *God, there was so much she herself wanted to talk to Alec about, but he had made her just so angry. She knew how much he overanalyzed and overthought things, but this had gone beyond her expectations as well. It had been decades since they had a real fight and as much as she hated fighting with him, she knew that she had to say what she did to him... to open his eyes and make him realize how stupid he was being about this whole situation. Alec needed someone who could have shoved facts onto his face. So what if it was Izzy who had to make him realize that? He was her brother, and she was responsible for him. Alec wasn’t completely wrong... Izzy understood why he had said what he did, but someone had to pull him back before he drowned himself in guilt. Alec was a smart man, and once he understood where he went wrong, he would have done anything to correct it. Izzy was trying to make sure he knew where he was going wrong. It was only a matter of time before he came apologizing to her.***

A few minutes of silence later, the door of the roof pushed open with a loud creak and Izzy looked over her shoulder. Alec was climbing onto the roof with a pack of cans in his hand. She rolled her eyes and looked away, still very furious at her brother and amused at the same time. It had taken longer than usual for Alec to come around. She would have bet on at least half an hour... and this time, it had been over *one and a half* hours. She anticipated his apology and relaxed herself on the roof. It was going to be a long conversation.

“When was the last time we had Cherry Coke together, sitting here on the roof?”*, Alec huffed, catching his breath as he sat on edge of the roof next to his sister. Izzy shifted away from Alec, to show how angry she still was. Alec placed the pack of cans in the space she had created between them and took out two of them. He popped them open and handed one to her. Izzy didn’t make eye contact when she grabbed the drink from him. It was ice-cold to touch.

“Halloween last year. After we were done partying and opening the gifts Max had gotten”, Izzy
answered. She was right. Alec and Izzy had dressed up as Captain Hook and Mr Smee respectively because Halloween coincided with Max’s birthday and the boy was a sucker for fairytale characters. “Remember your wig made you develop allergy the day after Halloween? It was so bad... you had gotten purple all over your forehead, neck and scalp”, she found her lips curving into a smile at the memory. Alec’s wig of curly hair which peeked out of his pirate hat was an old and dusty sample and by next morning, Alec was a bag of sneezes. He had also developed rashes wherever the wig had touched his skin... and it had been a whole mess. Alec scoffed and nodded. He lifted the can to his lips and took a sip.

“Max ended up having the best birthday of his life and honestly, I can go through all that pain and irritation again just to see that smile on his face”, Alec shrugged. Izzy nodded, humming in agreement. Between the three Lightwood kids, Max was both Izzy and Alec’s favorite because of the years between them. He was 14 years old when Max was born... and therefore, he was almost like his second father to the little wolf. Isabelle was 11 when Max was born, and he was naturally the star of her life from then on. He had become the apple of both his older siblings’ eyes and they were both fiercely protective of him.

“I know...”, Izzy sighed. “I miss him sometimes. I know why Mom sent him to Dublin at such a young age... we were much older when we left... but the way the storm is brewing in the Clave, it was a good choice to keep him away... before he got swept in.”

“Have you spoken to him... since he left?”, Alec asked. Max had been sent off to study in Dublin with Maryse’s parents, following Alec and Izzy’s footsteps.

“Nope...”, Izzy popped the p in the end. “I planned on calling him... after you came. So that he could see the both of us, and then everything else happened and it just... well, the plan got pushed a few steps back. That’s all”, she shrugged.

“Maybe we can make that call once all this is over...?”, Alec suggested.

“Uh huh”, Izzy hummed and looked away from Alec. “Max would be so happy to see us together...”, Her lips were curved in a knowing smile, because she knew what Alec was about to say. Somehow, she always knew.

“If I apologize... will you accept it?”, Alec asked, timidly. Izzy’s smile vanished, and she rolled her eyes before looking at Alec. “I need to know my options... before I dive into the risk...?”, he tried to make a joke and received a scornful look from Izzy.

“You wouldn’t know if you didn’t try?”, she shrugged.

“Izzy, I am really sorry”, Alec nodded.

“For?”

“For shouting at you...”, he nodded his head.

“And...?”, Izzy sipped her coke.

“...and behaving irrationally, letting anger take the best of me... and saying stuff I shouldn’t have in the first place – despite you warning me”, he sighed. Izzy smiled and nodded, accepting his apologies. “...and for letting you believe that it was your fault... when you were only keeping the promise you made to our mom... and I shouldn’t have blamed you for it. Yes, you could have warned me before... but that wouldn’t have stopped those people from doing this. They would have found another chance to hurt Magnus or me, and maybe even in a worse way than they did-”,
wanted to go on with the apology when he froze realizing that he had been repeating Magnus’ words
to his sister – and that Magnus had been stating this since the beginning. And, that he had been
stupid enough to fight with Magnus this morning before he came home.

Izzy gave him a tearful smile as she shifted a little closer. “I know, Alec... but I should have still told
you... no matter what promise I made to mom. You and I have always been a team and I kind of got
scared for some time and broke your trust. So, I am sorry for that”, she nodded. “I know those people
would have got us one way or the other... but Magnus still went through something really terrible,
and so did you... I am sorry”

Alec took a deep breath and looked at her. “Thank you for apologizing. I am sorry too because I
shouted at you... and lost my temper more than once. I have not been thinking clearly ever since that
night... and I even infuriated Magnus... and then you... and I am going to have to up my game to
make up to the both of you...”, he sighed. “...so, this is me starting with you...little sister. I will make
sure I don’t repeat this behavior again”, he promised.

“Well... we’ll come back to what happened with Magnus... because I am sure you’re going to need
the ‘Isabelle Intervention’ to solve that crisis... but first, let’s finish talking about you and I?”, she
pointed back and forth at herself and Alec. “We’re okay... okay? Whatever life is throwing at the two
of us, we’ll figure this out together... right brother? But, you have to tell me if you are with me... from
now on, total honesty and transparency...”, she raised her palm in the air. Alec smiled and
placed his own in her, nodding.

“Together, Izzy... always. I am going to need you more than ever, if we’re going to fight whoever
these people are...”, he assured her. “You’re also right about Stephen Herondale. Maybe we should
gather more evidence to see if he was the one behind this...? We cannot just accuse anyone without
knowing everything”, he shrugged. Izzy smiled and awed her brother. With time and proper advice,
he always did the right thing. She picked up the pack of cans and pushed it behind them. She closed
the distance between them and wrapped her arms around Alec’s neck.

“I am glad that we’re talking again. I missed you... and I have missed talking to you like this... like
adults. Not shouting when one of us is on the bed and the other is on the floor. You know how much
content I have... there’s so much I want to talk to you about... before you go back to your life in New
York, leaving me here... alone...”, she chuckled on his shoulder. Alec pressed a kiss above her ear
and smiled. He rubbed her back as they made truce with each other. “Now... what happened with
my brother-in-law. What did you do?”, she pulled away and pressed her finger on his chest and
squinted her eyes.

Alec slumped his shoulder and facepalmed himself. Why wasn’t Izzy understanding the subtext. “He
just raised his palm at me... asking me to stop talking and then turned his back to me...”, Alec explained. “I turned around to leave... and told him I was... but he didn’t stop me... so, it’s more or less similar to slapping me on my face and throwing me out...”, Alec scratched an itch on his cheekbone and muttered. His face swelled up in grumpiness.

“Oh damn”, she clicked her tongue. “You’re in trouble, dear brother”, she rolled her eyes and chuckled. “If I know anything about the Banes, their anger is something you don’t wanna mess with. Wow. You angered Magnus”, she facepalmed herself.

“Izzy... you’re not helping... he wouldn’t even text me back? I asked him if he was feeling alright a couple of minutes ago... and he just... read it and ignored it”, Alec groaned, rubbing his fingers down his face.

“You need to apologize”, Izzy shrugged. “He’s coming over for dinner with Mom and Dad, right? Maybe you can two can talk... and make up?”, she asked. “He wouldn’t stay angry from you... for a very long time but... you’ll have to be really honest with him. Tell him everything your heart says. Don’t hold back, okay?”

“Hmm...”

“What were you guys fighting about... if you don’t mind me asking?”, Izzy gulped.

“Nothing... I was being a jerk. A full-blown jerk...”, he dropped his face in his hands. Angry Alec was a scary Alec... but helpless Alec was a cute one. Helpless Alec in love with a boy was a million times cuter Alec. “... Magnus didn’t deserve any of this anger... why did you not shout senses into me earlier?”, he accused his sister.

“Well, I didn’t know you were going to go and blow up your relationship with the man you’re in love with...”, she raised her palms in defense and shrugged. “Yesterday, you were all supportive, and madly in love, passionately so... and then you fought with him and came back... and shouted at me. Only your chaotic ass can do something like that. I am not surprised... but I think you messed up this time. Magnus is not most people.”, she smacked his arm. Alec gulped and looked at her. Literally everyone who saw him, and Magnus told him how much chemistry they shared... and yet, they had barely kissed a few times. They hadn’t even had a proper date yet. What was it that everyone else saw, but the two were oblivious to.

“I am not in love with Magnus...”, Alec mumbled. He leaned back to lie on his back. Izzy sprawled on the rooftop next to him and rolled her eyes.

“That’s what you think...”, she added. Alec chose to ignore that... because that was a topic for another day. A long day.

“I told him that he should blame me... for all the injuries... and scars”, Alec grumbled.

“Wow, you messed up”, she sighed.

“He will never forgive me... or talk normally with me...”, Alec feared. He had not been on the receiving end of Magnus’ anger but from the teaser he had gotten in the morning, he could guess that it was not the best idea to anger Magnus.

“Well... if your apology is great... maybe he will? I don’t know Magnus that much, but from what I have heard from you... and Clary, he is a wonderful man... and a very kind soul. And he likes you... maybe, even loves you... so, he might go a little soft on you and forgive you too... if you’re good and make a good apology case”, she suggested.
“What if he refuses to join us for dinner. He has all the right to do so...”

“Hopefully, he won’t. You’re starting to overthink scenarios and make situations in your head. But if you want... I could ask Clary to make sure Magnus comes to the house so that you can apologize properly?”

“Do you think we should use Clary to get to Magnus like that? Maybe don’t. I’ll text him later today... asking him... no... requesting him to come over so that we can talk and if I haven’t fucked up enough, maybe he’ll give me a second chance”, Alec furrowed his brows and looked at his sister. She twisted her lips together and shrugged. “Enough about me. How is Clary anyway? I mean... how is it going between the two of you?”, he changed the topic.

“How did you...?”, Izzy gasped.

“You’re not the only one who notices things, Isabelle. I noticed how close the two of you had gotten when I first came here on Friday... but I was too worried about the other thing to ask you about it. But now is as good a time as any... so?”, Alec chuckled. “Did you tell her how much you like her?”, he teased.

“I didn’t... tell her tell her... but, the night of the anniversary party... I asked her out on a date”, Izzy’s eyes twinkled as she spoke of the redhead. “After we kissed for the first time...”, she blushed. Alec’s eyes popped open and he sat up straight.

“Clary and you kissed...? Really. That is the best news I have heard in the longest time...”, he gasped and pulled her in a hug. “Oh my God, Iz... I am so proud of the both of you... so proud. I bet Magnus would be even prouder of the two of you...”, he added. Izzy giggled and hugged him back. It felt so good that Alec finally knew about the girl she had such strong feelings for. Things weren’t even close to being normal right now, but this felt like a start.

“I love you, Alec...”

“I love you too, little one”, Alec chuckled.

... Magnus read Alec’s last text which simply asked him how he was doing. He had read it the moment he received it... but he didn’t reply and chose to ignore. The last interaction between him and Alec had ended up in a serious fight – one of the rarest things in their relationship and Magnus was not ready to solve the situation just yet. Alec had messed up this time and Magnus wasn’t going to let that go so easily. He had no choice but to see Alec for dinner at the Lightwoods tonight, but until then, he could easily ignore Alec and go about with his day. After Alec left, Magnus had changed into better clothes and applied his makeup. He had powdered away some of his marks on the neck and diffused most of them. Izzy had texted Clary to head over to the Public Library and find out the history of the wolfsbane and its uses.

Magnus had had no other work that morning, and after he was done packing his things, he had offered to help Clary with the research. Wolfsbane had been used to spike Alec’s drink that night, and they had also discovered trace amounts of it in the syringe barrel that had been emptied in Magnus’ carotid the same night. A regular wolf poison was meticulously used in this well-crafted crime which only pointed to one thing – the man or woman behind this was technologically as well as historically adept at his job and had put a lot of mind into planning the whole thing. They knew the use of the Lightwood dungeon... as well as the right amount of wolfsbane that didn’t kill Magnus and Alec but rendered them useless.
Magnus was wearing his stone-studded boots and zipping them up when Clary knocked on the door, ready to head out into the town. She was wearing a lose grey sweater made of thick wool, coupled with a pair of leather pants and block heeled boots. “Shall we?”, she asked, leaning on the frame. Magnus stood up on his two and nodded.

“After you, biscuit”, he smiled. He shut the door behind him and walked down where his old car – mustang was waiting for him and Clary. It had been years since he had last drive it. That happened to be the night he had driven Clary and her date to the prom and came back home straight after. That was the last time he had seen it fully-functioning. “Did you get my mustang fixed?”, he gasped, stepping out into the portico of their house. The floor was wet because it had just rained in this part of town.

“Yup, I was going to surprise you by shipping it to New York for your birthday... but now you’re here and I don’t see why you shouldn’t be using it to move around the town. So, here you go? Early birthday present big brother”, she clapped, hopping on the passenger seat. Magnus pulled off the roof and jumped into the driver’s seat.

“I have missed you so much”, Magnus leaned and kissed the steering wheel, eliciting an eye-roll from his sister.

“You and your girl...”, she taunted. As they pulled out onto the street, Clary relaxed in her seat and pulled her legs up, close to her chest. “Are you sure you are up for research?”, she asked as Magnus took to the main road.

“I am...”, Magnus mumbled. “Why do you ask?”

“I heard you and Alec... I am sorry. I wasn’t trying to pry or eavesdrop. But you guys were shouting rather loudly... and it was impossible not to hear”, she sighed. “I bet even Mom heard some of it even though her room was locked from the inside... or our gardener outside.”

“That was nothing”, Magnus waved it off.

“Your volumes said otherwise”, the redhead arched a brow.

“Clary... I don’t want to...”

“I know... I know you don’t... but if you do, you know I am here. I will listen to whatever it is... no judgement or remarks... promise?”

“I know... I know sweetie. I love you for it. I will talk to you if and when I feel like it. Right now, I don’t. So, can we please talk about something other than Alec or this morning. I could really use the change of discussion.”

“Ok. How about an update on the case? Izzy told me something really interesting. She was reading through Christopher Lightwood’s journals. He is one of their ancestors who loved writing these diaries and there are at least 6 of them Izzy went through last night. His entries told us that his mother, Cecily Lightwood... she was actually from the Herondale Pack from before she got married”, she pushed the backrest a little to relax herself. The Library was on the other side of the town and it would take some for them to reach there. “...and Christopher’s uncle Gideon... he was the Omega that Benedict Lightwood built that dungeon for...”, she dramatically explained.

“So, the Herondales knew about this secret too?”

“Yup”, Clary popped the p. “We assume that’s the case because it’s not possible for Cecily to have known about this... and for her to have never mentioned it to any of her brothers... or her parents? It
sounds so unlikely and that’s why the clue was so important. Even if she mentioned it casually in a conversation, it means that the secret wasn’t very heavily guarded…”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if it is Stephen Herondale or his son ends up being behind all this. They have already made Alec’s life hell... and I mean, they don’t like him much...”, he rolled his eyes. “But... this is all ancient history. Who knows how many people were told about this...? Even if the Lightwoods kept it a secret... the Herondales must have flaunted it around for money or favors. They had no reason not to... it’s not like Benedict Lightwood let them use the dungeon for their Omegas... that dungeon was no use to them...”

“Exactly... which is why Alec and Consul Lightwood are going to inspect the basement for more clues. No one else is privy to that search. Only the two living Alphas of the Lightwood pack. Maybe they will find some physical evidence. A fingerprint... or traces of DNA...”, she informed with the click of her tongue. Magnus hummed in response.

“If we can figure out who supplies wolfsbane in and around town... or who has knowledge about the variable properties of this poison, we can get a step closer to finding out who the culprit is – maybe help Alec and Izzy narrow down their search...”

“That’s where we come in?”, Magnus asked.

“Uh huh...”, Clary hummed.

The Public Library was on the other side of the town where the mundane population of Idris lived. Clary had privilege passes of the restricted section due to her surnames (both Morgenstern and Bane). She showed her ID proof and proceeded inside followed by her brother. A few decades ago, the Elders had donated some of their historical records to the Library for public viewing. None of them explicitly mentioned their continued existence in the city, but they were loaded with information and stories that looked like fictional mythology – good for children as well as tourism... and hence the money. A major chunk of the revenue came from people visiting ancient buildings and monuments in the city – the ones that had an interesting story attached to them. Magnus and Clary settled their things on the table and picked out the books that mentioned Wolfsbane as an ancient tool to control the *rabid and wild dogs of the Forests*.

“Honestly, the definition of a wolf needs to change”, Magnus huffed as he skimmed through the index of a book that spoke about the origin of this poisonous plant. “*Rabid and wild dogs? Excuse me... I take offence on a personal level. From what angle do I look rabid... or wild?*”, he gestured at his body. His perfectly carved figure obviously was definitely not a good testimony of any description of wolves in these ancient literary texts. Clary chuckled without looking up at her brother.

“Alec would think otherwise”, Clary mumbled. Her cheeks were squished against her knuckles as she poured in a book that apparently spoke about the uses of plants for medicinal purposes... as well as the ones that were unethically used in drug abuse. So far, she had been through opiates and non-opiates but there hadn’t been a mention of wolfsbane.

“Excuse me?”, Magnus arched a brow.

“All I am saying is, he looked scarred by fear when he walked out of the house this morning... like you had threatened him or something...”, she looked up from the texts and tilted her head. Magnus rolled his eyes, not believing Clary’s words. “Trust me... I don’t think you have the best angry face... and it might have been Alec’s first time... because the poor boy”, she shrugged, pouting at her older brother. Most days, Magnus would have been amused by Alec’s cute and scared face... but not today.
“Back to Alec... are we?”, Magnus sighed.

“Magnus... you scared that boy to death in the morning... and he is the Alpha between the two of you. That says a lot about your scary angry face. Remind me to never piss you off... okay?”, she chuckled. Magnus felt his lips curving into a sly smile as he looked away from his sister and started going through the rack of books.

“He was wrong...”, Magnus shrugged.

“I am not going to be the judge of that... it is strictly between the two of you. But what I can tell you is that the two of you should not fight, ever. You both are strong together... and we’ve all been the witness of that, so don’t let a situation like this pull you apart. Okay? I won’t say who was wrong in the fight... but talk to him when you don’t feel like ripping his head off and maybe try and sort things out? That’s what you hinted last night when I went and spoke to Izzy, right?”, she suggested, and then briefly paused when Magnus furrowed his brows. “And... just for the record, I will support you no matter what... okay? Even if you don’t want to talk to him, I wouldn’t like it... or approve of it, but I will support you... because you are my family...”

“Biscuit...”

“It’s okay if you don’t want to talk to him now... I get it. You’re angry and possibly hurt and you need time to prepare yourself. That’s completely understandable. But don’t talk to him, eventually. Don’t let this drag on for too long because you don’t deserve that. And your relationship definitely doesn’t deserve that...”, she stood up, closing the book she was reading and stepped closer to her brother. “Alec has been a wonderful guy so far... and one of the best people you’ve been with... and I am saying that. I don’t approve half of your girlfriends and boyfriends. So, don’t let this fickle fight turn into something serious by avoiding a discussion”

“I am going to his place for dinner...”, Magnus shrugged.

“And you’re capable of giving him a cold shoulder all night. I have seen it up close. Remember the night after your engagement to him. You didn’t even look at him even though he was seated right next to you.”, Clary rolled her eyes. Magnus recalled the memory and smiled.

“For the record, I am not angry at him... at least not anymore. I am a little disappointed, but that idiot is still one of the best things that has happened to me... so if he wants to talk, I’ll talk... and maybe listen and see where it goes?”, Magnus made a cute baby face. Clary chuckled and turned around in her heels to get back to her research.

“You know him better than anyone here... so, just... maybe think from his perspective and then make a decision...”

“Thinking from his perspective means blaming him for that horrifying night... and you know that’s not right...”, Magnus sighed. Clary hooked her arms around her brother’s and dropped her chin on his bicep. She took a deep breath and paused for a minute.

“Well... as much as I can’t speak on Alec’s behalf, I can tell you what my take is on all of this... if you want?”, she asked. Magnus bit the inside of his cheek and nodded.

“As an Alpha, we’re always fighting this unending wave of adrenaline in our blood. Mythology says that we have short temper, and we get excited easily... but that’s the thing, Magnus... we never are not excited. The adrenaline, the anger... the fire its always there. It doesn’t come and go... of course when we have an Omega in our vicinity, it gets harder to control... and that’s about it... the keyword in all this is control. Bad things happen when we lose control... because we’re always furious, and
angry... and hormonal for that matter. We always want to pick a fight.”, Clary’s voice was low... and hesitant. She had never spoken to Magnus about the intricacy of being an Alpha. Magnus stood there, listening to her describe how she felt most of the time... and for a second, he felt guilty. He had always been so wrapped up in himself, that he never stopped to ask how she felt when she presented herself as an Alpha.

“Biscuit...”, Magnus swallowed the lump in his throat.

“I don’t speak for Alec... but had I been in his position, a part of me would have blamed myself too. With time and practice, we learn to keep that excitement in us in check... and that night, Alec was not stimulated to get excited, he was just drugged enough...to lose his control over his body. Maybe that is why he is so stressed...”

“I didn’t know...”

“It is okay... you don’t have to blame yourself for it. And it’s not like you’re the one who got it wrong. You were right in telling Alec that he shouldn’t blame himself... or that you don’t blame him...”, she waved her free hand in the air. “I guess I just...wanted you to hear an Alpha’s side of the story from someone who sees this from a neutral position...”, she shrugged. “If you want to give him a hard time for shouting at you... go ahead, I won’t come in the middle of it... but...”, she stopped to look at her brother. “…yeah, that’s all... I guess...”, she rolled her eyes and chuckled. Magnus gently patted her fingers that were curled over his arm and nodded.

Maryse was running around the kitchen, preparing for dinner with Magnus in the evening. That was the first dinner with Alec’s fiancé since their marking ceremony and she was nervous. Ever since the party, things had been tensed in the house. Alec hadn’t been speaking to her, Robert was busy with the investigations and Izzy was just not available. She was preparing the seasoning for her special Meatloaf recipe when Alec walked in with two brown bags full of groceries. She hadn’t seen him since he left for Magnus’ house last night and he looked well-rested today.

Alec quietly picked out a bowl and started making some sort of a dressing with lime, cilantro, chilli flakes, garlics and cumin. He whipped them together to make a quick marinade and set it aside. Maryse observed him for a second and then dropped her knife and wiped her hands on her apron.

“Are you hungry, Alec? Should I make something for you?”

“This isn’t for me”, Alec muttered, slicing a whole chicken breast into small fillets. “Magnus loves this fajita salad...”, he shrugged. Maryse’s lips curved a little. Alec was a different man this time. And she emphasized on the word man. Magnus had changed him since the last time she saw him. She had given her boy in the hands of a very responsible young man and that man had changed her son for the better. “I had a fight with him this morning... and I thought... that I should...probably... I don’t know... make him something...”, he stuttered.

“He’ll love it...”, Maryse smiled. She wanted to say so much more to him, apologize for starters and then tell him how proud she was of him. But Alec had made it clear in the last three days that he wasn’t going to accept any apology from anyone. “Alec?”, she cleared her throat and decided to give it another shot. Alec poured the dressing he made onto the chicken in a bowl and used his hands to spread it around. He set it aside for marination and then raised his chin to make an eye contact with his mother. She gave him a smile and then nodded. “We are really sorry for not telling you about the ritual earlier...”

Alec shut his eyes and looked away. He took out a grill to start grilling the chicken marinade.
“I know you’re angry... and rightly so. And frankly, baby... I don’t have an explanation or any excuse to justify why we did what we did... and I know no explanation will ever suffice... so I just want to say that I am sorry. I understand that we were wrong... and unjustified in the ways that we tried to handle the situation. You and Magnus are grown up adults who had the right to know everything from Day 1. There is no possible reason why we decided to not tell you. Just give us a chance so that we can do this correctly now?” she let out a breath she was holding and sighed. Alec didn’t respond to her, and his eyes kept staring at her... going up and down. That’s what he did when something was going on in his mind. Maryse bit her lip and continued to work on the dressing for her meatloaf. She had said what she wanted to... and Alec had respectfully listened. Now it was his choice to forgive them or not. Alec took a deep breath and set the grilled chicken aside to cool down. He grabbed another bowl and started chopping some lettuce.

“I understand your reasons... no matter what you think otherwise”, he spoke up after a few seconds of silence. “I am just really angry on the inside because of the way things happened. But you are not to blame. You were trying to protect us... and somewhere deep down my heart, I do understand that. Thank you for apologizing...”, he finally smiled and leaned closer to press a kiss on his mother’s cheek. Maryse released the breath she was holding and sighed. “I understood it the hard way... and I really upset Magnus... but, we are not the ones to be blamed for what happened...”, he said, affirmatively. Maryse nodded.

“Thank you for listening to me, Alec. I appreciate it.”, she acknowledged. I am sure things will get better between you and Magnus as well... especially after this wonderful dish you’re making for him”, she smiled. Alec put another pan on heat to fry bell peppers and some sliced onions in a little seasoning. He even sliced an avocado and set all of it aside to mix when Magnus finally joined them dinner in about an hour.

“I hope so. I really disappointed him today”, Alec gulped, wiping his hands off in a kitchen towel.

“Then, you need to up your game...Mr Lightwood. If you want to charm your man back in your life... and make him forgive you...”, she patted his shoulder as they proceeded to the living room. Alec opened two bottles of beer and they settled on the couch. It was already dusk outside, and Robert had just returned from work and was taking a shower in his room. “When Asmodeus came to us... to offer Magnus’ hand in marriage to you... we were a little surprised”, Maryse lifted the beer bottle to her lips. “None of us thought that you would be ready for such a commitment... and of course, with Magnus... I mean you guys... you guys hardly knew each other then... and you were still recovering from Sebastian...”

“Sometimes the best things happen in the most unusual ways...”, Alec rolled his eyes, lifting his free hand to spread out on the backrest.

“Yeah... and I am glad this happened... and both of you agreed, for your own reasons... obviously... but Magnus is... he is good for you”, she smiled. Alec looked at his lap and nodded. He had a smile on his face thinking about all the nights he had spent at the apartment in Manhattan... laughing and giggling... and bonding with his fiancé.

“Yeah... he is the best life partner I could have got... and I am an idiot for fighting with him”, Alec scratched his stubble and groaned.

“Talk to him today... apologize and see what happens next. Maybe he will forgive you, if you have some honesty in your words”, Maryse suggested, raising her eyebrows. Alec parted his lips to say something when the doorbell sounded. He craned his neck and saw Clary’s fiery red hair through the windows.

“Oh great...they are here. Open the door... and I’ll call Isabelle and Robert”, Maryse tapped her
thighs and got up. Alec swallowed the lump of anxiety in his throat and looked back and forth between the door and his mother.

“Maybe you should get the door... and I will call Izzy and Dad...”, Alec huffed, his heart throbbing in his chest.

“It’s going to be fine... Magnus won’t eat you... you’re not alone...”, she joked, patting his chest. “Your Dad and I will make sure that you come out of this relationship alive... with all your limbs intact okay?”, she winked.

“Ha ha. You are hilarious”, Alec shut his eyes and took a deep breath. He turned around to persuade his mother to open the door, but she had disappeared into her room already. Alec sent a prayer to the heaven and walked over to the door. “Oh... the Moon, and the Angels... please... please let me live until I apologize to my fiancé. Let him not rip me apart with his eyes...”, he folded his hands and looked at the ceiling right before unlocking the door.

The door eerily creaked when Alec turned the knobs and pulled it towards himself. He was sweating profusely and it was subzero temperatures outside. Clary and Magnus stood a couple of feet away from it. The girl wore a long white sweater over her leather pants and boots and she had a muffler around her neck. Alec’s scared eyes wandered off to his fiancé who was wearing a purple patterned shirt with a sequined collar. There was a scarf tucked inside the shirt and a thick long overcoat hung over his shoulder. Magnus wasn’t wearing a lot of makeup. Just simple kohl lined eyes with a faded eyeshadow and a nude lip gloss. Oh, so beautiful. Alec thought. Had Magnus always been this beautiful or was it just the night?

Alec held the door open for his guests and Clary walked in, grinning with joy for some reason. Alec leaned and pressed a quick kiss on her cheek. “Hello, Clary”, he greeted. Clary did a cute curtsy and chuckled.

“Hey there, Alec”, she rubbed her palms together because of the temperatures outside. Alec took a deep breath and then looked at Magnus who had a very unreadable expression on his face. The man handed over a wrapped bottle.

“Cabernet Sauvignon for the lovely Isabelle and Mrs Lightwood. Where are they?”, he announced. Alec gasped as their hands brushed for a second. “Our mother couldn’t be here because she has some pressing matters to attend to... and she sends her apologies”, the Omega said formally. Alec kept staring at Magnus, having missed his face the whole day.

“Hi...uh... mom... has gone to summon Izzy and Dad...”, the man released the breath he was holding and choked on his voice. Magnus’ pupils flickered for a second and a naughty expression took over his eyes. Alec thought that he saw enjoyment in Magnus’ eyes... and the pleasure of seeing Alec struggle with his words. But it barely lasted one moment and then, Magnus instantly regained the furious expression and stern gaze in his deep brown eyes. Alec read the change of expression and in a second, he went from being delighted to being disappointed because that meant that Magnus was still very pissed. But, he was staring into Alec’s hazel orbs with such intensity that the Alpha felt himself melting in that gaze.

“Alec”, Magnus said, tight-lipped. Hello, Alec. Not Alexander. Alec Lightwood, you are so beyond dead this time! Alec repeated in his thoughts and then widened his pupils realizing that his thoughts were open to Magnus. He could hear everything. Frightened for his life, Alec met Magnus’ gaze again and he swallowed nervously. The fierceness in Magnus’ eyes had returned as he shook his softness away and took a step forward inside the house, almost ignoring Alec. He was stopped midway when Alec held him back, holding his arm. Magnus turned on his heels and stood in front of Alec – tall and confident.
Alec eyed him from head to toe and then removed the distance between their faces to place a chaste kiss on Magnus’ lips. His eyes were shut in the process and therefore, he didn’t see Magnus’ widened pupils when their lips met. He had taken the Omega by surprise. “I missed you”, Alec whispered against Magnus’ still parted lips and then pulled back.

Chapter End Notes

the next chapter will be the one most of us have been waiting for, including me. And then, the countdown to chapter 25 will begin because that is the most devastating piece of writing I have ever worked on. The last dramatic peak of this plot. From then on, the plots will be lighter and easier to go through.

find me on Twitter or the comments here, and let me know :D

..

chapter 22 snippet

“Let’s go out in the rain...”, Magnus interrupted. Alec paused and looked at his fiancé.

“Are you crazy... it’s windy outside... and there’s a storm. It’s risky, Magnus”, he pinched his lower lip and placed his hands on his hip.

“Just for a little bit, Alec... we’ll not even go far in the woods... we’ll just spend some time in your backyard and be back before you know it...”, he curved his lips upwards.

“It will be fun... stop trying to kill it...”

“It’s freezing outside...”
Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

i have a feeling that you will be happy with this update. We're 2 chapters away from "the" chapter 25 as i would like to call it. Maybe i am over-hyping it, but that chapter is going to change the course of this storyline forever. Anyway, let me know if y'all would like an update on Sunday as well. It's totally up to you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I missed you”

Magnus blinked his eyes and closed his lips. He was standing only a few centimeters away from Alec and his intense gaze was making it difficult for Magnus to continue being furious at him. Or at least continue his plan of giving his man a hard time. Who could resist Alec Lightwood’s charming hazel eyes? He could taste the bitter taste of beer on his lips, so Alec had obviously been hogging some before Magnus came. Magnus tipped his chin up to look at Alec and found that he was nervously biting his lips between his teeth and his fingers were sweating in his pockets, because he could see them poking out of his pockets. Magnus didn’t need to touch them to know it. He just knew it. He hummed softly, responding to Alec and then turned around on his heels to walk inside the house without engaging in any further conversation with his fiance. A little hard time wouldn’t do the Alpha much bad. Plus, he always enjoyed getting Alec flustered with emotion. Magnus hooked his arms in his sister’s as they walked ahead to greet Maryse and Isabelle who were coming down the stairs.

“Mrs. Lightwood”, Magnus smiled, greeting his mother-in-law with a kiss on each of her cheeks and then went ahead to greet Alec’s sister with the same gesture. The girl wrapped him in a tight hug instead, and whispered something in his ear, puzzling Alec as the duo broke into a barking laughter. A conspiracy, Alec's mind reeled. Looks were exchanged between Magnus, Clary, and Izzy while they occasionally eyed him over their shoulder, and it seemed like Alec was the only one from his generation being kept out of the loop. Magnus informed Maryse and Robert, after the patriarch of the Lightwood family joined, that his mother was apologetic for not making it to the party, but she had some urgent and important work just outside the town and had had to leave immediately. Izzy and Clary helped each other light the fireplace up again while Magnus joined his father and mother-in-law for a conversation over the drinks.

“How are you, Magnus?” Maryse smiled, squeezing the man’s shoulder. “I hope you are feeling much better now?”

“In fact, I am Mrs. Lightwood. Thank you for asking. The injuries and bruises... they are all healing up fine. At this pace, I am sure we will be on our way to New York very soon so that the both of us can get back to our jobs.”, Magnus smiled. Alec took a deep breath, acknowledging the fact that he had been secluded by his fiancé, his sister, his fiancée’s sister and now even his parents. Good job, Alec. Slopping his shoulders, he walked over to the kitchen to open the bottle of wine Magnus had brought for the family. He went to the Bar and grabbed a few wine glasses and returned to find Maryse waiting for him. They popped open the bottle of wine and Alec poured the exquisite liquid into four glasses and took one for himself and one for Magnus.
Magnus gave him a very formal smile as the Alpha handed over the glass of wine to him. Their eyes met only for a fraction of a second before Magnus mercilessly tore the gaze away again. He was really making it hard for Alec to focus on the night. “We really should have done this the last time both of you were here”, Maryse spoke. Robert hummed in agreement with his wife.

“So, Magnus... how is New York treating you?”

“Good... good. Better than I expected, to be honest.”, Magnus lifted the glass of wine to his mouth and nervously sipped the liquid inside. Alec stared at the floor, twirling the wine glass in his hand and making circles on the ground with the tip of his leather shoes. He felt like he wasn’t needed in the conversation, and that Magnus and his parents were managing just fine without him. “I expected some adjustment issues with the lifestyle, and the people, mostly because I have never been to a city outside Idris for visits, let alone shifting there for work... but thankfully, everyone and everything in the city was welcoming and nice to me...”

“That’s wonderful. I am not surprised though. I have heard Alec tell me, time and again, that New York embraces you with open arms without judging where you are from... or which community you belong to. Everyone who moves to the place eventually become a New Yorker. Look at Alec. No one can tell him apart from a native inhabitant anymore.”, Robert continued. He looked over at his own son with genuine pride and happiness in his eyes and pointed his hand at him. “He was a newcomer all the way from Dublin when he first went to New York... and also had a slight Irish accent to his tongue. That could have ended up being a disaster but the people there, they accepted him with all his uniqueness... am I right, Alec?”, the man turned to him and chuckled. Alec hummed as he snapped back his attention to the conversation and just nodded to whatever his father had been saying. He glanced at Magnus who was looking at him with a hint of adoration in his eyes. Who cared if New York had welcomed him with open arms? Right now, he just wanted to fall into Magnus’ arms and stay there for the rest of the night.

Magnus choked on his wine and coughed violently out of nowhere, startling both Alec and his parents. The wine glass shook in his hand and spilled some liquid onto his shirt and hands. Alec quickly grabbed a napkin from the table and handed it over to his fiancé. “Are you okay?”, he panicked, rubbing his back in careful strokes. Magnus shut his eyes and shoved his glass of wine in Alec’s hand before taking the napkin and wiping his shirt. He chose to not reply to Alec’s concerns and continued to tend to himself at the moment. Thankfully, the color of the shirt would prevent it from taking stains but he still needed to wash the sticky liquid off his hands.

“I think I will need to use the washroom”, he groaned, the itch in his throat still making it hard for Magnus to make a proper statement. He excused himself and climbed the stairs up to use the bathroom in Alec’s room. Alec watched him leave and turned his head to look at the two girls who were standing by the fireplace. Both of them were rolling his eyes at his stupidity until Izzy hissed him to follow Magnus and talk to him. Alec scratched his stubble and nodded, excusing himself to go and check on Magnus.

His room was dark and the only light in it was coming from the bathroom. Alec switched on the night lights in his room and proceeded further. The sound of tap running made him stop and wait outside for Magnus to finish. The Omega stepped out of the washroom, turning off the lights. He had a hand towel between his two hands as he dried out the water.

“You okay?”, Alec asked. Magnus nodded and gave him a smile.

“You need to keep your thoughts in check, Alec. We are not a lot of people down there and our families will notice.”, Magnus cleared his throat. He dabbed the towel to his lips and took a deep breath before throwing it aside on the table. Alec stared at him in confusion and then realized what
he was talking about. Alec had been thinking about falling in Magnus’ arms right before the guy had choked on his drink.

“Right... um, I am sorry for that”, he nodded.

“It’s fine. Let’s just go back outside”, Magnus pointed his thumb towards the door. He turned around and walked out with Alec following him on his heels. The Lightwoods eagerly waited to see if the couple was doing alright. Magnus told them that he was okay and soon everyone was gathered around the table. Alec joined his mother in the kitchen to finish up the salad he had made for Magnus and then helped her lay the table. Maryse softly gestured her husband to have a seat because dinner was served. Alec and Magnus took chairs next to each other while Izzy and Clary sat on the opposite sides so that they could face the other one. Maryse remained standing as she described whatever was on the table and then asked everyone to serve whatever they liked. Magnus’ eyes wandered off to the fajita salad and he instinctively picked it up because who didn’t love avocado and roasted chicken paired with lettuce.

“Oh my God, this smells delicious...”, Magnus hummed, holding the bowl close to his mouth. Maryse exchanged a look with Alec who asked her to not mention who had made it. He smiled and looked at Magnus who was hurriedly serving the salad onto his place. “I love this dish... just something about the whole combination of lime juice, the bell peppers... and the roasted chicken with avocado – it always gets me. The chicken just melts in your mouth... and the seasoning, the tanginess of the lime...”, he announced, licking his lips. Alec quietly pulled the bowl to himself and served a few bites on his plate.

“I am going to go with the Meat Loaf first, Mrs. Lightwood... if you don’t mind. The salad comes second for me...”, Clary raised her hands and gestured Izzy to pass on the plate that was kept in close vicinity to the Beta wolf.

“Your loss, Biscuit”, Magnus muttered under his nose. He rubbed his palms together and then picked up the cutlery. Alec wasn’t expressive, but he was eager to know if Magnus liked the dish he had made especially for the boy. He dug his knife in the lettuce and then filled the fork with a piece of it, a chicken slice and avocado. Opening his mouth wide, he stuffed the bite in his mouth and closed his eyes to revel the taste. “Amazing...”, he spoke with his mouthful. Alec’s lips turned into a wide grin and he relaxed.

He chewed on the food, a crunch escaping his lips when he froze for a second. He knew this taste. The pattern of seasoning, the amount of salt. His palate recognized this taste too well. The corner of his eyes saw Alec shifting on his seat nervously. Maryse hadn’t made this salad... it was Alec. His Alec. It was his cooking. He looked at Maryse and gave her a quick wink. Maryse narrowed his eyes at confusion. “Thank you for this wonderful salad, Mrs. Lightwood”, he licked his lips and glanced at Alec with mischief in his eyes. The color on Alec’s face faded and he clutched the knife he was holding, without correcting Magnus. Maryse understood that Magnus was trying to pull Alec’s leg and she looked away to hide her chuckle.

“Oh of course. I am glad you’re liking the food. It was made with a lot of love...”, she mumbled. Alec couldn’t have said anything to her because he had just gestured to her to not let Magnus know that Alec had been the one who had made the salad, especially for Magnus. He composed himself a second later and then continued eating his food. It’s fine. That’s what he wanted – for Magnus to enjoy the dish. “Do try the Meat Loaf though, Magnus. Tell me what you thought about that as well... I just tweaked the recipe a little...”

“I will... let me finish the salad first. The chef has put so much love and affection in the dish and it would be unfair to not give it full attention. I am sure the Meat Loaf is delightful, and I cannot wait to
“Isabelle? How are the *dance lessons* going? I heard you are choreographing for a play this Fall. Alec was telling me about it...”, Magnus sipped his wine and asked. Alec was now eating the Meat Loaf and he snapped his head up because he also wanted to know what his sister had been up to all these months.

“Oh... they are great. I have been pressing Clary to come and join me for one session, but she just wouldn’t listen to me. The Summer Ball Night is coming, and it would have been lovely if she joined me. And yes, I did get asked if I would be willing to choreograph the play. Still thinking about what to say...”, Izzy pointed her fork at the redhead, giving her a defeated and annoyed look. Clary shrugged and rolled her eyes. Magnus exchanged a subtle look with her and then turned his attention back to Alec’s sister.

“Magnus... please tell her how I have two left feet? Isabelle, I cannot dance to save my life... and add that to the list of things she doesn’t listen. I have been asking her to take that job offer because it’s a wonderful chance...”, Clary rolled her eyes. Magnus scoffed and nodded.

“That I agree with... Isabelle, there are two things in the world that are just impossible... first is getting Clarissa Morgenstern-Bane to dance without tripping on her partner... and second is getting grumpiness out of this guy”, Magnus pointed at his fiancé. Alec rolled his eyes and glanced at Magnus for the first time while he was still staring back at him. Magnus was smirking at him, and it was flirtatious more than insulting. Alec felt weak and he felt like he wanted to blush. The heat was rising up to his cheeks.

“I am not grumpy”, the Alpha argued.

“I believe you”, Magnus leaned and dropped his chin on his wrist. Alec’s gaze flickered between Magnus’ eyes and his lips and he stopped functioning in that second. The lips were slightly wet because Magnus had licked the seasoning away, just a few seconds ago. The lip gloss had been wiped out and his naturally pink lips were inviting him... he wanted to kiss Magnus. The edges of the lips were curved up in a sly smile. Magnus knew exactly what he was trying to do to Alec and it was working. The boy was flustered beyond his senses. Alec parted his lips to say something and Magnus wiggled his brows, encouraging him to go on.

But he couldn’t. He couldn’t form a sentence in his mind that had blanked out because of Magnus’ stare game at him.

*Magnus stop looking at me like that.* Alec squinted his eyes and thought in his mind. He wasn’t sure if Magnus heard it, but he sure didn’t listen to him immediately. He rolled his eyes and winked at the Alpha playfully before tearing the gaze away to his food. Alec shut his eyes for a second and then wiped his palms onto his thighs to calm himself down. He was so rattled by Magnus playing with him that he just wanted to confront the man and talk to him. This was not fair. The silence in the room, created by Alec and Magnus’ intense eye-lock was broken by a peal of thunder that vibrated the glass walls in the Lightwood mansion.

“The storm is already here. I thought it would take at least another day... going by the pattern of winds in the afternoon...”, Isabelle gasped, looking out at the sky where she could see lightning occurring far away in the forests. It was going to rain very soon.

“There wasn’t even a forecast this time”, Clary wondered.
“If it starts raining heavily, then don’t drive back home... alright, guys? I don’t think it would be safe for you. The roads get really slippery and the Public Works has done close to nothing to reduce the risk of accident in the hilly areas.”, Robert suggested, looking at the Bane kids. Clary and Magnus looked at each other and nodded. They were a little worried for their mother who was out of town for work. He asked his sister to send a text to Kaya, asking her if she was okay. Clary nodded and pulled out her phone to do so immediately.

“When is Asmodeus coming back? It has been a while since I last heard from him. He wasn’t even there for the last Council Meeting on Friday. I told him repeatedly that the assignment could wait... we weren’t in any sort of hurry.”, Robert decided to start another conversation. Magnus looked at Clary because he was unaware of the answers himself.

“Tomorrow morning, I think?”, Clary licked her lips. “I am not too sure... but when Dad was leaving on Friday morning, that is what he mentioned. If there is an update on that plan, I’ll text you... or tell Dad to give you a call maybe?”, she shrugged. Robert smiled and asked Maryse to pass the jug of water kept next to her hand.

“I don’t have an urgency, but I wanted to speak to him... about everything that happened. We talked over the phone... but it would be better to have a face-to-face discussion”, he lifted his shoulders, continuing to eat his food.

“Of course”, Clary nodded.

After the dinner was over, Clary and Izzy decided to head upstairs to the Lightwood girl’s room and watch a movie and just talk about themselves. Clary gave Magnus a quick kiss on the cheek and murmured something before she joined Izzy. Alec cleared the plates off the table with the help of Robert while Magnus helped Maryse pack leftovers in proper containers. Alec quietly went ahead to do the dishes while Magnus continued to help his mother-in-law.

“Sometimes I miss the two of you here, especially during family dinners. Kaya and I are usually a mess missing our sons. And to top all that, you both don’t call so often. We have to pester your sisters to get information about you guys.”, she chuckled, slapping Alec on his back very lightly. Magnus gave her a smile as he put the leftover salad into a smaller bowl and put a plastic wrap on it. He placed the bowl in the fridge and came back to see that Alec had finished the last of his dishes and was wiping his hands on the towel. He hadn't spoken a word since they had finished eating dinner and their silence was marred by the sound of raindrops hitting the glass walls. Alec pressed a kiss on his mother’s cheek and looked at Magnus with hopeful but sad eyes. They were tired and exhausted... and also deprived of Magnus.

“I am going to my room. See you tomorrow, Maa...”, he announced. Magnus gasped when he realized that he may have gone a little too far in giving Alec a hard time. “Magnus are you coming up?”, he asked, without making an eye contact with the man. Magnus hummed a soft yes, without giving his anxious voice away. Alec nodded and walked out of the kitchen with slumped shoulders and Magnus just watched him go.

“Alec made that salad for me, right?”, Magnus asked, as soon as Alec was gone.

“Yup”, Maryse smiled and leaned on the kitchen island.

“I thought I would tease him a little... and maybe I have gone a little too far for his liking...”, he scoffed. Maryse patted his cheek, adoringly. “So, I guess I’ll go and talk to him before he drowns himself in guilt any further.”, he rolled his eyes. He heard the mother chuckle as he walked out of the kitchen following Alec up the stairs to the first floor.
The fireplace in Alec’s room was lit up. That was the only source of light in the otherwise dark room. Magnus opened the door and saw Alec’s silhouette against the closed glass doors of the balcony. He was staring at the raindrops trickling down the glass pane. His hands were stuffed in his pocket and his breathing was erratic. Magnus tiptoed inside to not let the wooden planks creak below his feet. He neared Alec and took his place next to the man, eyeing the rainfall outside. The nightfall prevented them from getting a view of any of the forest covers but the trees near street lights were visible as they swayed in the winds, in the entirety of their length – some of them on the verge of cracking in the middle of their trunks.

“I love storms and heavy rains. Have I ever mentioned that before? I guess not. We don’t have such storms in New York. It is always so quiet and unadventurous out there... don’t you think?”, he announced, hugging himself. Alec gave a lopsided grin and scoffed.

“I believe you have mentioned it once or twice. Though, I don’t remember the context”, he added, rolling his tired eyes.

“During storms like these, you just realize how weak you are in front of these mighty forces of nature... That lightning can split our skull into two pieces if it falls directly on our head besides rendering us into a pile of ashes. It makes you think... what is even the point of feuds and rivalry when all of us are going to perish one day. All this hatred eventually means nothing...”, he muttered under his nose, pressing his palm on the cold glass door.

“You’re being philosophical today...”, Alec arched a brow.

“I tend to do that... when I am well-fed and satiated in the core of my existence. And the dinner tonight was so palatable that I won’t forget it for a very long time... not even when we return to our home and I go back to eating the things you cook for us.”, Magnus hummed. Alec gulped and looked away. It hurt Alec that Magnus hadn’t still recognized that he had made the salad and not his mother. And he had somewhere hoped that Magnus would. The opposite had been quite heartbreaking – more so because Alec expected too much I guess.

“I am glad you liked Mom’s cooking...”, Alec shrugged.

“The Meat Loaf was definitely delicious, Alexander. The flavors and the tenderness of the meat. Everything was perfect. It is one of the best of the kind I have had so far in my life...”, Magnus sighed, before turning to his side and leaning his shoulder onto the glass door. “But I was talking about the salad”, he quirked. Alec smiled weakly and gave Magnus a quick glance before looking away to hide his tears. He shouldn’t have cried for something so fickle. This was stupid. He was acting stupid. “Thank you for remembering how much I love that dish. And how the tanginess of the lemon goes so well with the roasted chicken”, Magnus came closer and pulled Alec by his shirt, and grabbing his waist in the process. “I haven’t had a better salad than that in my entire life. Mrs. Lightwood doesn’t even know how good a cook her son is... does she?”, he cupped the boy’s jaw and stroked it. Alec opened his eyes and let the tears roll down as he finally looked at Magnus.

“You...knew...?”

“How would I not? I can recognize my fiancé’s cooking when I taste it...! Do you really think that I wouldn’t be able to tell who made that salad when you’re the only one on that dinner table who knows how much I love that dish...?”, he waved his hand and leaned closer to kiss Alec straight on his lips. Alec found himself melting in the touch. He hadn’t kissed Magnus for hours and the craving had been so real. Magnus used his thumbs to wipe the trail of tears that had fallen down Alec’s cheek.
and tugged him closer with his shirt collar. Alec pressed his fingers onto the cold surface of the glass wall behind Magnus and moved closer to press his body against his fiancé’s. Touching the cold surface and feeling Magnus’ lips on him ran a shiver down the Alpha’s spine.

Magnus moaned against the Alpha’s hot and swollen lips as he wrapped one arm around his neck and fist Alec’s shirt between his fingers to pull him closer to himself. The curves on their faces fitted perfectly with each other while their lips sucked and kissed. Magnus’ long lashes brushed against Alec’s, making him shudder and ticklish in some spots. The succulent noises that echoed because of the proximity to a hard-reflecting surface, flanked by the clattering of raindrops on the glass walls reverberated the room. Alec pushed himself forward and Magnus’ back hit the glass wall as he was trapped between that and Alec’s frame. He retracted his hand from the glass pane and placed it on Magnus’ chest to feel his thrumming heart. Alec’s tears dried out between on both their cheeks as they rubbed together.

“I missed you”, Magnus whispered, panting when they pulled away from each other and Magnus threw his head back on the glass pane to normalize his breathing. Kissing Alec was like playing with fire and ice. It was exhausting yourself willingly because of the happiness it bestowed on you. The feeling of having him kiss you back was on another level of salvation. Alec’s palm, that was flattened on Magnus’ chest, curled around his shirt.

“I am sorry for shouting at you... it was totally uncalled for, and I was being irrational and stupid...”, Alec gulped, his pupils flickering with sadness and tears. “I didn’t mean to disregard you or the pain you went through. I can never do that. I am so sorry. This situation has been hard on all of us, especially you, and I was being selfish in using my anger as an outlet to relieve myself, not caring whose feelings I was hurting in the process.”, Magnus gave him a tightlipped but genuine smile. He nodded, acknowledging the apology and then upped himself on his toes to press a quick kiss on the Alpha’s forehead.

“It’s okay... I forgive you. You didn’t do it intentionally, Alec and I understand that sometimes our anger gets the best of us”, he sighed. “I don’t hold it against you. I could never. Just remember that I will be here to help you with your temper and anger if you let me. I’d like nothing more than to be with you.”, he shrugged. “Also, I don’t like fighting with you... so, just... remember that as well, okay?”, he mumbled against Alec’s skin. “Not talking to you the whole day really fouled my mood and I never want to feel it again...”, he added. Alec felt goosebumps in his arms and thanked himself for wearing a full-sleeves shirt because if Magnus noticed the erect hair... he would never hear the end of it. The other man slipped down from his entrapment and scurried to the main door to bolt it from the inside. “Our sisters don’t need to know the intricate details of our talk... do they?”, he winked. Alec scratched his stubble and shrugged in agreement.

Magnus went over to the Bluetooth speakers in Alec’s room and connected his phone to it. He put on a soft instrumental music complimenting the weather outside and then turned to face Alec. “Dance with me? It is that weather after all. It would be a bummer if we don’t make the full use of this atmosphere.”, he offered his hand. Alec smiled and stepped forward, hurriedly closing the distance between him and Magnus. The Omega directed them to the empty space in front of the bed and wrapped his arms around Alec’s waist pulling him closer.

“By the way. I am sorry too...”, he tilted his head and a mischievous smile appeared on his lips as he came closer to his man.

“For what...”, Alec furrowed his brows. His hands settled around Magnus’ neck, fist right behind his back.

“For giving you a hard time...”, Magnus winked. “For pretending that I am still furious when I had
forgiven you a very long time back. I was just being silly... and immature. And, I may have gone too far... so, I am sorry...”

“I deserved that”, Alec mumbled as Magnus’ temple brushed against his cheek and their bodies cradled together perfectly. “…for being a disastrous mess earlier in the morning when you were being mature and wise about this situation that we’ve been put in. You had all right to give me that hard time”, he mumbled, pressing his cheek on Magnus’ skin and taking in the sweet smell of his cologne mixed with his Omega scent.

“Even if you were a disastrous mess... which I doubt you are...”, Magnus licked his lips and swallowed. Alec’s strong scent was making his heart almost thrum out of his chest. “…you are my disastrous mess, Alexander Lightwood”, he mumbled. “and by that, I mean... all of you belongs to me, and not just the good parts.”, he added. Alec closed his eyes as a smile formed on his lips. “…you are my disastrous mess, Alexander”, he mumbled. “and by that, I mean... all of you belongs to me, and not just the good parts.”, he added. Alec closed his eyes as a smile formed on his lips. He sniffed and dropped his forehead on Magnus’ shoulder, his warmth offering him the much-needed comfort. He had gotten so lucky.

“Magnus...?”, he mumbled, shifting his head closer to his fiancé’s neck.

“Mm”, Magnus gave his arms a squeeze and pulled Alec closer to himself.

“How are we going to get through this?”, he gulped, his tone sounding like a child who had been sad for a while. Magnus’ eyes stung with tears. Alec was right. That Saturday night had changed their lives... changed the two of them and no matter how much they avoided talking about everything, it was going to become inevitable very soon.

“Together. Just together, Alec.”, Magnus sighed. That was the most honest answer he could have given Alec. He didn’t know how all this was going to work out between the two of them, but whatever and however it did... they would do it together... holding them when one of them tripped and hugging when one broke down.

“I like the sound of that because I can’t lose you...”, Alec sniffed. Magnus felt his shoulder warming up with moisture and pressed a kiss on Alec, right above his ear. It was a simple declaration of love, but it meant so much more.

“I can’t lose you either, Alexander”, he admitted, blinking his eyes in pain. “That night scared me more than I would like to accept. Not because I thought you would lose control. I had no doubt that you will fight it, sooner or later... that you would fight with your instincts. But when I lay there, watching you limply fall on the bed next to me, I thought...”, he paused, the lump in his throat making it hard for him to talk. “I thought...and asked myself... if I could ever get through losing you... if I could ever live... if something happened to you that night... or any day or if we broke up after this... and that thought... that mere thought broke me right through my bones. That thought shattered me more than that injection ever did...”, he pulled Alec closer because that fear came alive in his mind. Their hips still swayed to the beats of the music in the room and the clouds outside thundered, giving this moment a more dramatic effect.

“If I had lost control that night... I would have never forgiven myself...”, Alec took a deep breath and lifted his head up. Magnus was sincerely looking at him with tear-stricken eyes. The Alpha trailed his fingers down the side of Magnus’ temple and cupped his jaws. He pressed his forehead against Magnus and sighed, breathing against his caramel skin. He could feel that he had been running away from his feelings for some time now. Alec closed his eyes for a few moments when the events of that dreadful Saturday flashed in his mind. His body shuddered, recollecting everything from Magnus’ handcuffed hands, his bleeding neck, his naked body oozing slick and the red anger boiling inside him. What all could have happened but fortunately didn’t. And then, the memory changed into a happier one. Magnus and Alec cleaning up their apartment when they first moved to New York and
eating Chinese takeout on the floor. Dividing the chores amongst themselves and that stupid pillow wall on their bed, everything came alive in Alec’s thoughts again. The two of them dancing together... and getting drunk at Pandemonium only to be escorted home by the staff. The day when Magnus comforted him after he came face-to-face with Jace after almost a year. All the times Magnus stood up for him, against Sebastian and their first kiss. Their magical first kiss. Oh! And all the times they raced each other in the Silva Haven that Luke had created for the wolves. The beautiful memories of their life they had created together in New York. Alec would never have thought in the last year that he would ever forget how Jace and Sebastian had wronged him... broken his heart and his trust in sanctity friendship and ruined his career until Magnus came along. The man healed him... put his trust in him – blind and irrevocable trust. He made him believe that Alec could trust someone to become his friend again. Someone who wouldn’t break his heart but will safeguard it like it were their own. Someone who will reciprocate his emotions, with all honesty.

Over the last 5 months, they had nurtured each other’s broken souls, healed each other’s wounds – built new foundations of trust and love that only they could understand. Alec had started opening up to feelings and emotions again as he let Magnus into his life, told him the secrets only his family knew about. There was a part of him that feared that Magnus would break him... but he never did. Instead, he gave his life and safety in Alec’s hands, believing that Alec will protect it. The two men stood there, breathing warm and rapid breaths against each other’s skin, anticipating what was coming. There were tears ready to spill out of both their eyes – waiting for the right time. “You are special to me. You are important to me. You have made me believe that I am capable of being happy again. That I am capable of looking after someone”, he huffed a choking breath. Magnus shut his eyes and nodded, swallowing the lump in his throat. “That... I am capable of falling in love again”, he shut his eyes, not ready to see rejection in Magnus’ eyes in case he didn’t feel the same for Alec. “I love you, Magnus. I am totally, utterly, impossibly and madly in love with you”, he shook his head, with eyes still closed. No matter the outcome of this confession, he needed Magnus to know what he was about to say. He wanted Magnus to know. “I love the way you boss around the kitchen on Sunday mornings or the way you roll over me in your sleep not caring of that pillow wall of protection that I built for our sake... the way the entire bathroom is filled with your stuff... and only yours... and I don’t mind it. I love having little bits and pieces of Magnus Bane around me... all the time”, he added. Magnus scoffed a little and rolled his eyes, mouthing a d’uh. “The way your eyes twinkle when you’re trying to mess me up. The way you look at me in the crowd, like I am someone you recognize and know. I love those things, and everything else about you too. The way you absolutely can’t function on a Monday morning without that double Soy Latte”, he took a deep breath and opened his eyes. “I love the way you make people around you feel respected and meaningful. Like they matter. You are a wonderful man Magnus and I love you. The decision to marry you was one of the best decisions of my life because it has given me the honor of being Magnus Bane’s fiancé.”, he let out the rest of the breath he was holding and stopped. “I love you so much.”

Magnus would have collapsed on the ground had he not been holding Alec so close. His arms around Alec’s waist anchored him and gave him the support he needed as their foreheads rubbed together. Alec was breathing heavily, and Magnus could hear his thudding chest against his own. The Alpha was nervous, and his eyes awaited an answer from his fiancé. Magnus had never been confessed to before. He had never had a relationship whose foundation had been love, and not physical need. And he had made peace with that fact about his life. And then Alec came and shook his entire world. He had defied all the beliefs that Magnus had had about Alphas and gave him space to breathe and exist as an individual, and not as an Omega mated to someone. Magnus’ terrible experiences at love had made him accustomed to the fact that no one would ever get attracted to him for who he is. No one will ever look at him beyond his gender. No one will ever fall in love with him for the man he was. And this idiot standing right in front of him claimed that he loved him.
That he was in love with him for no other reason but simply love. That he had seen Magnus for what his gender was... but for how his heartbeat. “Alec”, he choked, surprised at the tone of his voice that came out. He had been quietly listening to Alec for so long that he had almost forgotten how to make words in his mouth. Magnus cleared his throat and tightened his grip around Alec’s waist, just for the mental support he needed.

“You don’t have to answer to me... you know that, right?”, Alec sniffed and stroked his cheekbones with his thumb. Magnus shut his eyes and nodded. He knew. But he wanted to answer him. Tell him what he felt. Not to appease Alec... but for himself.

“I know, darling”, his voice was hoarse and laden with tears. “But I cannot tell you how much I love you too if I don’t answer right now...”, he shrugged, casually letting his answer slip out of his tongue. Alec’s reddened eyes widened, and he licked his lips. “Alec Lightwood”, he released Alec’s waist and gently pulled the man by the collar of his shirt. “I love you, so much that sometimes...”, he shook his head unbelievably at himself. “...sometimes I cannot believe myself. You make me forget what I am about to say... your smile makes me want to melt, and the look in your eyes when you see me amongst a crowd of people... a look that says that you belong to me... and there’s no one you would rather choose but me... that honestly makes me feel butterflies in my stomach...”, he chuckled. Alec sucked in his cheeks as he tried to control his trembling lips. “I am usually better at words than this...”, he added, looking flustered.

“Hey! I am the one allowed to get flustered... not you. Don’t worry. You are doing amazing. You are supposed to be perfect. A living embodiment of perfection.”, his voice was soft and adoring as he cleared the strands of disheveled hair from Magnus’ forehead. Magnus pouted in response and Alec laughed, wiping his nose as he pulled away. “Oh God I look so gross”, his gaze fell on his reflection in the mirror. His eyes were red with bags under them, and his cheeks and nose were the shade of pink and red. “So gross”, he added, wiping his face dry of tears.

“You do not look gross”, Magnus stopped his hands and pulled it away from his face. Before Alec parted his lips to give a reply to him, the Omega captured his lips in for a passionate kiss. Alec could do nothing but moan against Magnus’ mouth. “You’re just... a cute mess”, he added. They broke their kiss and wrapped their arms around each other in a tight hug. They laughed and squealed, swaying their bodies with the music. Alec twirled them around, exchanging their positions and Magnus looked at his reflection in the mirror. “I look like a panda, Alexander”, he gasped and tapped Alec’s shoulder to let him go. Alec pulled away and saw Magnus. The kohl and eyeshadow had smudged all around Magnus’ eye-socket. He widened his eyes and covered his mouth with his palm to avoid being caught laughing at the love of his life.

“It is okay. It’s not so bad. You look like a Ninja ready for war... and that’s okay...”, Alec shook his head. Magnus shot an angry glance at his fiancé and then slapped him lightly before nudging Alec’s arms and directing them around his back again.

“I don’t care. You just admitted you’re in love with me... so I guess it is your headache now to keep loving me for all my disastrous post-crying looks as well...”, he shrugged, pressing his cheek comfortably on Alec’s collarbone. Alec dropped a kiss on his hair and scoffed, his hands curling around Magnus’ back.

“I’ll deal with it”, he rolled his eyes.

“You better... or I’ll dump the shit out of you for breaking my heart... and then Clary will be after you for the rest of your life... and so will Izzy, if she loves me and is a little intelligent... Your life will become a born tragedy without me, Mr. Lightwood. So, consider yourself officially warned.”, he waved his hands dramatically.
“Uh huh...? Then, I guess I would have to make sure you never dump me...”, Alec sighed, dramatically rubbing the scar on his brow. He tugged Magnus’ waist with one hand and pulled him closer to his chest. “But here’s the thing, Magnus... I just told you how much I love you...”, he shrugged. Magnus lifted his hands and pressed his palms flat on Alec’s chest.

“Mm”, the Omega closed his eyes and nodded.

“So... it is you who isn’t getting rid of me easily...”, he pursed his lips.

“But I love you too”, Magnus started the unending discussion. “So... let’s just agree on the fact that we both won’t get rid of each other so easily...”, he shrugged. “Do you think you can deal with that, Lightwood?”, he wiggled his brows.

“I think so, Bane”, he shrugged and launched a quick kiss on Magnus’ cheek. “I wouldn’t have it any other way. You and I are stuck with each other now”. Magnus chuckled as his cheeks were squished in every direction with kisses.

“You’re a sap, Alexander”, he closed his eyes, laughing.

“Only for you...”, Alec mouthed between his unending kisses on Magnus’ face. He closed the distance between them again and buried his face in Magnus’ neck. The sound of winds swooshing outside the room blended beautifully with the music inside the room. “Hey listen...”, he mumbled, squeezing his cheek against Magnus’ temple.

“Mm?”

“You think you can go out on that date with me...”, he narrowed his brows.

“Right now?”, Magnus gasped, pulling away from Alec. He raised his hands to squeeze Alec’s shoulders and bit his lower lip.

“If you’re not... tired or exhausted. We can totally do this another day... when I am more prepared and there’s some good venue involved”, Alec scratched his stubble. “But... you know... our second date could be the one where we cross out items off our checklist... and for the first one, we can just go with our instincts. It is not like we haven’t been out together before... we haven’t just given it a label... as such”, he waved his hands to explain. Magnus dropped his chin for a second and scoffed, before looking back up at Alec.

“Let’s do it...”, he pursed his lips.

“Yeah... of course, I mean we can make totally make it another time-”, Alec gasped and stopped after registering Magnus’ answer. “You want to do it... right now?”, his pupils widened.

“Why not. Like you said, we have been out together multiple so technically this isn’t even out the first date.”, he shrugged.

“Ok... ok, I’ll go and get the champagne... and uh... we could watch a movie... and then cuddle on the couch... and drink the champagne...”, he gulped, unable to believe that he was going to have a date in less than a few minutes.

“Let’s go out in the rain...”, Magnus interrupted. Alec paused and looked at his fiancé.

“Are you crazy... it’s windy outside... and there’s a storm. It’s risky, Magnus”, he pinched his lower lip and placed his hands on his hip.
“Just for a little bit, Alec... we’ll not even go far in the woods... we’ll just spend some time in your backyard and be back before you know it...”, he curved his lips upwards. “It will be fun... stop trying to kill it...”

“It’s freezing outside...”

“Alexander... don’t be like that. Come on”, he grabbed his wrist and pulled him out of the room.

“If one of us catches a cold... that will be on you...”, Alec said.

“Really romantic, Alexander”, Magnus deadpanned as they shut their bedroom door behind them and stepped towards the staircase.

The rain hadn’t stopped in hours not and there were already huge and growing puddles in the Lightwood backyard. Thank God for the street lamps, the place didn’t look totally eerie and dangerous. The Lightwood backyard had a little slope towards the end as it continued into the forests. That helped them transform effortlessly and launch into a full stride. The living room downstairs had been deserted and, on the way down, Alec and Magnus heard Izzy and Clary giggling and the muffled sounds of the TV playing some sitcom.

Alec quietly unbolted the back door while Magnus waited for him, and they slipped out into under the porch. On reaching the edge of it, Alec pulled Magnus back. The rainfall was heavy, and nothing was even barely visible.

“It is cold... Magnus are you sure...?”, he warned. Magnus tilted his head and nodded, stepping in the rain, and walking backward on the grass. Soon, the raindrops drenched his purple shirt, sticking it against his body. His sprayed and quiffed hair came down, falling messily over his forehead. He pulled a hesitant Alec out in front of him and in no time, both were getting soaked in the rain, with their chest pressed together.

Chapter End Notes

did I mess this up? drop in the comments and let me know :D

[chapter 23]

“Sometimes, you just gotta let loose, Alec. One night. Just one night, and then we go back to doing sensible things, okay?”, he shook his head, pulling away from the boy. Alec scoffed and rolled his eyes before grabbing Magnus by his wrist and rolling him back into his arms. Magnus squeaked as his back crashed against Alec’s chest. Alec fisted his hands together in Magnus’ and squeezed him tightly around his waist. Magnus’ throat bobbed as he tried to catch his breath after being surprised by Alec’s act of pulling him back.
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

we're so close to finding out the people behind Malec's abduction!

Chapter Notes

so yes, I said I would post an update in case you guys want it... so here I am :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Magnus spread his hands in the air and raised his chin up to feel the ice-cold raindrops hitting his face. He was drenched in water from head to toe and raindrops that were hitting his face were splitting out. “I can’t believe you are ruining your shirt, and your boots just to get soaked in the rain”, Magnus jumped on his heels hearing Alec’s voice directly in his ear. He turned his face around and saw Alec grinning at him. The boy was just as soaked as Magnus was and his skin was peeking out of his cotton shirt that had gotten translucent after getting wet. Magnus rolled his eyes and stepped closer. He pressed his finger-pads against the back of Alec’s neck and pulled him closer and then crashed their lips together. Their lips warmed up from the kissing, but their cheeks remained cold and freezing. They were shivering right before their lips touched each other.

“Sometimes, you just gotta let loose, Alec. One night. Just one night, and then we go back to doing sensible things, okay?”, he shook his head, pulling away from the boy. Alec scoffed and rolled his eyes before grabbing Magnus by his wrist and squeezing him tightly around his waist in front. Magnus’ throat bobbed as he tried to catch his breath after being taken aback by Alec’s passion.

“I am freezing... so you have to keep me warm, Magnus”, Alec whispered against his ear. Magnus moaned, shivering when the Alpha’s warm breath entered his ear canal. He swallowed and pressed his back in the crook of Alec’s neck. The warmth radiating out of each other’s body was comforting. Alec dropped his head and his lips sucked water off cold skin of the nape of Magnus’ neck. He drank the raindrops wetting the area and then trailed his lips along his carotid to the back of the Omega’s ear. Magnus groaned and threw his head back on Alec’s shoulder His body felt like he was on fire – despite it being freezing cold outside. Alec stopped right below Magnus’ earlobe and sniffed. Magnus shivered because that felt cold and hot at the same time. Alec parted his lips and took Magnus’ earlobe between his soft teeth and bit at it softly. “You’re warm... aren’t you, Magnus?”, he whispered against Magnus’ earlobe. Magnus swallowed and nodded. He couldn’t say a word out of his mouth, though. Alec inserted his lips behind Magnus’ earlobe and kissed him again. Magnus pressed his fingertips around Alec’s wrist that was squeezing against his abdomen.

“Alexander”, he moaned – his heart thrumming in his chest. He opened his eyes and blinked rapidly to clear his vision. Alec’s proximity was making him dizzy. Alec stopped somewhere right below his temple and then pulled away from Magnus, gently releasing him from his grip. The man turned around to face him and gave him a mischievous smile. Only he knew how hard he was trying to not
think about how hot and sensual this whole setting had been. Magnus shut his eyes to avoid the falling raindrops from hurting the eyeballs. He popped one foot and unzipped his boot and then did the same to the other leg. Alec dropped his chin and watched Magnus intently trying to understand the reason behind his actions. He toed his shoes aside and placed his naked feet on the top of Alec’s shoes inserting his toe slit in Alec’s leg.

“Now... we’ll be warmer”, Magnus flattened his palms on Alec’s shoulder blade and wiggled his brows. “Clary and I used to do this when we were little...”, he informed. Alec gasped and widened his eyes. Magnus gulped. “No... no... not the romance part, and the intimacy... no... no. Ew, Alexander. Why would you even think that...”, he shook his head. Alec’s eyes relaxed and grinned lopsidedly. “But we used to balance each other on our feet and try and walk for as long as we could... it was fun... especially in the rain”

“Magnus... it is raining, and there’s lose and wet mud all around. We’ll slip and fall... and then water won’t be the only thing we’ll be soaked in...”, Alec wiped his face to clean off some of the water that was blurring his vision.

“Does it really matter? This is an unusual date anyway... so let’s just do stuff our sober, and dry selves from New York won’t even begin to attempt”

“Ok... let’s do this...”, Alec sighed, pulling Magnus closer and adjusting him on his feet. “Ready?”, he took a deep breath and asked. Magnus proudly grinned a hum as he braced himself. Alec lifted his left foot to step forward and Magnus “whooped” as he tumbled on his balance. “Hold on, Magnus”, Alec chuckled as he tried to get a hang of it and lifted his right foot and stepped forward. This idea was absolutely crazy and insane and the adrenaline releasing in both their bodies was making them dizzy and hyperexcited. Magnus dropped his chin on Alec’s shoulder and chuckled and the absolute stupidity of what they were doing. He raised his hands and wrapped it around Alec’s neck to get a better balance.

They walked around, Magnus’ toe slits fitting perfectly in Alec’s legs. To anyone watching from afar, they looked like a robot hopping around with another robot on his foot, trying to balance itself in the downpour. The grass gave Alec the grip he needed to carry him and Magnus around without slipping into the mud. “You’re crazy and insane, and so am I because I am listening to you... We look like two high schoolers”, Alec muttered between his giggles. His palms were pressing on Magnus’ shoulder blade, keeping the man close to him. His eyes were clouding up with rain and he couldn’t even wipe it clean because releasing Magnus from his hold would eventually make them tumble down. Magnus pulled away from his shoulder and used his palm to wipe Alec’s face before pressing a loud and big-mouthed kiss on his cheek.

“...madly in love with each other. And I think it’s very sweet. I never had a full high-school romance so... thank you for the experience, Alexander”, the Omega finished Alec’s sentence. The Alpha stopped walking and cupped Magnus’ jaw for a deep kiss. The taste of Magnus’ skin had been marred by the raindrops and it was so cold that they couldn’t really feel each other’s skin. “Come on, turn around now... let’s go back inside the house. We’ve been out for long enough.”, he patted Alec’s back and pulled away. Alec rolled his eyes and turned around to head back inside. They had gotten better at this by now and covered the rest of the distance rather quickly. On their way, they stopped to pick up Magnus’ boots. Magnus held them behind Alec’s back, dangling them by their zippers. He pressed closer to the Alpha’s chest when they were near the stairs and Alec very efficiently climbed them on one by one without tripping and in no time, they were back under the porch, dripping with water. A puddle formed right where they were standing.

Magnus stepped away from Alec and plucked his shirt out of his skin to release the water he was holding between the fabric. Alec bent down and ruffled his hair to spray water out in all directions.
Magnus squeezed his sleeves in his hands and water dripped out between his finger slits. “Wow, you were right... it’s freezing out here”, Magnus’ teeth clattered as he hugged himself. Alec shook his head in despair, removed his shoes and tiptoed to the door. He wiped his wet face with his palm as he pushed it with his shoulder and held it open as Magnus shivered his way inside. They securely bolted the door and giggled at their stupidity.

“Now before my mother sees us being 5-year old kids again, let’s hurry up and dry ourselves. Otherwise, one of us is going to end up getting pneumonia.” Alec grabbed his wrist and they ran their way inside, leaving a trail of water behind. They jumped up the staircase, skipping one stair at a time and hurriedly pushed their way inside Alec’s room. Their giggles were loud and muffled with the sounds of rainfall outside. The lights inside Clary and Izzy’s room and been turned off, and there was silence on the first floor.

Once the door was shut and bolted, Magnus and Alec pressed their backs on it and heaved a sigh of relief. They were breathing heavily, and water was dripping from their hair down to their neck and soaking in their shirts. “That was good...”, he huffed, sniffing. He couldn’t feel his nose anymore... or his ears. Magnus rolled his eyes and agreed. They walked over to the fireplace and Alec added more wood to it. He went to the wardrobe and brought a set of towels. “You go first... I’ll stay here by the fire”, he mumbled. Magnus grabbed the towels from Alec and picked out a sweater and pajamas from Alec’s wardrobe, before disappearing into the bathroom. Alec crouched on the rug in front of the fire and rubbed his palms together before warming them up against the flames.

Magnus had a hair-dryer in his hand. He stood in front of the mirror, combing and drying his wet hair. The showers inside the bathroom were running now that Alec was inside taking a bath. After their little trip to the backyard, Magnus had changed into dry and warm sweater and pajamas that belonged to Alec and was waiting for his fiancé to come out of the shower so that they could sleep. He was still freezing, and his skin felt soft and delicate because of getting soaked in water for far too long. Magnus stopped the dryer and pulled the neck of his sweater to one side after one of his scars peeked out from the collar. He felt it with his fingertips. It wasn’t as painful as yesterday or the day before... but the area was still tender. He took a deep breath. The existence of this mark had caused him and Alec to have their first real argument this morning. The thought of losing this relationship over the fight had petrified Magnus all day until they finally resolved it a couple hours ago. Something like this could never happen again. Magnus wasn’t sure if he could ever get over losing Alec. He released his hold over the sweater and the fabric covered the mark again.

He turned the dryer back on and promised himself that he would make every effort in the world to make sure nothing could pull him and Alec apart again. Theirs was a love that had defied all the odds already and if there was someone who could make it work, it was the two of them. And they would do this. It wasn’t difficult, but the effort was worth it. The doorknob turned, and Alec stepped out wearing a sweater and a towel around his waist. His hair was dripping with water when he approached Magnus and kissed his cheek. “Go wear your pajamas... I am almost done here. I’ll help you dry your hair”, Magnus smiled after the gesture and whispered against Alec’s cheek. He couldn’t remember a time when he didn’t know Alec... or when he wasn’t in love with the man. No. Correction. He did not want to remember the time he wasn’t in love with this boy. Magnus watched the Alpha walk to the wardrobe and pull out a pair of pajamas. Slipping them from beneath his towel, he pulled them up and the towel squeezed out and dropped on the floor in the process. He came back to Magnus and the man did what he promised.

Once they were both dry and warm, Alec poured some Brandy in two glasses and offered one to Magnus. Magnus clanked their glasses together and gulped the entire drink in one go. The warmth of the drink brought their shivering bodies to rest. Alec blew out the fire in the fireplace. They undid the
covers of their bed and settled under them. Maryse had replaced the sheets in Alec’s room, and even the mattress felt comfier than the last time Magnus had slept over. Magnus had his socks on because the fireplace had gone cold now and temperatures were dropping in the room. The winds outside were still too harsh and they could hear it swooshing against the window panes.

Alec extended his hand out on the bed and Magnus placed his head on his shoulder as the Alpha spooned the other arm around Magnus’ waist. He used the tip of his nose and rubbed it against Magnus’ cheek. “Quite the date... I never realized that you were so low maintenance. Just some rain and a bottle of Brandy?”, he scoffed.

Magnus hummed, cuddling in the pillows and rubbing his head sleepily against them. “I had the best time. Honestly, I could do this with you every next time we decide to go out for a date now onwards. We don’t really need to spend dollars on food and movie tickets... especially when we can just spend some time with each other...”, he shrugged. He turned around for just a moment and kissed Alec on his lips before settling back into his original position. “I am very low maintenance, Alexander. As long as I see those hazel orbs of yours looking at me with love, I don’t think I’d even the alcohol or the rains...”, he hummed. His eyes were drooping close because of exhaustion. Alec kissed his temple and breathed out an okay against his skin.

“I love you, Magnus”, Alec whispered. His eyes could barely open now. “When this ends, we are going to go back to New York and live our normal lives”

“I love you too”, his fiancé responded seconds later. “And I cannot wait for us to go back to our home and resume our lives... and go on multiple dates...” Their erratic breathing ceased after a while. Magnus fell asleep first. Alec kept making patterns at the back of Magnus’ hand until he too dozed off with exhaustion.

... 

Clary and Izzy were wide awake in the morning, doing yoga on the mats outside under the porch. The storms from last night had created a ruckus in the town. Branches of trees with lush and young green leaves had fallen all over their backyard. Dry and yellow leaves had been blown over to the porch by the strong winds. Everything from furniture to the floor was dusty and rough to the touch. It had stopped raining at around 4 in the morning and the cleaners were due anytime. It was the Consul’s official residence and there were perks, which included a cleaning staff available on call. Maryse had woken up to a messy backyard and living room and she had summoned the people that were supposed to call.

“It’s a bummer we have to miss running today”, Clary stretched her arms in front of her and tried to balance herself on one leg as the other was stretched out on the other side. She was attempting to do the virabhadrasana posture. “Yoga is an alright alternative, I guess...”, she corrected herself because of Izzy’s glares at her. The Beta wolf had been trying to get Clary to do yoga for months now... and the redhead almost always came up with good excuses to avoid it, until today when the roadblocks around the city had prohibited any physical activities outside – an order from Consul Lightwood himself.

“Focus on your breathing, Clary”, Izzy reminded. Her hands were pressed onto each other over her head and her sole was flattened against her thigh. “Yoga is all about understanding your inner self, and recognizing what your body and soul needs. And once you understand how it connects you to the core of your existence, you’ll realize why it is so beautiful...”, she explained. Clary frowned, feeling her leg shake because of how difficult all this was. Balancing a horizontal body on one leg, it wasn’t as easy as it looked in the posture chart.

“You know... I would focus on my breathing... and my body and soul... and the chakras... if I could
just stop shaking...”, she sighed, dropping on her knee and giving up. “It is easy for you to say because you have a dancer’s body... and you practice. I am just as stiff as a staff. Admit it, yoga isn’t meant for everyone.”, she shrugged. Izzy smiled, opening her eyes and relaxing her posture. She walked over to Clary and pulled her back on her feet.

“Let’s try an easier posture... okay?”, she winked. She tapped Clary’s ass playfully. “...stretch your leg at the back, parallel to the ground. Just one leg... and nothing else”, she instructed and placed a firm palm on the redhead’s back. “You’ll notice how the upper part of your body automatically bends forward to accommodate the change of posture”, she whispered as Clary’s torso leaned forward. She grabbed Clary’s wrist and stretched the hand back to hold the leg, right above the ankle. “When you’re holding your leg, it’s easier to maintain your balance. Now, take a deep breath Clary... and focus on that part of your body which is grounding you.”, she lifted Clary’s other hand and stretched it ahead. “The one thing you think is preventing you from falling down...”

“You are...”, Clary rolled her eyes under her lids. Izzy chuckled.

“Stop being such a romantic. Focus.”, she chided the girl who pouted in response. “Think about how your leg is holding you firmly... without letting you fall. Focus your energy there. Visualize how your energy flows to your leg. Take deep breaths. Deep and slow breaths. Energy flowing into your limb.”, Izzy kept her hand firmly on her back. “See... you’re not shaking... not as much as you were before at least”, she praised. Clary proudly smiled.

“Don’t take your hand away though. I am not joking. I feel better... much more in control because I know you’re there for me if I tremble again. That touch is reassuring in many ways.”, she whispered, not using a loud voice to conserve her energy. Izzy hummed and stood there for as long as Clary was in the position.

“Count to 10... and then slowly release your hand that is holding your ankle. You did very well for the first time, C”, she instructed. Clary relieved herself of her posture and then took a deep breath. This strangely felt good... and invigorating. Why had she been avoiding yoga for so long? Her adrenaline was in check and she felt more in control of herself.

“Wow... I think I am changing my mind about this. I could actually pursue this every day”, she blew out air and looked at a triumphant Izzy who was giving her an i-knew-it smile. “Of course... if you teach me... I can’t have every other person touch my ass... and feel fluttered by it now, can I? You, however, will be alright I guess.”, she rolled her eyes. Izzy chuckled into a lopsided grin and nodded. They resumed doing yoga for another half an hour before the cleaning staff arrived.

Maryse and Robert were sitting at the table having breakfast when Izzy and Clary came back to the house holding their yoga mats under their arms. They settled on the chairs on the farthest end of the table and grabbed butter and toast. Robert was reading daily news on his tablet while Maryse was busy on her phone.

“Where are Magnus and Alec? I thought Alec would be up now, at least for his morning exercises?”, she asked, lifting her chin and looking at her daughter. Izzy stopped chewing the toast and looked at Clary to exchange a look.

“They must be sleeping... considering they had a rather long night?”, she rolled her eyes. Maryse choked on her juice and widened her pupils at her daughter. Even if Magnus and Alec had had a long night, how did Isabelle know about it. She looked at her horrified and Izzy realized that she may have misworded her sentences a bit.

“No... no... They didn’t do all that. Not in our knowledge at least. I just meant that they were out in the backyard... getting soaked in the rain and doing stuff that high school kids do... you know?
Chasing each other...jumping the puddles.”, she chuckled. “We saw them from the window... and oh my God, I can’t that those were our brothers”, she spoke the last line looking at Clary who was giggling incessantly. Maryse sighed in relief and plastered a smile on her face. Robert squirmed in his chair because talking or even listening to the stories of his kids’ romantic lives wasn’t exactly the best idea to start a day with.

“Go wake them up once you’re done eating. The cleaning staff will have to clean Alec’s balcony too. I am pretty sure they’ll find broken branches there as well”, she huffed. A messy house really triggered Maryse Lightwood.

“Watch her turn into that lady who grandmother who follows the cleaning lady around, inspecting every nook and corner”, Izzy muttered under her breath. Clary scoffed silently and continued chewing her food. Maryse was about to go and check on the cleaners when she got an important call from someone. She went aside for a few minutes and then returned with news.

“Alaric got back to me about the girl who swapped places with our bartender during the party.”, Maryse shook her phone in her hand. Alaric was a private investigator she and Robert used to know a while ago. “Ingrid Blackman bartended our anniversary party on Saturday after the other guy mysteriously disappeared... and she has not been coming to work, since”, she huffed. “The guy she replaced, he complained that he slept through the entire Saturday and had no clue why. Forensics picked up sedatives in his blood. He was drugged to skip the event”

“So, Alec was right about hearing her name. She was purposely planted at our home that night. And, she is not from our town. She is a native of Texas and there is no known family attached to her name. Grew up in an orphanage and ran away from there when she was 15. Since then, no one knows of her exact whereabouts.”, she informed.

“Where was she working?”

“She had just started working for the Seelie Realm last week... part-time basis. The details on her whereabouts before that are a little hazy and unclear. The pub says that she hasn’t been coming to work since after the party. Hell, she hasn’t even come in to take her cheque for working off-hours in the party. Alaric said that he will get back to me by the end of today. They are suspecting that she knew about the use of Wolfsbane – prior knowledge or she was trained for the crime”, the Lightwood matriarch informed.

“Magnus, Izzy and I will be heading over to the Public Library today. We have sorted out some books that might contain information on that part of our history. If we find something, we’ll let you know? It might narrow down our search?”, Clary used her hands to explain herself. Maryse nodded, giving her confirmation. “Even if the Wolfsbane was used, there must be someplace it came from... or was brought from, you know?”

“I’ll go and check the stores here, see if anyone has the records of any Wolfsbane being delivered to somewhere in Idris?”, Maryse cleared her throat.

“Then everyone knows what they have to do for the day, right? Alec will be checking over the basement, fishing for clues. I shall be at the Council... seeing if something seems suspicious over there. Talking to the accounts department to see if any Wolfsbane was brought in...”, Robert sipped his coffee and cleared his throat. The Lightwood and the Banes had had a long day of work ahead of them. This was going to be interesting. Izzy finished her food and walked up the stairs with Clary to wake the boys.

The door to Alec’s room was unusually open and the morning light was pouring in from all directions. At first, the girls couldn’t spot them. Only when they stepped closer, they found the two
men huddled in the center of the bed, hidden under multiple layers of gold blankets. Magnus' head was squished against the large pillows and Alec’s arm was wrapped around his waist, spooning him. Clary rolled her eyes at how adorable the two of them were. For a second, she couldn’t find the heart to wake them up and ruin this beautiful moment. She had stopped a little away from the bed, so as to not startle them with her voice.

“Magnus... Alec? Good morning”, she clapped her hands. “Rise and shine, Magnus. We have a lot on our plate today”, she added in her quirky voice. Magnus groaned first. He opened his eyes and looked around. Spotting Clary standing near the couch, he made a face and turned around to hide in Alec’s neck.

“Alexander, ask her to leave. Biscuit... go away, I am tired and I have to sleep... just leave...”, he murmured, wrapping his arm around Alec’s chest and climbing one of his legs over Alec’s. Alec closed his lips together and licked them a little before shifting his sleep. He yawned and rubbed the scar on his brow.

“Leave... please”, he obeyed Magnus. Clary scoffed and turned to Izzy who was just so amused by everything.

“Alec? We found Ingrid... come on. Rise and shine big brother...”, she squealed. Alec’s eyes shot wide open and he woke up. Magnus groaned and pinned him back down as Clary glared at Izzy for being so ruthless with waking the boys up. Izzy whispered a “this was the only way” in her ear and crossed her hands over her chest. They walked out of the room to give them some space and a few moments together.

“I don’t want to get up, yet”, Magnus muttered against Alec’s neck. Alec was yawning... and trying to make his eyes water to push his sleeves away. “This bed is so warm... and cozy... and soft”, the Omega whined a little. Alec hummed in agreement because everything felt perfect. The temperatures outside were really cold but this blanket was warm... and it was so soft and silky. It had hugged Magnus and Alec in all the right places and no one in their right mind could have ever abandoned such a peaceful moment just to get on with their day.

“We have a lot to do, Magnus”, Alec yawned. His voice was hoarse and soft at the same time. He waited patiently for Magnus to wake up and opened his eyes. He looked around himself and dropped his head back on Alec’s shoulder because the bright light hurt, waking up so early hurt... and the thought of leaving this comforting bed hurt. A few moments later, he kissed Alec’s forehead and then, pulled himself away from the Alpha and grabbed a pillow beneath his head, surrendering himself to sleep.

“You go and get ready first then. I’ll sleep for some more time.”, he whispered. “Also... no pressure of hurrying up inside. I am very comfortable here” Alec scoffed and sat up on the bed a few seconds later. He stretched his hands out and looked at Magnus’ horizontal frame. When did he not look perfect? Alec rolled his eyes and then bent forward to kiss his cheekbone. Magnus smiled and snuggled into the covers.

Robert got off the call with his wife. Maryse had met with Alaric, their PI to inquire about the girl, Ingrid. Turned out, she was a herbology student at the University of Alicante. That explained how and why she knew about the right amounts of Wolfsbane to be used to spike Alec’s drink. But like Maryse had already mentioned, the lethal nature of the compound had made it illegal to be sold in free markets. Special permission had to be sought from the Council if any werewolf in the community required it for medicinal uses. So, that meant a paper trail. Somewhere in the entire Council. He was tapping the back of his click pen on his desk when there was a knock at the door.
Robert lifted his head up and saw Stephen Herondale standing. Robert bent down and pressed a button before asking him to come inside.

“Robert”, the man greeted after the Consul gestured him to take a seat. He placed his hands in front of him on the table and took a deep breath, clenching his jaws. “I hope I am not disturbing you. I wanted to know how your son and son-in-law are recovering after everything? What happened was utterly awful and disgusting to even imagine.”, he asked. Robert pursed his lips and pressed his lips in a thin line.

“They’re well. Considering everything they have been through these past couple of days…”, he mentioned. “Thank you for asking”

“I wanted to do this at the party... but we were surrounded by a lot of suspicious eyes and then, with the stuff that happened to your kids... I just couldn’t find the right time to do it. So, I decided to do it today because no one will suspect anything... other than official Clave work.”, the Herondale Elder took a deep breath and closed his eyes. “And... I have no intentions of putting you and your wife in more trouble than you already are...”

“Speak freely, Steph... no word gets out of this office. You know that, right?”, he gave him a tight-lipped smile.

“Jace and Sebastian received the acceptance letter last week at their New York home. They are free to marry and return to Idris without the fear of getting arrested for breaking the law and marrying outside our community. I still cannot believe you made this happen. Robert…”, the expressions on his face changed to gratitude and happiness. Robert nodded, acknowledging the letter Stephen was holding.

“Jace is like my son, Stephen. You’re my best friend too…”, he added. “And this law is stupid and illogical. We are allowed to love whoever and whenever we want.”

“I know that, Robert but you know what happened between our kids”, the wolf sighed. “What Jace did... to Alec, was abhorrent and unspeakable. I would have not held it against you if you had denied my son the right to come back home. But you didn’t, and I am thankful for that. More so because you put your reputation on the line, for a man who cannot even call you friend out loud in the public. And I feel like I don’t deserve your loyalty. But, you have to know how hard it is to pretend to hate you in front of the Council. Pretend to hate my son and the love of his life... but I cannot even begin to imagine how you do it? How you take all those hateful eyes on yourself... and those heinous comments? I could never do it”, he shook his head.

“What Jace did to Alec... was wrong, I don’t deny it. And by sending that letter, I don’t mean that I forgive him... or that I think he was right. But whatever that situation was... Alec and Jace are the ones who need to sort it out or not sort it out. Alec is the one Jace needs to apologize... if he wants to apologize. But that incidence has no reflection on our friendship. When I signed that letter, I did it solely because no one in the world deserves to be locked out of their homes... no matter how many mistakes they have done and especially not because he dared to love someone who was different from him. I would have done the same for Alec... or hoped that you would do the same for my son. Jace deserves to come back home. His partner... he deserves to see where Jace belongs... and do whatever they want with that information. I am no one to deny that right to them. And I am sure if Alec was there in my place, he would have done the same.”, he shrugged. “I also know how difficult it is to pretend to mock my ideals in front of the Council... but you know how risky it is to do the opposite. There are cruel people among us... you saw what they did to Magnus and Alec and if pretending to hate me keeps your family... and Sebastian safe... then I am more than glad to be the subject of that hate”
“You’re the best thing that has happened to the Clave in the longest time. I wish there were more people ready to accept the positive changes you’ve brought to us and how necessary it was for us to move forward as a community. I didn’t come here just to say thank you... for this letter. I came here to tell you that I am done pretending to not support you. If you and the Lightwood pack ever need me... or my help, I would gladly offer my life to you. That is the least I can do for everything you’ve done for me”, Stephen whispered.

“Young friend, I would hope it doesn’t come to that”, Robert smiled.

“Give my best to Alec and Magnus. And please, please don’t hesitate to ask for help. I am here for you. My pack is here for you.”, he stood up and held his hand out. Robert shook it warmly and Stephen left the office.

... 

The basement had been locked up, per Alec’s demands. It was late in the evening when the Alpha decided to have a look at the area. Magnus and Clary had gone back home after their visit to the Public Library because Asmodeus had finally returned and he wanted to see his children at the earliest. Alec had gloves on his hands and his mobile torch. He entered the basement and turned the lights on. The entire dungeon smelt of algae, moisture, and remnants of Magnus’ heat. It was disgusting, and the Alpha scrunched his nose and covered it with his hand. He headed straight to the room first when Izzy’s call made him jump out in surprise.

“Izzy, can it wait? I am trying to find something worthwhile in this basement. Something that could lead us to the people behind Magnus’ kidnapping?”, he muttered, pressing the phone to his ear. Izzy sighed on the other side.

“I wanted to update you about what we found in the Library... but if you want to wait, I am sure we can talk later... I am expecting some more calls so... yeah?”, she muttered. Alec closed his eyes. No, it couldn’t wait. He needed to know. Fishing out his Bluetooth earplug, he transferred the call and plugged his phone into his pocket to get his hands free.

“Ok, tell me”

“According to the books we found in the Library before Wolfsbane was banned for public use in the later 1950s, there were farms all across town where the plant was grown – for commercial and personal use. Public Works and Municipality records gave us a list of 213 such registered plantations where this plant was grown until the 60s when the Law banning the use and cultivation was enforced”, she informed. It looked like she was reading facts from somewhere. Alec hummed and stepped into the room where Magnus had been chained to the bed. The syringes used to drug Magnus were still lying next to the bed. He picked up one of them and placed them in the sterilized packet. They were made out of silver.

“Clary and I checked the internet and all of them have been shut down except two. The records suggest that these two plantations still have some Wolfsbane growing but the area is secluded and restricted from Public Access”

“Could it have been that Ingrid Blackman obtained the Wolfsbane from somewhere not in Idris? I am sure this restriction doesn’t stand outside the Town and people freely use the plant for their use in the entirety of America”, Alec hummed, walking around the back. He was looking for a strand of hair... or a drop of blood – anything that could have pointed to the identity of the other man, the Shadow as he recalled.

“Dad got back from the accounts department and no consignment on Wolfsbane has come to Idris in
the last 23 days. So, that rules out the possibility of importing the poison. Anyway, getting back to those two farms. One of them is owned by us... I mean it is owned by the Consul of the Clave – whoever is in power... and the other... the other wasn’t supposed to be still functioning according to the law. On paper, the plantation seems to have been closed in 1961 but it is still running... illegally”, Izzy sighed on the other side. “...so, Dad spoke to someone in the Council... and they’re going to find out the owners in a couple of hours”

Alec hummed, scratching his beard. He turned around to leave when something shiny caught his eyes. By the leg of the bed. He bent down and picked the thing up. It was a metal shard but very shaped for the same. There were incomplete carvings on it as if it had broken from something. He twisted it in his hands, trying to see if something was engraved – a name, or a manufacturer. Even if nothing, there could be fingerprints on it. This was a good thing. “Izzy, I think I found something. Can you ask that forensic biologist friend of yours... what was his name? Meliorn right? I need him to do something off the record for me.”

“I’ll text the guy and let you know what he says? Alec don’t do anything reckless on your own. We’ll get through this together. I’ll be home soon, so tell Mom to not worry about me. I have just dropped Clary and Magnus back to their home... and I am heading to ours”, she informed before cutting the call.

“I am going back to my room. Do not forget to ring Meliorn and ask him, alright?”, he reminded her right before she hung up.

Alec stuffed the shard in another plastic packet and rushed out of the basement after a thorough inspection of all the corners. Apart from syringes and barrels, there was nothing that could have complemented this shard and counted as part of the clue, but Alec was glad because this shard could explain so many things. There was no one in the house except his mom at the time who was pacing up and down the living room, waiting for something.

“Expecting Alaric?”, Alec asked, walking inside the house.

“Uh huh!”, Maryse nodded. “He says he has some important pictures for me... he found Ingrid. She is in New York since Sunday... and he found out that she met with someone consecutively for 4 days before disappearing again...”

“That’s stupid. New York is the one city that we would have first looked for... considering that is where they kidnapped Magnus from... but I guess... whatever. I’ll be upstairs. Let me know when you get those pictures so that we know what the girl has been up to in New York.”, Alec chuckled. He clutched the packets that held the syringes and barrel and decided to head upstairs and hide them safely until Meliorn or someone else agreed to help them. He was on his way towards the staircase when the doorbell rang. He looked over his shoulder and saw Maryse receiving a huge envelope from a delivery boy who wasn’t Alaric. This was good progress. He decided to keep the evidence away and come back down to check on the photographs.

The lights along the walls of the staircase were on and his gaze fell on the large photograph of the entire Council hanging in the center of the gallery. He had seen it a million times before, every time he passed by it. The photograph was taken last year in the Annual Council Event. But today, he saw it in a different light. Something caught Alec’s attention and he paused to have a closer look. There was a cane in one of the Council member’s hands. The cane had metal engravings on it. The engravings looked familiar – very familiar. He gasped and pulled out the plastic bag from his pockets. The metal carvings on the shard matched the ones on that cane. They must have broken out of it when he was chaining Magnus to the bed. Alec gulped and lifted his gaze to see the face of the man who was holding the cane in between his fists.
“That’s not possible”, he whispered.

“Alec... you need to see this baby”, he heard Maryse choking downstairs. He rushed down, jumping a few stairs in the process and saw Maryse frozen in front of the main door. Tears had clouded her eyes and her jaws were clenched in anger and fury. Alec gulped and neared her, gently pulling the photographs towards her. “Izzy... where is she...? Alec...? She should have come back home by now... right?”, she choked. Alec wasn’t in the position to reply. His eyes were fixed on the photos of Ingrid and the man she had been meeting in New York. His head was dizzy. This wasn’t happening. This wasn’t what he had expected.

“I have to go...”, Alec was shaking as he grabbed his car keys and headed to the main door. “Tell Izzy to stay back here... no matter what... and tell Dad that he needs to get me backup. Mom... remember, Izzy cannot leave the house. It is not safe for her. You have to stop her. I know she will try and resist it... but you have to stop her. I cannot do this if I am busy worrying about my sister.,”, he shuddered, twisting the door knob in his hand. Maryse nodded as the door slammed on her face and Alec was out in the next second, running towards his car. Her shaking hands found the courage to click on her husband’s name and she dialed him.

“Robert...”, she choked when the man picked up. “You need to get home now...”

Chapter End Notes

it's not a hard guess now, is it?
drop the comments and let me know if you liked the chapter or not?
Malec playing in the rain, and Clizzy doing yoga :'}
Isabelle hopped onto the steps of her house and was surprised to see that the main door was wide open – like someone had just entered or left the property. Alec’s car was gone from the front porch, but she didn’t read too much into it because he had told her that he would be home when she came back. So maybe someone else had taken the car with them. It didn’t have to necessarily mean anything. Maryse sat on the couch and she was frozen in her spot. There were photographs lying in front of the lady on the coffee table. “Mom?” Isabelle shook Maryse’s shoulder. Her mother gulped and lifted her chin to look at the girl. “Are you okay?”, the girl dropped on the armrest next to her mom, worry washed all over her face.

Maryse parted her lips to say something when her phone vibrated on the table, making both the women jump in their seats. Isabelle leaned forward and read Robert’s name flashing on the screen. She picked the phone and turned to her mother to hand it over but saw that Maryse was shaking with fear. She couldn’t have taken the call even if she had tried. Isabelle narrowed her brows and pressed the answer button to talk to Robert and see what he had had to say. Maybe it was about the ownership thing she wanted him to find out about.

“Dad, it is me Isabelle”, she spoke, picking up the phone.

“Isabelle? Where is your mother? Put me on speaker, I want to talk to the both of you? Is Maryse alright...?”, her father sounded worried and he was breathing heavily. There were car honks, in the background, around him, so he was probably stuck in a traffic jam on his way back home. What had gotten her parents so worked up all of a sudden that Maryse was still as a statue and Robert was heading home early? Everything had been alright when she had left for the Library with Clary and Magnus and now, the house seemed like something terrible had happened. Or was about to. Isabelle hummed and pressed the loudspeaker button on the phone, holding it between herself and her mother. “You’re on speaker now. Mom is here too.”

“The Accounts department got back to me on the ownership of that other Wolfsbane plantation”, Robert huffed.
“What? Did they? That’s great! Who owns the other plantation Dad? Someone we know? Can we narrow down suspects based on it? Maybe we can link Ingrid Blackman’s name to the owner to solidify the pieces of evidence we have.’’, Isabelle cried in hope and excitement. She raised her chin and called out to Alec, but her mother told her that Alec was on his way to something important and he wasn’t going to be home anytime soon.

“The plantation is owned by a company called Erchomai. Pretty ominous name if you ask me. Translates to Demons from Hell in some texts.”, Robert informed. “According to the official records, it is a flagged shell company based in the Cayman Islands. It was recognized after $3 billion was transferred into the account 6 months ago. Guess who the major investor in that illegal business is? It is Edom Estates. Ring a bell?”

“Edom Estates... isn’t that Uncle Asmodeus’ company? It deals with properties in and around Idris, right? Why would he fund a shell company based off-shore unless he is handling illegally earned money?”, the girl widened her brows. “I am sure someone is doing this from within his company, but he is going to get blamed for it because it is his company’s name involved. Oh God. That really doesn’t narrow down anything.”, she shrugged.

In no world could she imagine that Asmodeus Bane – the man who had brought up kids like Magnus and Clary could do something like that. Her mother shifted uncomfortably in her spot, hearing Robert’s information which confirmed Alaric’s findings. There was no doubt that Asmodeus Bane had been behind this whole incident and God knew how many more in the past. She eyed the photographs on the table and Isabelle noticed that. Her gaze fell on them and for a second, she was confused. Looking back and forth between her mother and the table, something wasn’t adding up. It looked like Maryse knew something that she wasn’t able to guess. She shoved the phone in her mother’s hands and picked up the photographs to have a closer look at them. That is when she understood why Maryse was behaving so strangely.

The door of their house opened again, and Robert stepped inside with Underhill and a few Guards from the Clave on his heels. He cut the call and spoke out loud. “Ingrid used to work for Asmodeus before she was hired by the Seelie Realm to bartend at our party. She is a student of herbology and this explains everything else.”

“You’re asking me to believe that Clary and Magnus’ father is the one behind all this. He abducted Magnus and drugged him. He did that to his own son?”, Izzy squeaked. “Dad you have to absolutely sure about this because if you’re wrong, we risk losing one of our closest friends and families. Alec is engaged to their oldest son and if this turns out to be someone else, God knows what will happen to their relationship”, Izzy warned. The photographs in her hand proved everything she was refusing to believe. There were at the very least, half a dozen of them. Ingrid was seen with Asmodeus, out and about in the streets of New York. They had lunch dates together with the man handing over a packet of cash to her. In one of the pictures, she was giving him an old wooden box that had vials and bottles inside it.

“Isabelle. I understand that, better than anyone. Asmodeus and I, we grew up together. He is my best friend and the fact that I have to see this evidence against him is breaking my heart. I cannot believe that he crafted this entire thing just out of spite for his Omega son. Just because he was ashamed of him. This isn’t the man I had befriended. It cannot be”, Robert scratched his beard and sighed. He looked exhausted and tired.

“If Magnus’ father is behind all this... then... how does... how did he come to know of our basement?”, Isabelle recalled the Lightwood journals where the only other family to know of their secret were the Herondales. “The Herondale Pack is the one that knows about its history... other than the Lightwoods. The Banes weren't supposed to know of this in the first place, right? How do they
know?”, she placed her hands on the hip and lifted her chin in exhaustion. She still had the photographs in her hand and they were crushing between her fingers.

“I don’t know, Isabelle. But it turns out that he does know. Everything about that dungeon...”, Robert sighed.

The last two photographs had Kaya alongside Asmodeus with Ingrid outside a beautiful and a very posh restaurant in the Queens. The date stamp revealed that it was taken on the night Magnus and Clary had come over for dinner. *Last night*. Those pictures were from last fucking night. Kaya had lied to them about having work outside of town. She had united with her husband in New York and met Ingrid.

“All the evidence is very much true, Robert. Alec found a metal shard in the basement, next to the bed Magnus was chained to”, Maryse cleared her throat. Izzy looked up from the photographs to listen to her mother. *What metal shard and why is she hearing this from her mother and not Alec when she was on the phone with him while he was scouring through the basement?* “The patterns and engravings on the shard match the metal engravings on Asmodeus’ cane. It must have broken off when he tried to subdue Magnus.”, she announced. “He has gone to Magnus’ bungalow to take him and Clary out before Asmodeus suspects anything”

“I need to warn Clary. I need to tell her that she has to run out of the house before something happens to Magnus. Her father is back to town and if these photographs are any proof, he must have planned something else – much more heinous and outrageous for Magnus”, Isabelle turned on her heels to find her phone.

“Ask her to be careful”, Robert warned. He turned to Underhill and whispered something to him and the Guards. They marched out after their orders had been given. “They cannot let Asmodeus suspect that we are onto them. It would ruin everything, and God knows what the two of them have planned for Magnus next. We have to be careful”, the daughter nodded at Robert’s warning and pressed the call button next to Clary’s name.

The number was out of reach.

*Fuck.*

Alec’s hands were curled around the steering wheel as the footpad pressed on the accelerator for the car to gain speed. He had to reach Magnus as soon as he could. Robert’s Audi roared through the hilly roads. Magnus lived across the river and after the storm, the entire town had been full of potholes and detoured roads, making it difficult for Alec to reach Magnus on time. He had sent texts to Magnus, asking him to wait for him before going out with anyone. He couldn’t really spill Asmodeus’ secret on a message because who could stop Magnus from calling his Dad out. And that risked Magnus getting hurt at the hands of his father before Alec even had a chance to save him.

*Call me Magnus. As soon as you see this.*

He typed out a hurried text and threw his phone on the passenger seat. Magnus hadn’t been picking up his calls ever since he left his house. It had started pouring again, a few minutes after Alec hit the road and the Alpha contemplated if he could cover the distance faster on foot. He should have seen this threat coming. He should have been the one to visit the basement sooner so that he wouldn’t have let Magnus go away to his home this morning.
Last night had been perfect for Alec. He had confessed his love for Magnus to him and was told that Magnus loved him back. After that, they had most adorable and fun date of their lives – getting drenched in the rain like they were adolescents again – and then they had fallen asleep together on their bed without the nightmarish Saturday memories flashing up again between them again. He couldn’t have imagined a peaceful night after the week the two had had. He stood beneath the shower this morning, rubbing his neck and arms with his fingerpads, relieving the tension in his muscles. His right arm still felt a little numb because Magnus had slept on it overnight – but overall, it was a pain worth having.

He and Magnus hadn’t had the perfect start to their love story, or their relationship for that matter but they were getting there – slowly and very steadily – much to Alec’s relief. After spending five months living with Magnus, there’s no one else the Alpha could have imagined spending the rest of his life with. It was either Magnus... or simply solitude with memories of Magnus. In short, Magnus was ‘it’ for him. His eternal love. His partner for life.

He chased off the last remaining blotches of shower gel and lather from his arms and abs with his fingers rubbing on his body and then stopped to check himself out. Everything felt clean and rinsed, and relaxed. Turning the faucets off, he grabbed the towel from the hook and rubbed his chest and torso, drying them clean. Once that was done, he lifted the towel to his head to dry his hair whilst wrapping another dry towel around his waist. Today was the day they were meant to find some real answers and punish the people responsible for this chaos that had pulled Magnus and Alec away from their normal lives. Find out about the source of the Wolfsbane, or if the Herondales were to be blamed for this fiasco? Even though a major part of him was bubbling with rage, he couldn’t wait to get this over with so that he could go back to living his normal life with Magnus by his side. The life where everything was simple... and lovely.

He came out of the bathroom to find Magnus looking into his phone. He was not sleepy or exhausted anymore and there was a relaxed smile on his face. He was still lying on the bed with his elbow bent and supporting his head a little above the pillow. His knees were propped up and his soles pressed deep onto the mattress. His thumb rubbed in the upward direction as he scrolled through his unending notifications.

“I spoke to Luke while you were taking a shower. He was very concerned about the two of us! I told him I am still me... and you’re just as grumpy as he remembers”, Magnus smiled and tilted his head towards his fiancé. Alec hummed, walking over to the mirror to spray some deodorant on his chest and underarms. He arched a brow at Magnus and then scoffed. “I would have been fired four times already if Luke hadn’t been so understanding and empathetic about this whole thing though.”, he chuckled, rolling his eyes.

“It’s a good thing he understands what people like us go through. I am not sure if Vogue will think the same. I am pretty sure I am looking at some kind of salary cut or contract-breach penalty when I get back home. Jace will leave no stone unturned to make my life hell.”, Alec rubbed aftershave on his recently clean-shaven cheeks.

“Oh huh? Well then, we will tackle that situation together as well. Kicking Jace Herondale’s ass would be fun and I would like nothing more. Don’t you worry, Alexander. He wouldn’t know what hit him”, Magnus agreed, rolling over on the bed and dropping his legs down to the floor from Alec’s side of the bed instead of his own. Alec keenly observed his antics and gave his fiancé a lopsided grin before rolling his eyes. Magnus stepped into the bathroom while the fog was still coming out from it and let the door be open while he brushed his teeth. He splashed water on his face and then pulled the hand-towel from the hook to wipe his face clean before coming out of the room and heading to his suitcase. He had packed his stuff and gotten the bag to Alec’s house so that it was easier for them to leave the next morning.
He fished out his clothes for the day and then walked back to the bathroom to keep them neatly on the counter. The water-heater lights were still on which meant that there was some time before the water was heated enough for Magnus to take a shower. He came out of the bathroom again and leaned on the wardrobe door, right next to the mirror. His hands were crossed over his chest and his shoulder was pressing against the wood. Alec was straightening his shirt collar. The Omega moved forward and grabbed the shirt, stopping Alec.

“Let me help with the buttons”, he shrugged. Alec let the shirt go from his hands and lifted them higher above Magnus to button his cuffs while Magnus pulled out the collar from beneath the shirt and then started buttoning it up. “Dad is back in Town. He arrived in the morning. Just received the text on the family group.”, the man whispered. His voice was loaded with happiness and delight. Alec had completely forgotten that Asmodeus had been away since the night everything went awry for him and Magnus and that maybe his fiancé was missing his father and wanting to talk to him – hear his words of wisdom. They were very close – Magnus and Asmodeus and his fiancé respected his father above everyone else. Alec knew that. He also knew that in order for him and Magnus to leave for New York the next morning, Magnus would have to spend some time with his father. It was only fair... and both the father and son deserved that time alone.

“You’re having dinner back at your place tonight, right?”, Alec whispered. His voice was low and sad because he didn’t want Magnus to go away from him even for a second. Magnus finished doing the buttons on Alec’s shirt and looked up, giving him a smile. He flicked his palm over the shirt to remove the creases and dust over it and adjusted the collar again.

“You know... if I remember correctly, Mom invited you and Isabelle as well. She would have loved to get to know you more... and I quote her very sincerely and incorrigible.”, Magnus mumbled. Alec sighed and hooked his hand around Magnus’ waist pulling the man closer to his chest. Magnus gasped and flattened his palms on Alec’s chest.

“You and I are going back tomorrow... and in New York, you’ll be all mine... for every hour of the day, every day”, he shrugged, hitting the tip of his nose against Magnus’. The man chuckled at the gesture and slapped the Alpha on his chest lightly. “So... it is only fair that you go and spend some time with your parents and sister... they are the ones who won’t get to see you after tonight.”, he wiggled his brows and bit his lips, smiling deviously.

“You sound like you’re going to kidnap me on our way to New York... and then murder me in cold blood so that my family never finds my body again, Alexander. That’s horrifying, my love.”, Magnus rolled his eyes and threw his head back, laughing. Alec rubbed his tongue at the back of his teeth, suppressing a blush.

“Serial killers, huh? Are you into them?”, he scrunched his nose.

“As much as I know how you would love to hear a ‘yes’ from me... my answer would be a solid no. The only type of people I am into... “, he paused and licked his lips. “well... that happens to be the man who is standing right in front of me. I am faithfully loyal to a certain Alec Lightwood for the rest of my mortal life”, he closed his eyes and chanted “Namaste”. Alec chuckled and bent forward to shut his Omega with a kiss on his lips. The turning off of the water-heater alerted Magnus and he jumped away from the kiss, heading straight into the bathroom.

Alec snapped back from the flashback to this morning and hit his wrist onto the steering wheel. There was a long traffic jam ahead of him and the downpour was only getting heavier with time. Perfect timing. Alec gritted his teeth together and dialed Magnus again. The number was still out of reach. Where had Magnus kept his goddamn phone?
Clary got off the phone with Isabelle and dropped on the bed. Her head was spinning from the facts she had just learned from her girlfriend. If that evidence and facts were anything to go by, everything that she had been told by her parents had been a lie. They were absolutely vile human beings who had kept both her and Magnus in dark for over 15 years of her life. She pulled herself together and ran to Magnus’ room to warn him, and maybe take him out safely before Asmodeus and Kaya attacked.

The room was empty. Magnus phone was blinking on the bed in front of her. She furrowed her brows and stepped closer. The room looked fine. There were no signs of a struggle anywhere. But Magnus was not the type of person who would go anywhere without his phone. She picked it up and swiped it open to see if there was anything of importance on it. A gush of wind brought droplets of water inside the room, drenching her side profile. She tilted her head towards the window. It was wide open. When she peeked out of it, she saw paws embedded in the grass, right near the landing spot. Was Magnus out for a run? In this weather?

She looked at his texts. There were multiple miss calls from Alec’s number... and then there were streams of text messages as well. She was about to open and type out a reply when his phone rang again. It was Alec. She answered it immediately.

“Magnus... thank God. Where the hell have you been? Look... I need you... Magnus?”’, he paused when he didn’t hear Magnus’ voice on the other side. Something was off. “Are you there?”

“Alec, it’s me Clary”, the redhead sniffed.

“Where’s Magnus? S’ he okay?”

“I don’t know. He is not home... but his phone is. Which is weird because he never leaves his phone. Never”, she reiterated. “Isabelle filled me in about everything”, she sighed. “Are you sure, Alec? Because this is my parents you’re accusing... they took me in when I had nobody. And they had no reason to help me, but they did?”

“I know how it looks, Clary... and I am hoping that this is all foul play, and someone is framing your parents, but all the evidence says otherwise. I found broken pieces of your father’s cane in the basement where Magnus and I were chained. Your father was supposed to be away from Idris on Saturday and there is no reason why I found that shard”, Alec hissed. “As much as I want to blame your father... I will still hope that this ends up being a huge misunderstanding... but on the off-chance, it isn’t, can you do me a favor? Can you find Magnus... and just don’t let him disappear from your sight?”

“Yeah... I’ll go and see where he is”

“And... if possible, stay away from both your parents... just until I am there.”, he requested. Clary closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

“Yes, okay. I’ll go and find Magnus. You don’t worry, okay? Come here soon”, she huffed and hung the call-up.

Magnus was adjusting his earcuffs in front of the mirror when Alec walked back into his room. Magnus was almost ready to head out to the Library with Clary and Izzy while Alec was preparing to investigate the basement. The shower had been a relaxing one for Magnus because it had given
him to recollect his thoughts.

“Ready, Detective Lightwood? We have a whole day of investigation ahead of us...?”, Magnus turned around on his heels and smiled at his fiancé. His velvet jack hung on his arm and his necklaces dangled out. Alec looked up from the journal he was reading and gave him a side grin. He slapped the book closed reached the door to open it out for Magnus. Magnus gave him a gorgeous smile as he stepped out.

“You take care of yourself. Don’t burn yourself and I repeat... be very careful Alexander...”, he turned around again and patted Alec on his chest. Alec smiled and scratched the back of his neck before kissing Magnus on his cheek.

“Why wouldn’t I be?”

“Because you’re you. And I am warning you to not do anything stupid. I’ll be at the Library with our sisters... if your worrying nerves get back on, please don’t panic. Nothing will happen to me. I’ll be fine... just as long as you are.”, he snuggled his hands around Alec’s waist and tiptoed himself up to kiss him on the tip of his nose.

“If I get some free time, I’ll bring you and the girls some lunch, okay?”

“You do that”, Magnus shook his head and chuckled. He turned and headed down to the living room, followed by Alec. They were greeted by Maryse and Isabelle. Robert had already gone to the Clave headquarters.

“Ready, Magnus”, Isabelle smiled, adjusting her backpack on her shoulder.

“Oh yes. A day full of reading history. It would be so much fun.”, he rolled his eyes, hooking his arm in his sister-in-law’s. Maryse gave him a tight-lipped smile as he walked past her. Alec held the door open for him and Izzy and escorted them to Magnus’ car. Isabelle sat on the passenger seat and strapped herself.

“I’ll see you at lunch... and if not, tomorrow morning?”, Alec asked, placing his hand on Magnus’ shoulder. Magnus gave him a strong nod. “Cannot wait to go back to New York...”, he shrugged. This had all been too much for them already.

“Me too”, Magnus wetted his lips with his tongue. “I love you?”

“I love you too”, Alec furrowed his brows and replied instantly and sincerely. He kissed him on his lips right before Magnus ducked into the driver’s seat and closed the door. Alec watched his fiancé and sister drive away.

Tears stung Alec’s eyes as he recalled his last I love you to Magnus. He hadn’t managed to bring lunch to him or the girls over lunch because he had gotten busy with going through the remainder of the Lightwood journals. Fuck yourself, Alec. He thought. What if he never saw Magnus after today? What if something had happened? No. No. You cannot think like that. Magnus is fine. He nodded, rubbing the back of his hand with his thumb.

... 

Clary walked down to the living room and found Kaya hurrying out of the backdoor. “Mom?”, she called, and the lady froze. She flicked the strands of hair from her forehead and turned to the girl with a plastered fake smile on her face.
“Yes, my love”

“Have you seen Magnus?” Clary asked. She had a tight-lipped smile on her face and her demeanor was as calm as she could have made it. “I have been looking for him for quite some time now. He promised to do my nails before the dinner party”, she made an excuse. Kaya parted her lips and then wiped her tongue over it.

“No... Clary... I am afraid I haven’t seen Magnus since... I don’t know?”, she grinned. Clary felt disgusted at the smile because she could see how fake it was. “Maybe he and your father went out for a run... it is a beautiful weather outside... isn’t it?”, she waved her hand before pulling the doorknob to open the door again.

“Maybe. Where are you going though?”, she crossed her hands over her chest. “Aren’t you supposed to be making dinner for all of us?”, she smirked. Kaya heaved a huge sigh and dropped her bag on the floor before turning back to her daughter. “If you’re going out for a run as well... maybe I can accompany you?”

“I am not going out for a run, Clary”, Kaya shrugged.

“Well, then it can wait... right? Maybe you can help me find. I really need to know where he is, mother”, she snarled softly. Kaya knew that she had been caught. Her adopted daughter was onto them. She knew something.

“I knew Asmodeus was getting us into trouble when he decided to bring you home”, Kaya rubbed her temple. “You are a Morgenstern. What else can be expected from that vicious brain inside the red head of yours”, she rolled her eyes. Clary was taken aback by such words from the woman she had considered her mother for so long.

“What do you mean?”, she hissed.

“Both Valentine and Jocelyn were known for how witty they were. The Morgenstern intelligence – they called it. And then when they passed away, Asmodeus thought that adding the last remaining Morgenstern to our pack would mean that we will have that viciousness and intelligence as our own. But you...”

“Where is Magnus?”, Clary ignored Kaya’s hurtful words and focused on her brother.

“How much do you know?”

“Pretty much everything? Ingrid Blackman... the Wolfsbane plantation... there’s just one dark door in all this. How did you and Dad come to know of the Lightwood dungeon? The secret was kept by the Lightwood and Herondale families?”

“Stephen Herondale is a great guy. He is an even better drinker”, Kaya smiled. “One dinner party... a couple of spiked drinks... and he blabbered all the secrets of the Lightwoods to your adoptive father that night. It wasn’t as difficult as you think it was. We failed once, Clarissa... it is not in our nature to fail a second time”, she shrugged.

“You will. Alec is on his way over here right now... and so is Consul Lightwood with the Guards. It is game over for you and Dad, mother! We will hunt Magnus and Dad down and when we do, no one can spare you from the deep and dark cells of the City of Bones”, she glared – her eyes glowing in her Alpha color.

“Well, shit”, Kaya gritted out. “I cannot have that right now. Asmodeus is almost ready with the ritual... and we were stopped once... it is not gonna happen again”, she flipped around and reached
for the door when her wrist was grabbed by the Morgenstern wolf. Clary twisted it and sent Kaya flying back into the house. She couldn’t let Kaya get away before Alec got here. Kaya hissed when she got up. Her neck cracked as she turned it around, partially transforming into her wolf. She pounced onto her daughter and dug her claws deep in her abdomen.

Clary screeched and pushed her mother off from her. Her mother was an experienced fighter and Clary was barely learning the intricacies of martial arts. She could only buy Alec some time. There was no way she could win against her.

“Join us, Clarissa”, she grunted, pinning the redhead to the nearest wall and choking her within her fingers. “You’re an asset – a powerful wolf. Your inheritance makes you special... you don’t have to waste it on your brother...”, she shook her head. Clary’s fingers were curled around Kaya’s wrist as she tried to remove the chokehold on her.

“My brother...is the man who accepted me as his sister... without ever making me recall that we weren’t related by blood. I will not abandon him like you have... and why?”, she asked, skipping words to catch her breath. “Why are you doing this to him? He has never done anything to deserve the hatred he is receiving from the two people who were supposed to love him the most!”

“Because he was supposed to continue our pack... and then that filthy excuse of a wolf turned out to be an Omega... and now he will help Alec continue his pack even if it is the last thing we end up insinuating”, Clary looked at his mother as hatred spews out of the women’s eyes. Hatred for her own son. “Because guess what... he is failing at that as well... and for what? To pursue a fricking job in NYC?”, she pushed Clary back into the wall. “We’re merely reminding him what he is supposed to do... and as his parents... isn’t that our primal duty towards our offspring?”

Tears spilled out of Clary’s eyes as started fading in the chokehold. If Alec didn’t arrive sooner, she’d be as good as dead.

Alec ran out of the car as soon as he pulled into the Bane compound. The house looked eerie and deserted. He kicked the door open when no one answered the doorbell and found Clary strapped to kitchen island. He rushed to her and grabbed the knot of the rope to untie it when a scorching sensation made him pull away. Clary’s mouth was taped but she was wanting to say something. He pulled the tape out of her mouth and she winced in pain. “It’s laced with Wolfsbane... be careful...!

“Alec... you need to go. Asmodeus has Magnus. Kaya is involved... and they are going to do something very bad to him... something to remind him of who he is...”, she repeated Kaya’s words. “Don’t worry about me... you need to get to Magnus. I am fine”, she wheezed as the poison made the rope seep into her charring skin.

“Magnus will never forgive me if something happens to his sister... neither will my sister. Plus, I need you. You’re an Alpha. You can match my speed... we both need to go and save someone we love very deeply...”, he panicked. There was no time to find a scissor to cut Clary out of the ropes. He had to touch them and unknot it... regardless of the fact that it would have burnt him. He shook his fingers and firmly grabbed the knot. It burnt through him. Clenching his teeth in pain, he curled his fingers around the knot and started untying it. It was harder than Alec assumed because of how much his fingers burnt.

Robert arrived half an hour later and Alec had rescued Clary by now. His hands were red and charred by the poisonous liquid. They were about to head out to hunt Asmodeus and Kaya. Underhill entered behind Robert, armed with kindjals tugged in his pants. “Consul”, he
acknowledged and rushed to help Alec with Clary. Alec saw the girl Ingrid Blackman in cuffs, being dragged inside.

“Dad... they have Magnus... we need to hurry”, Alec pleaded, ignoring the presence of the detestable woman. He couldn’t care if she was here or not. Isabelle and Maryse rushed inside the house and Clary ran into Izzy’s arms, breaking down into a sob. The whole thing had been too much for her. From finding out the truth about her parents to Kaya pinning her to the kitchen island and tying her with poisoned ropes.

“I understand, Alec. We will rescue Magnus. But, we cannot do this if we don’t think wisely. Ms Blackman. Step forward.”, Robert turned to the girl after ordering the Guards to search the bungalow for Kaya and Asmodeus’ things that would help the wolves better track them. Ingrid gave him a sly and devious smile.

“Yes, Consul?”, she replied.

“Care to elaborate why neither Magnus or Alec picked up Asmodeus’ scent when he abducted them on Saturday?”, he glared at her.

“He had masked himself. Invisible to naked eyes and nose”, she shrugged. “Ipsenol Musk... spray some on yourself and then no one can ever guess if you’re an Alpha or an Omega... it comes in handy when you want to become invisible. I didn’t do this because I wanted revenge on you Lightwoods. Asmodeus paid me... and I gave him a handful of bottles of the chemical. Now, you can have it. I don’t care. I just need immunity from all this because I have a life to make, and a career to look forward to. I don’t want any part of this.”, she added. Alec rubbed his eyebrow scar in frustration. They were losing Magnus every second they delayed the hunt. The girl threw a bottle of musk at Robert and the man relayed it to his son.

“Go... you need the head start. Take the people you trust... and we’ll be on our way as well. Don’t worry Alec. We’ll find Magnus. I have Guards already in position, searching for Asmodeus or Manus.”, the Consul assured. Alec sprayed the musk on himself and then gave it to Clary and Underhill.

Alec looked over his father’s shoulder and saw Stephen strapping up. It was interesting to see the Elder from the Herondale pack so eager to help the Lightwoods. Robert had briefed him about the truth... and that Stephen was a good guy. At this point, Alec didn’t have the time to make that assessment. He needed all the help he could hand. The more people he had behind his pack, the stronger was his chances of saving Magnus.

“Clary, Underhill and I are chasing down Kaya’s scent. You need to divide search parties. The forest cover is huge, and it is still raining outside. The usual routes will be flooded and slippery. We have to scour every inch of the land around Idris. Magnus could be anywhere”, he ordered like the true Alpha he was. Clary rushed downstairs and handed over Magnus’ clothes to Alec and Underhill. The Lightwood Alpha didn’t need it. He knew exactly what his mate smelled like... but holding his favorite hoodie in his hand gave him purpose.

Alec sniffed it softly and then pressed it to his chest. “I am coming, Magnus”, he whiffed and took off with Clary and Underhill. They didn’t transform into their wolf counterparts yet. The war had just begun. And they needed to conserve their strength.

Chapter End Notes
i'll see you on thursday, i guess?
as usual, leave your comments and let me know what you thought. I know there was no Magnus in the update but Alec will get to him soon. It will be fine, eventually.
The Massacre - Part B

Chapter Summary

Alec and his family literally risk everything to rescue Magnus.

Chapter Notes

Alright, here we go. The Massacre. There’s triggering violence and blood in the chapter, please... please be careful before you go to read it. Angst is on full-swing and malec go through some gruesome stuff.

Please, don't read it if you find it triggering.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Magnus was barely fifty meters away from where Alec hid in the bushes. It had taken him less than three hours to track down his fiancé and Asmodeus. Now, he could see him and yet, there was no way he could have rescued his fiancé without risking his life in the process. There were far too many people for him to go against alone. They outnumbered him by dozens. And even though Alec was a strong wolf, he was no match compared to that pack which had at least 12 very seasoned Alphas and innumerable Betas and even a few Omegas including Magnus’ mother Kaya who was leading the people who were sitting by the fire. And they all had leverage. Any of them could have used his love for Magnus to subdue him and make him watch as they marred his mate – violated him in front of his eyes while he watched helplessly, unable to do anything but watch. Magnus was hanging limply by the log in the center of a formation. A fire was lit on the rope, demarcating a boundary around Magnus. His eyes were shut but his throat bobbed which made Alec aware that Magnus was still alive and conscious.

There was a strange scent in the air – very similar to the one that had surrounded him after he and Magnus had been abducted into the basement on the night of his parents’ anniversary – and it was possible that Asmodeus had injected his son with the heat-stimulating drug again. Alec lifted his chin up to take a long whiff of the scents around him. His mind reeled when he realized the brutality of Asmodeus’ ways. How could he have done this to his own flesh and blood? Did they have no love for him? Alec’s anger fumed in his blood. The rising Alpha temperatures forming sweat beads on his forehead and making his veins pop out of his skin. His eyes were reddening with fury. There was a fire on one side and a few members were sitting around it, throwing a strange white stone that ignited the fire more. Camphor. Alec raised his chin in the air and took another whiff. He knew he wanted to rescue Magnus, but he had to wise about every move. One mistake and either him or Magnus would be dead in no time.

Among the people who were sitting on the ground, Alec recognized a few of them. There were the Penhallow pack leaders – Jia leading them. His father had told how the Penhallows loathed his guts to bits and it wasn’t a surprise that they were supporting Asmodeus in whatever heinous thing he was planning to do to his own son. He could also see a couple of Whitelaw pack members around – mainly the few Beta wolves of the pack. They were young wolves... almost as old as Magnus and
Alec. It broke Alec that people of his generation had the same obsolete ideals as their ancestors. The future of the community was in these incapable hands. Alec clenched his fist and hit it against the trunk of the tree. The Musk that Ingrid had given them containing *Ipsemol* extract was working. No one could sense Alec’s strong Alpha scent around them. He had almost become invisible. Alec absent-mindedly looked at his phone. It had been 7 minutes since he had summoned Clary and Underhill. They should be here by now. Without the two of them, and Robert’s trusted Guards, he had no idea how long he could stand the Army of Lunatics that had Magnus.

Alec had used the time to analyze the war front. There were at least 59 people excluding Magnus. Most of them were Betas so Alec could easily take them out... one by one. That is if someone handled the Alphas behind him and gave him a proper cover. Magnus was being held hostage at the center of the congregation and there was a nasty fire around him. He was sweating and unconscious so grabbing Magnus would be hard because the Omega didn’t look like he could put up a fight or run on his own. He had to be carried out of the scene. Alec could do... but he would need a good cover. The hardest thing, however, was trying to take Asmodeus down. The old man was an experienced Alpha of Idris – one of the senior most at that. Therefore, he was easily one of the strongest Alphas alive today. And he knew Alec and all his weaknesses. And tonight, his biggest weakness was right in front of him, chained to a wooden log.

The leaves rustled behind him and Alec turned around, ready to administer a sinister blow to anyone who had dared to sneak up behind his back. He stopped when he saw Underhill and Clary with their hands up in the air, ready to surrender. Clary’s eyes were red with anger when she saw her brother chained to the log over Alec’s shoulder. Underhill had his kindjals in his hand. Clary muttered something under her breath and launched ahead, threatening to blow their hiding spot to the enemies. Alec grabbed her waist and pulled her back. “Clary... stop. You will kill Magnus with one stupid and dumb move, alright?”, he hissed. Tears spilled out of her angry eyes as she flickered the gaze back to Alec.

“They have Magnus. They have my brother, Alec. I will not spare them. Look at him...”, she choked and growled at the same time. Alec shook her shoulder and held her head close to his chest. This was so unusual. Both of them were Alphas of their packs and yet, their proximity to each other wasn’t driving them insane. Clary relaxed a little and took a deep breath. “We need to rescue my brother”, she gulped the lump in her throat. “And I have to murder the people who hurt him”, she said, determinately. Alec sucked his cheeks inside and nodded.

“We’ll do that. We’ll rescue Magnus and punish whoever comes in our way. Tonight, we serve justice”, Alec announced under his breath. “Underhill, go and check the perimeter. We need the exact numbers of people we are up against. Clary, alert Dad and send him our location. This is going to get ugly now.” They crouched back into the bushes to analyze and see which entry point would have given them the best advantage. Taking Asmodeus down first was the easiest choice but then they risked exposing a defenseless Magnus to 58 other wolves who could have done anything to him... just out of spite. Clary took out the musk from her pocket and reapplied it to herself and Alec, just in case. Underhill had already gone away to check the perimeter on Alec’s order. They were alerted when some of the members in the camp stood up and started circling the fires. They threw more camphor into it and the flames flared higher and higher. Asmodeus stood up from his place and took another syringe. He took out a chalice and heated it on the flames of the fire.

Inserting the syringe into the cup, he filled the barrel with a silvery and white liquid that looked dense from afar. Clary narrowed her brows as he tapped the barrel of the syringe and then headed towards Magnus. The patch around Magnus’ groin had increased now. His heat was on peak. “Alec... you’re Magnus’ mate... you’re the one who is supposed to complete the ritual. And you’re here next to me. What is Asmodeus doing? Without you... this ritual won’t work. Unless there’s another Alpha in the picture... but then he’ll have to mark Magnus again...and for that, you’d need a full moon. What the
“Hell is happening?”, she gritted under her teeth. She grabbed Alec’s wrist and squeezed it. They had to do something now or this was a lost battle. Clary jumped up to make a move when they heard the rustling of leaves again.

“Everything clear, Underhill?”, Alec asked, not moving his eyes from Magnus. “Underhill?”, Alec asked again. No one responded to his question. Alec narrowed his brows and looked over his shoulder after he noticed the eerie silence. It wasn’t Underhill. He turned his head over and saw a knife aimed at him and Clary. Alec gently tapped Clary’s wrist warning her and then stood up with their palms held up in surrender. The man tilted his head, asking them to walk towards the congregation. Alec eyed Clary and they had to give to give up. They had barely moved a step ahead out in the open when a sharp slicing noise sounded behind them. They turned around rapidly and saw blood oozing out of the man’s mouth and one of Underhill’s kindjal exposing out through his chest. That was Underhill. Alec’s relief was only short-lived because the noise alerted everyone in the Camp and they turned around to a group of 60 or so people looking at them with vengeance and anger – ready to attack under direct order of Alec’s father-in-law.

Underhill pulled the kindjal out of the dying man and placed himself next to Clary and Alec. Until Robert came with backup Guards, they had to make sure they didn’t let themselves or Magnus die. It was going to be hard... but they had to do this. The Betas launched themselves first at the three Alphas after Asmodeus flicked his hand. Clary was adept in martial arts and she transitioned partially, killing and ripping wolves apart with her canines. She was a Morgenstern wolf – one of the purest blood wolf communities in the history of time. A natural killer breed. There was a reason why Asmodeus had taken her in. It wasn’t just out of love for the little orphaned girl. Any pack would have benefitted from having one of the Morgenstern wolves as a part of them – supporting them and having their confidence. The Morgenstern Pack had been known for their inane fighting skills and exceptional healing abilities. Clary’s eyes glowed in anger as she complemented Alec, her claws ripping out people’s chests – giving Alec the cover he needed to get to Magnus and rescue him in time. It was a race.

Alec was fisting and punching everyone in his way, but his aim was to get to Magnus and rescue him before his father went ahead with whatever brutal he had planned for Alec’s fiancé. Asmodeus had remained unfazed by the presence of the three Alphas and he stood next to his unconscious son on the log and slapped him across his chin to wake him up from his unconscious state. Magnus coughed blood from his mouth and flickered his eyes open with a lot of effort. His jaws had barely healed from the last attack when he heard a few cracking bones again. Fuck. He swallowed the choking pain that spread across his jaws and his head that was spinning. His weak eyes wandered around until he saw Asmodeus glaring at him with hatred and despise. His own father. The man who had birthed him. The man who claimed to love him the better part of over two decades. He had another silver syringe in his hand and the Omega’s lips trembled weakly. “Dad”, he mumbled, and tears formed in the eyes. Asmodeus scrunched his nose and grabbed Magnus’ neck, squeezing it to choke his breathing but not enough to kill him.

“Don’t you dare call me that again...”, he growled his stinking breath against Magnus’ nose. “I stopped being your father the day that disgusting slick oozed out of your groin. The day you insulted me by presenting yourself as an Omega. You know how long it took me to find you a mate so that I could get rid of you”, Asmodeus spat on Magnus’ face that was smudged with dust, blood, sweat, and tears. “And then when I found Alec, you refused to mate with him... for a fucking job in New York?”, he grunted. “I don’t care about that job, you disgusting piece of shit”, he hissed, throwing insults at Magnus. “I wanted you to fulfill your purpose and get out of my hair. Birth your children and start your pack so that my name is not associated with your filthy existence anymore. Because us Banes are not weak”, he growled.

Magnus wheezed, unable to catch his breath and nodded. Asmodeus’ slurs were etching in Magnus’
exhausted mind. He was beginning to believe how worthless his life had been. That all he had ever done was to bring disgrace to the people who had given him a life. He could see a faint image of a tall man fighting his way through the crowd. He wanted the man to be Alec, but the Alpha’s scent was nowhere around him. He couldn’t smell Alec’s protective presence around him. Whoever this rescuer was, he wasn’t Alec. Magnus shut his eyes as tears streamed down his face. His heart was thrumming his chest. The pulse in his ear – loud and erratic. Asmodeus grabbed a sharp and shining knife in his hand and tore Magnus’ pants apart. The Omega gasped after he felt cold and naked in the lower part of his body. But nothing compared to the sense of embarrassment that broke Magnus’ remaining self-confidence apart. Asmodeus took a thick tape and Magnus’ mouth between his strong hands and sealed his lips tightly. The tape burnt his skin because it was laced with wolfsbane and rendered him unable to defend himself.

He felt his father’s ghastly hands hovering around his thigh and that was the moment he realized that he didn’t want to survive this. He wanted to perish and succumb to the ritual that was going to be performed on him. He wanted to get destroyed in this because there was no way he could get over the emotional and mental trauma associated with this. Everything in his life had been a lie. His parents, who he thought loved him had been the ones to hurt him twice this last week. And for what? Because he was an Omega. Because his parents expected him to become an Alpha and continue the Bane pack for them? It’s not like he wanted this for himself... or he asked for it. This hadn’t been not under his control. There was no way he could have known that his destiny was to be presented as an Omega on his 18th birthday? Earlier in the evening, his father had called him an abomination. A disgrace to the family. He couldn’t live with that. It was better to die knowing that people will be happy to get rid of him.

He felt a tingling sensation in his genital area as Asmodeus inserted the syringe inside and emptied the contents into his hole. Magnus wheezed and widened his eyes. The burning sensation and the presence of whatever that liquid had excited his senses in a more painful manner. He felt his groin hardening as the liquid diffused around inside his body, filling up the small crevices and wetting him. Asmodeus squeezed his hole shut to avoid Magnus from expelling the liquid back out and filled the barrel with the liquid again for another dose. And then tears sprayed out of Magnus’ eyes when he felt the liquid injection again. This time, the liquid reached higher up inside his body and his groin locked around the canal. The twisting inside his genitals told him exactly what was happening to him. The one moment that was supposed to bring him pleasure and happiness had become the most nightmarish experience of his life. The already blurred visions in front of his eyes whitened because of the adrenaline rush through his body.

He was knotting. Without an Alpha. He was knotting because of an Alpha’s semen inside him. An Alpha who could have been Alec... but could have very well been another stranger. This was unbelievable for him to comprehend. Of all the people, it was his father who did this to him. Asmodeus pulled his pants back up and squeezed his groin one last time as the knotting stung Magnus. He squealed at the top of his lungs, despite a taped mouth. The squeals were hoarse and filled with remorse. Tears accompanied the cries for help.

Alec froze where he was fighting Asmodeus’ army when he heard those wails. He felt like the ground had shifted from beneath his feet. The pain in Magnus’ voice, and the redness of his eyes. The man was leaning out of the log, hanging down and wailing... tearing his throat out with the sounds. His cries pierced the Alpha’s heart and he clenched his fist and pressed it on the next Alpha who was heading towards him. Magnus was calling for help and he couldn’t do a thing from here. The man was thrown away in the air and his heart was dripping of blood, in Alec’s hand. Alec had brutally ripped out his heart out of his chest. Clary gasped and stopped when she saw Alec’s anger. It was different this time. It was merciless. She was distracted for a second and that was enough for a female Omega to register a blow to her. Clary growled and turned around to see her mother... her
stepmother Kaya standing with her hands bloody.

Tears spilled out of the young girl’s eyes as she punched a fist right through her mother’s abdomen. “How dare you... he is your son! You gave birth to him. You brought him up. And now, your husband is tearing him apart... and you’re protecting that bastard?”, she cried. Kaya recovered from the attack and waved her hand to punch Clary back, but the girl ducked right on time and registered a strong elbow on her mother’s chest. The ribs cracked a little, but Kaya was an agile Omega. She grabbed Clary’s hand in the process and twisted it around, toppling her to ground and pressing her palm to choke her.

“He is nothing to me. Ever since he became a baby-making machine, he is non-existent for me.”, she growled. Clary lifted her leg and kicked Kaya before she grabbed her neck between her elbow and trapped her hand behind her back. Kaya moaned in pain as Clary’s arm choked her, blocking her airways. The Alpha closed her eyes shut and recalled all the times Magnus had been there for her as a brother and then the number of times Kaya made him feel like she wasn’t an orphan. The woman in her chokehold was the woman she had called her mother for over 15 years. And then she recalled how the same woman had roped her to her own house and laced that rope with wolfsbane that slowly charred her skin, melting it slowly. Hadn’t Alec rescued her, she would have slowly perished. Clary grunted in anger and twisted her arm and Kaya’s neck snapped and a crack sound echoed in the surroundings. She fell lifelessly on the ground and Clary felt like she was going to pass out. She had just murdered her mother with her own hands.

Her body froze where it stood, unable to process this. Clary was just a 22-year old girl. She had barely seen the world... and yet she had killed someone. Someone she knew more than she had known her birth mother. Someone she had loved like family... more than family. Two wolves saw her standing defenseless in the middle of everything, over Kaya’s body and launched towards her. A perfect window to kill the last of the Morgenstern wolves and end this threat to their life. Letting Clary live was lethal for them. This was the perfect time to assassinate the last of the Morgenstern pack. Clary did not see the attack coming until she was pushed out of the way by a large wolf who stood between her and her attackers who were now dead on the ground, their arms ripped out of their bodies. Clary gasped and saw that wolf. She wasn’t Izzy... but it was a female wolf. Clary looked around and saw Izzy in her wolf form, fighting next to her father.

This was Alec and Isabelle’s mother. Maryse Lightwood – the Lightwood matriarch. The wolf growled and pounced on the Whitelaw Betas, protecting Clary from them. Robert Lightwood had arrived with his Guards. There was Stephen Herondale as well, fighting along the Consul’s side. Now, this looked like a fair fight.

Asmodeus was momentarily thrown out of his game when he saw his wife being murdered by his adopted daughter. He snapped his head towards her lifeless body and growled in agony. The window was enough for Underhill and Izzy to push him away so that Alec got a chance to take Magnus and rescue him from this gruesome place. Magnus was still wailing, the pain in his lower back and groin rising up every second. The process of knotting was still going on inside him and because it wasn’t natural with an Alpha around, it was a thousand time more painful. Alec sprinted across the ground to get to his fiancé. He killed another wolf in the process before he finally reached the log and cut the rope that was holding Magnus to it. Magnus fell to the ground on his knees and grunted in pain. *Fuck.* Alec should have grabbed Magnus first. Magnus’ face hit the mud and he couldn’t find the strength to turn around.

Alec fumed and untied Magnus’ hands. He squeezed his hand beneath Magnus’ waist and pulled him up to his chest, kneeling on the mud next to the burning fire. The tape around Magnus’ lips was tight and it was burning his hand whenever he touched it. *Wolfsbane.* He cursed his father-in-law. Magnus opened his eyes, hoping that he had been rescued by Alec and no other Alpha. And he was
right. A sense of relief washed over him. Alec’s eyes were scrunched as he tried to pull the tape out of Magnus’ mouth. His fingertips burnt and got charred by the time the tape came out and Magnus coughed out blood that was accumulated in his mouth.

“Magnus”, Alec breathed out, pressing his fiancé to his chest. “Hey... it’s me. I’ve got you... don’t worry, we’re getting the hell out of here... hold on Magnus...”, he whispered. Magnus heard Alec’s voice and he pressed himself on his chest. He shut his eyes and sobs left his mouth again. Maybe there was still hope for him. With Alec by his side, maybe he could get through everything. Maybe their love could conquer all. It was difficult to feel the relief for a very long time though because everything around him smelled disgusting. The scent of semen leaking out of him, his own slick... the smoke of camphor and fire and the metallic smell of blood. Alec’s own knuckles were dripping in dark red blood and so was half of Magnus’ face if he was right in analyzing the number of times he had been hit by his father.

“Alexan-”, Magnus wheezed out his fiancé’s name but couldn’t really complete it before floating back into unconsciousness. Alec looked around, trying to find the best exit point. Robert had brought backup and they could have handled Asmodeus now. He needed to get Magnus to safety. That was priority for him. Nothing else. He could kill Asmodeus some other day. Alec fisted his knuckles and took a deep breath. He was injured, and Magnus was weak... but the only way out of here was if Alec carried Magnus and ran as fast as he could. He slipped his hand before Magnus’ knee and was about to pick him up when something stung his neck and disoriented him. Magnus fell out of his arms and dropped on the mud with a loud thud.

“Not so soon, Alec. We are not done with the two of you yet...”, a voice rang in his ears. Fuck this. Fuck all of this.

Alec growled in agony. Now there was no way he could take Magnus to safety without losing his control. He spared a glance at Magnus as the fire inside him grew. The best way to keep Magnus away from danger right now was to be away from him. He was the danger to the love of his life. He clenched his jaws and stepped away from his bleeding partner. He raised his chin up and felt his claws coming further out of his hands and his chest expanding and getting darker. The canines... his fangs were growing in size.

“Clary”, he grunted from across the field. The girl stopped fighting and looked for Alec. The man stood tall in front of a collapsed Magnus and his eyes were blazing with anger. She jumped her way across and reached Magnus, cradling him in her dirty arms. “You need to take him and run away from here. Somewhere he is safe... and alive... you need to run...”, he announced. Clary gulped, wiping blood of Magnus’ face and checking him for any further injuries. He was only barely conscious, but he knew that Clary and Alec were by his side... he felt safe. His heartbeat was surprisingly under control. She sniffed and pulled him up on his feet, holding his waist.

“Where?”, she asked, wiping off her tears.

“Anywhere far away from me. I need to end this, Clary. For you and for Magnus. But you need to be alive for all this to end.”, he said, digging his nails into his palm to keep the effects of that injection in check. “Just run... run far away from Idris and don’t look back. Keep running until you’re sure Magnus and you are safe from all this. Don’t tell anyone where you are taking him... not even me. If Asmodeus gets out of this alive, he could use my link with you to get to Magnus. Take him somewhere no one knows you... where you can take care of him... and support him. He is going to need his sister to bring his confidence back up. He would need you for the emotional and physical trauma his father has put him through. And when this is all over... when Asmodeus is dead, I am going to come and find you. I promise. I will find you. But until then, you run... run without stopping...”, he whispered, his lips trembling at the thought of sending Magnus away. Another wolf launched itself on Clary and Magnus from behind and was taken down by Izzy’s black wolf form. She growled holding remnants of the wolf’s flesh within her teeth. Clary’s heart ached. Running
Alec grabbed Magnus in his arms and ran towards the closest exit of the forest while Izzy took cover, supported by Underhill. Once they were hidden among the bushes, he dropped Magnus back on his feet. Clary took out the musk bottle and Alec sprayed it all over Magnus until his Omega scent had weakened considerably and could be masked by the smell of the forest floor and the leaves. Clary took a deep breath and partially turned to give herself broader feet and strength for what was about to come. Magnus stood limply against her, his eyes open. Alec cupped his face and took a deep breath. “I love you. So much. I will find you, okay? I will find you. Don’t forget that but take care of yourself... and your sister. Everything will be fine. I will find you one day. And then, I will never let you go.”, he kissed him on his lips one last time and pulled away just before it got too much for him to handle. Clary shut her eyes and glanced at Isabelle who was still fighting and defending them... giving them the head start to run away.

She had to get herself and Magnus to safety. Nothing else mattered in that moment. Asmodeus and his clan were after both of their lives. She wanted to say goodbye to her best friend and the woman she was in love with but there was no time. Taking a good look at Izzy, she turned and nodded to Alec. "There’s a pack in New York. China Town, Brooklyn. Take Magnus there... there’s an Alpha, Luke Garroway... he will help you with a doctor for Magnus...and whatever else you need. After you’re done with him... just disappear. Asmodeus knows all the places Magnus and I have been to... no place is safe. Not even his friends’ house. Take him to someplace even you don’t think you’ll ever go. Tell Luke that he needs to kill anyone who comes asking for Magnus after you go.”, he instructed. Clary hummed an okay.

He pulled out his engagement ring. It was made of platinum and studded with diamonds. It was the symbol of their beautiful relationship and once Magnus was gone, one of the things that Alec would need to survive his absence. “Take this. Sell it off. I don’t think you’ll have time to collect cash before you leave... this will give you money, Clary”, he handed it over to the girl’s palm and closed her fingers around it. He also gave her his car keys while Clary just kept looking at him dumbfounded. He took another good look at Magnus before the Alpha launched into a run and disappeared into the darkness of the forests.

Alec returned to the battlefield and Izzy snapped her head to expect Clary behind him. But she was gone and so was Magnus. She looked into Alec’s eyes and they were distraught with pain. The rest of it wasn’t difficult to put together for the girl. Clary and Magnus had disappeared for good. She looked at Alec who reached the log where Magnus had been tied to and picked out a strange bottle from a box. He filled a syringe with the liquid and stabbed it to his chest. And then did it again until his chest expanded enough to rip his shirt apart. It was the same serum that had been given to him to make him lose control over himself. He transitioned and headed straight to Asmodeus who was fighting with Maryse, Robert, and Stephen.

The young Alpha launched himself at Asmodeus with a growl and grabbed his neck between his canine. “What the hell did you do to Magnus?”, he grunted. Asmodeus was smart. He pulled Alec’s forelimb and twisted it painful and the wolf whined, releasing his hold on his neck. “I just gave his life a purpose, Alec”, Asmodeus whispered before he punched his fist right through Alec’s chest and the painful grown echoed in the entire field and his ribs shattered inside his chest. “Now wait for him to give you beautiful kids. Your kids.”, he sneered at the Alpha. “Remember the night of the party... of course you don’t”, he chuckled. “When you were passed out, I had Pangborn extract some of your semen... for science, obviously”, he admitted. “Just a backup. And look it helped me tonight”, he clicked his tongue. Alec was aghast to hear all that. Magnus had been artificially inseminated to get pregnant with his kids, without his consent. By his own father. Even if he found Magnus after this, how could he ever heal Magnus of the emotional trauma his father had
put him through. It was almost impossible now. With this realization and bubbling anger, he outed his claws and waved his limbs towards Asmodeus to tear his flesh apart, but he was agile. He ducked every attack until Alec was too exhausted.

“You’re naïve, Alec. I don’t even want to fight you. You don’t deserve it”, he elbowed Alec and he collapsed on the floor. Asmodeus was so wrong. Alec might have been a young wolf...and naïve... but he was ruthless right now... because he had just sent his fiancé away... to some place where he hoped Magnus would be alive... but he couldn’t be sure. Other than the reassurance that Clary was with him, there was no way Alec could guess what was going to happen. That anger was enough incentive for him to kill anyone who dared to come between him and his aim of rescuing Magnus. He saw Asmodeus launch an attack towards Stephen and Robert and he pulled himself off the ground. His wolf form now completely out crouched and pounced towards Asmodeus from the back. Robert and Stephen were standing side by side, defending Maryse and Isabelle as they fought the remaining Penhallows and killed them one by one. Their eyes were fixed on Asmodeus who was running towards them, but they could also see Alec following him. Underhill had sustained some injuries and Maryse had asked him to calm down and attack only when provoked.

Asmodeus bared his teeth and spewed saliva at Robert, nearing him when Alec landed atop him and his sharp canines dug right in Asmodeus’ carotid. His forelimbs tucked beneath Asmodeus’ forelimbs leaving him trapped with his body. The older wolf whined in pain, the sound scaring everyone who heard it. Maryse and Isabelle froze for a second when they saw Alec grabbing Asmodeus and biting him so hard. Asmodeus used his claws to rip Alec’s skin apart and managed to tear his flesh where he could reach the young Alpha. Alec’s lower jaw dug into Asmodeus’ neck the next moment and he now had full control of the two wolves. The Bane Alpha turned around to squeeze Alec and choke him to death, but Alec’s teeth were so deeply embedded in Asmodeus’ neck that it was hard to shake him off even if he tried to strangle him. Asmodeus continued to rip Alec’s skin with his claws but his attacks became less and less impactful as Alec’s poison spread in his blood. No matter what happened, Asmodeus was not going to make it out alive. He just couldn’t. Not with Alec’s poison spreading through him so rapidly. The Bane Alpha’s squeezing hold did manage to shatter the rest of Alec’s ribs and he found himself fainting into unconsciousness, but he kept his teeth digging inside the carotid, oozing his poison into his arteries. Only a few more seconds and his venom reached Asmodeus’ heart and stopped it from beating. Asmodeus grunted and used the last amount of his strength to crush Alec before he collapsed on the ground and died.

Alec’s wolf form slipped off from Asmodeus’ dead body and returned to his human form. He was unconscious and bleeding out from his mouth because of his ruptured internal organs. There were claw marks over his chest, his back and even his abdomen and they were all bleeding. There were dark purple bruises on his chest from internal bleeding around his crushed ribs. Robert instructed the Guards to stop and arrest the other members of Asmodeus’ pack – take them down to the City of Bones and incarcerate them to the end of their lives. He crouched near his son and pulled him in his arms. The young Alpha was burning with fever and his eyes were still a dangerous color of blaring red and maroon. Alec threw his neck back and cried in pain as his bones and muscles moved from their position. His teeth were clenched onto each other as he tried to tolerate the sting of bleeding inside him... and his crushed bones. “Alec. You need to fight this, my boy. Magnus and Clary are counting on you... come on. Keep breathing.”

Robert scooped his boy closer to his chest and looked around him. The entire field had been leveled with blood and bones of the people he had called his family for the past 2 decades. He had won the war for his sons but at the cost of losing so many people that he had once cared about. There were tears in his eyes because of the loss of innocent lives. If he didn’t act sooner, his son would become one of the people he’d lost. Asmodeus and Kaya were already dead on his feet. He pressed Alec’s gasping body closer to his chest giving him comfort and encouraging him to stay awake and keep breathing until he was at the hospital. Maryse and Izzy came closer, still in their wolf forms. Robert
could see the grief and heartbreak on their faces and hear Maryse’s thoughts through their Alpha bond. Robert strapped Alec’s chest with a leather belt to avoid further damage to his bones and then picked him up to rush him to the infirmary.

The run back to the Lightwood property was the toughest one Clary had ever had. She had raced Isabelle from her house to theirs so many times, but this was different. These times were different. Why had things gotten so fucked up for their lives? Neither of the four of them deserved any of the pain they had been put through in the past 48 hours. From finding out about her own parents being the ones behind Magnus’ abduction to her mother strapping her onto a chair and then a battle where she snapped her mother’s neck between her arms and watched as the Omega wolf took her last breath. Clary nudged her brother every now and then so that he was still conscious and cut her way through the trees and bushes until the Lightwood backyard was visible through the spaces between the tree trunks. Magnus opened his tired eyes and they landed on the porch. Clary whispered something into his ears as she settled him on the couch kicked the glass walls to break and enter the house. Magnus collapsed on the armrest of the couch and the world started spinning around him. He knew he was bleeding... *his jaw probably*. His jaw.

Clary came out of the house a few seconds later holding a duffel bag full of Magnus’ clothes. The ones he was supposed to take home to New York with him. There were no wallets in the house and they were running low on cash. Far off in the forests, she could still hear wolves howling and flesh being torn apart. The war was still on and her loved ones were still fighting, risking their lives. Alec and the other Lightwoods had put their lives on the line for them. She wiped her nose and picked Magnus back up in her arms. Alec had given her keys to Robert’s car. She threw the bag on the backseat and strapped Magnus onto the passenger seat. As the engines roared, she gave a quick glance to the Lightwood property and drove out.

This could very well be the last time she was seeing Idris. Magnus was unconscious on the seat next to her, but she couldn’t panic. She had packed a bottle of water for him and as the car roared on the main road, she uncorked the cap and shook Magnus’ shoulder. Magnus drank a little and then settled in the warmth of the heater. The journey to New York would be the longest Magnus would have to endure. She hadn’t driven out of the city before. Not without someone else in the car who was fit enough to manage if she messed it up. It was always Asmodeus. He had taught her to drive when she was 16 and Clary clenched her jaws as his lessons crossed her mind. His was the last name and face she wanted to remember at this moment and yet, all the while she drove, she could hear her step-father instructing her, giving her tips on how to do this right.

[18 hours later]

Isabelle threw her phone aside and sank down on the couch. Everything in their life was falling apart in front of their eyes. Clary’s number was still out-of-reach and Magnus’ phone was already at the Banes’ residence. He hadn’t taken it with him. It had been 18 hours since the girl disappeared with her brother and no one knew where. *No one, except perhaps Alec*. She didn’t know that Alec had asked her to disappear without a trace. How could she have known? The only person who had information about this matter was Alec who was strapped to a ventilator while the doctors replaced his bones in the correct position. The surgery to save Alec’s life and repair as much damages they could had taken over 12 hours. His spine was put back in place and his ribs were patched up. He was given a strong anti-venom to counteract the presence of Asmodeus’ poison in his blood along with antibiotics for infections. His punctured lung had been repaired but it would take some time before Alec could breathe on his own which is why he was sedated, and endotracheal tubes were
lodged in his chest to aid him. The internal bleeding was controlled and after much effort, Alec’s life was finally out of danger.

She turned her gaze to her brother. He was breathing through tubes attached to his chest. There were sterilized bandages around his wounds that Asmodeus has made on his body with his claws. He hadn’t woken up since the surgery and the medics had told Izzy that the sedatives had been reduced a few hours ago. So, it was only a matter of time before he woke up. His jaw was positioned back in place and plastered to his skull to facilitate healing. There was a tight bandage covering his chest and torso and a plaster around his ankle. Tubes of glucose went inside his radial arteries and a catheter was attached to his penis to help him while he was out of consciousness. She saw his phone kept next to his bed when it lit up with a few texts. Curiosity got the better of her and she swiped it open using Alec’s thumb. There were texts from his work. She had to call Jace up and inform him that Alec was indisposed until further notice.

There was another unknown text.

_We got help from Luke Garroway and Magnus is stable now, Alec. He insisted that I text you regardless of how dangerous this is. Don’t worry, we’ll be out of here if something bad happens. I hope you are okay. I hope Izzy’s okay! I have informed Luke to kill anyone who comes asking of Magnus. He’s alright now, and he knows that you will come to get us soon. This burner phone will be discarded as soon as I send this text._

_Thank you for helping us, Alec. Thank you for risking your own life._

_Take care of yourself, Alec. And take care of Izzy._

_Oh. And Magnus says he loves you too._

Izzy covered her trembling lips with her palm and shut the phone, keeping it back on the side table. She was so glad that Clary and Magnus were safe and alright. She grabbed Alec’s fingers and squeezed it, mentally sending a prayer to the moon gods to wake Alec up soon so that they could go and find Magnus. There was no point in calling the number back. The text was sent over 2 hours ago. Clary must have long discarded the phone. It was a relief, though, that both the brother and sister were fine.

She couldn’t believe everything that had happened in the last few days. Alec had sent Clary and Magnus away to safety and injected him with the entire dose of drug that had gotten him out of control. The drug-induced fury assisted him in murdering and avenging the love of his life. That amount of dose could have killed him, but he didn’t care about that. The lethality she had seen in her brother’s eyes was a first. Alec was always the soft one... the one who no one expected brutality from. She had grown up with the boy and seen him be so fond of everything around him, filled with love and affection for everyone. And yet, 18 hours ago... he had murdered people in cold blood.

He had become the Alpha that he was supposed to be. She was proud of him. As a sister, she was so proud of him. But she hated that the situation and circumstances had made her brother a killer when he was the farthest thing from it.

...  

[5 days later]
24 hours after the attack, Alec had woken up from his surgery. His drugged self had asked for Magnus and then his body had collapsed into a coma before actually waiting for Izzy to respond to him. And that was it. He hadn’t woken up since. Since that day, Alec also had received no texts from Clary or Magnus or whoever Luke was. The two siblings had indefinitely disappeared from the maps. The medics said that Alec’s coma was a temporary state and he would wake up soon. There was nothing to worry about, but the thing was, 5 days down the line, Alec hadn’t responded to anything. He was just a still and breathing body attached to a ventilator. Isabelle hadn’t left her brother’s side since that day.

“Your brother is very strong and brave, Isabelle. Don’t worry. He will be okay, and he will come back to us stronger than ever.”, Maryse tapped Izzy’s shoulder after she found her daughter dozing off into slumber next to Alec’s bed in the infirmary. Izzy gave his mother a tight-lipped smile and then stood up to hug her.

“Then, he needs to wake the hell up”, she scoffed.

“Let him rest for a while. He needs to get his energy back before we go and find his fiancé.”, the mother sighed. Alec’s cuts and minor wounds had been healed but his collarbone and jaws still hurt. So did the rest of his fractures in the body. High doses of morphine to relieve him of his pain were interfering with his natural healing abilities and the injuries were taking longer to heal on their own. “...and the girl who my daughter loves so much”, Maryse cupped Izzy’s face and kissed her forehead.

“Mom”, the girl choked.

“It’s okay little one. We’ll get through this. Your father and his friends are leaving no stone unturned to make sure Magnus and Clary are found”

Isabelle was about to leave when Alec’s phone buzzed with a phone-call. It was an unknown Private Number. “Hello?”, she squeaked, picking up the call.

“Izzy?”, it was Clary on the other side and she sounded confused. This was Alec’s number.

“Clary. Oh my God, are you okay?”, she almost yelled.

“I am. Where is Alec?”, she gasped. “Please... please tell me he is alright?”, the next sentence came out in a whisper. It was as if she was trying to be discreet about Alec’s well-being from someone. A hoarse voice asking for Alec’s name sounded from the other side of the phone. It was Magnus and he sounded weak. “It’s still ringing Magnus... I’ll tell you as soon as Alec picks up? Don’t worry, you go back to sleep, okay brother?”, she lied to her brother and then there was another sound of a door opening and closing. “Izzy, where is Alec?”

“He...”, the Beta wolf took a deep breath and sighed. Her palms flattened on glass window that separated her and her comatose brother. “He’s still... recovering. In the hospital, I mean. He is still in the hospital”

“What happened?”

“Enough about Alec. He is okay. We’re here for him. You, Clary... how are you? How is my brother-in-law? Please tell me that you are obeying Alec and taking care of yourselves? You know he’d be pissed if something happened.”, Izzy deflected the statements. Could the news of Asmodeus’ death be appropriate to share with her at this point in time?

“Magnus and I are both okay”, Clary sighed. “He is sleeping now... getting better every day. The
guy whose name Alec gave was a lot of help. He is the reason why Magnus is alive and breathing right now. But you didn’t answer my question. What happened to Alec? I need to know... because I have a brother resting inside the house... a brother who is desperate to hear Alec’s voice and before he goes all frustrated on me, you have to let me talk to Alec. Or let Magnus talk to him”, she sounded helpless and disturbed.

“Alec can’t talk... right now”, she sniffed. “Clary... I don’t know when you and Magnus will be able to talk to my brother because he is in a coma...”, she sobbed.

“Coma? Since when...?”

“After the war was over... he collapsed on the ground. He was so injured Clary... broken ribs... shattered collar bone and what not. The medics fixed him, but the blood loss was so much that he fell into a coma right after he woke up from the sedation. And they say that he would wake up soon... and his vitals are fine, but I don’t know. I don’t know what to do. Plus, I am sure his subconscious is worried about Magnus...”

“What am I supposed to tell my brother?”

“Don’t tell him. Let him get better. Tell him that Alec is recovering and is not in a position to talk yet. Make up a lie but I don’t think telling Magnus would be the right way to handle this situation”, she wiped her nose.

“Ok... okay, I will... I will talk to Magnus and let him know that Alec is okay, but he cannot talk to him for some time.”, her tiny voice brought so much relief to Isabelle. “Oh God... why is this happening to us”, she sighed.

“I am so glad you’re okay, Clary”, she smiled.

“Me too. Had Alec not told me to take Magnus away, I swear I would have helped you all. I am sorry I didn’t say goodbye”

“Don’t be sorry, please. Alec was right to send you away. Magnus needed to stay out of those people’s hands and I am so glad you both are safe and alive because of this. It’s only a matter of time before we meet again”

“You’re that certain?”, Clary chuckled.

“Yeah... Alec and Magnus will find each other again...and so will we”, she shrugged.

“I have to go now... can’t stay here for very long. And I need to discard this phone. Listen, Izzy... I know Alec asked me to be discreet but please let him know that he can call Luke and ask him about my current location. I call him every few days to ask him about updates and if I hear from him, I will call you through a burner phone and let you know where Magnus and I are.”, Clary sniffed.

“Until next time, Morgenstern”

“Until next time, Lightwood”, the call went dead. Izzy held Alec’s phone close to her chest and cried for some time. Their lives had been turned upside down in a matter of days.

...[10 days later]

There had been no improvements in Alec’s condition even though the medics repeated that he was
stable. His fractures had almost completely healed except for his collarbone, but he just refused to come out of coma. A week after the attack, the remaining members of the Bane pack had been incarcerated in the City of Bones. Ingrid had been sentenced to 5 years in prison and all attempts to find Clary and Magnus had failed. To aid in Alec’s recovery, he had been flown to New York in an air ambulance. Luke had agreed to let Alec recover in the infirmary.

The doctors had performed all preliminary tests on Alec and they had all come back fine. There was nothing physically wrong with Alec anymore. Izzy had discreetly asked Luke if Clary or Magnus had tried to contact him. He said that three days ago, the only numbers that Clary had given him had gone dead. At the moment they had no contact with the brother and sister. Jace Herondale had heard of the news and surprisingly, had rushed in with his boyfriend Sebastian to check on his former best friend.

“Isabelle, I know you hate me... but you need to let me see Alec”, he protested as Izzy blocked the door to Alec’s room. The infirmary wasn’t a very huge building, but Alec had been given a different room because Robert pulled in some favors.

“I don’t think your face is the one Alec will want to see when he wakes up”, Izzy sniffed, crossing her hands over her chest.

“Izzy... I know. I am sorry for everything I have done. But whatever it is, is between me and Alec. And for that to keep going, he needs to stay alive”, Jace huffed. Sebastian peeked from the glass walls and saw Alec’s sleeping frame, attached to tubes that helped him breathe. “I have asked Vogue to get another photographer, but Alec will be paid for the work he did. And because this is a medical emergency, Vogue won’t be filing a breach of contract”, the man informed.

“That is very noble of you, Jace... but I don’t trust you with my brother”, she sighed. “I am glad you’re to check on him but please... can you not do that inside the room. Stay here. For as long as you want but please...”, she begged.

“Fine. Fine. But when Alec wakes up, you need to tell him that I was here... and that I need to talk to him. Meanwhile, I know it sounds strange coming from us... but if you need any help finding Magnus... you please ask...”, he shrugged. “If Magnus is who Alec needs to wake up, I’ll try everything in my power to find the man”

Izzy looked back and forth between the two men and nodded. She didn’t understand what was happening but right now... nothing was more important than making sure that Alec was stable and recovering while Magnus was safe wherever he was.

Chapter End Notes

ok, I am sorry. Really sorry. I'll see you tomorrow or on Saturday?
I swear to God things will get better after this. The uphill journey to the angst is over.

Next chapter will look into what happened with Magnus all this while.
Finding Chinatown in Brooklyn wasn’t such a difficult task, but Clary was exhausted by the time their car entered NYC in the wee hours of the morning. Magnus had been in and out of consciousness all through the night now and he was the only one who she could have asked for this Luke Garroway’s address, but he wasn’t in the position to say anything. To add to their miseries, she didn’t have her phone on herself and the GPS wouldn’t pin the location down to a specific person. But that was a necessary precaution. Alec had clearly instructed to disappear without a trace and if Asmodeus and his army had somehow escaped last night, it was risky for Clary and Magnus to make contact back home, especially with Alec. She nudged Magnus once again, waking him up to see if he was still with her. He was feverish now. Clary called his name a few times and he responded with a soft hum. That was enough for the girl. As long as her brother was responsive and alert to his surroundings. “Jade Wolf”, he murmured in his sleep. Clary furrowed her brows.

Jade Wolf? Could be a landmark... or a road name? Something.

She entered the Chinatown area by 8 am in the morning and stopped her car on the side of the road. There was an old ice-cream truck and an elderly man was setting it up for the day as the sun was rising in the Big Apple. She went and asked if there was something called Jade Wolf around the area and the man happily directed her to the Chinese restaurant by the docks.

It was inside the restaurant that she met Maia Roberts, the owner of the diner, and asked for Luke Garroway’s address. Maia recognized Magnus in the car and she directed him straight to Luke’s bungalow which was nearby the docks, in a secluded area. She could still hear sea-gulls when she pulled into the Garroway compound. The man was getting ready for his shift at the Plaza when an unusual knock sounded at the door. He pulled the door open and saw a young girl with fiery red hair standing on the steps. She looked injured and bruised and exhausted. Some of her knuckles were still red with dried out blood. Her hair was disheveled and there were dark circles around the girl’s eyes suggested that she hadn’t slept the whole night before. But most importantly, she was smelling like a true-bred Alpha.

“Are you Luke Garroway?”, she cried, big tears forming in her eyes. Luke stepped out of his house and looked at her. From the way her eyes looked at everything around, she seemed like someone who had never been out on her own and not in New York City for sure. The man felt sorry for her.
She was too young to be looking so miserable and burdened with duties. Whatever had happened must have been unavoidable for her to take such extreme measures. Her eyes reminded him of someone... someone he used to know a very long time ago. But that was it... it was a long time ago. There was no way there could be a connection between his memories. He shook the thoughts away and focused his attention back to the girl who was freezing to death.

“Hey... yes, it’s me, Luke. Are you okay? Do you want to come inside?”, he asked, holding out his hand towards the bungalow. Her eyes widened when she realized that she had found the right man and maybe her brother would get better now. She broke into a sob and wiped her nose.

“My brother... Magnus. You know him, right? He works for you at the Hotel”, she pointed towards her car. Luke’s color paled from his skin as he heard his employee’s name. He looked at where she was pointing and saw Magnus leaning over the window of the passenger seat and breathing heavily. There was dried out blood on his lips. He broke into a run as soon as he could, and Clary followed him. She unlocked the car for him and Luke opened the passenger door and leaped forward as Magnus collapsed in his arms. “Alec said that you’re the only one I could trust...”, she wiped her nose, smearing the dried-out blood all over her face. Luke picked Magnus up in his arms and nodded, shutting the car door behind him.

“Come on in”, he instructed. They rushed inside Luke’s home and the man settled an unconscious Magnus on a soft bed in a guest room. “What happened to him? Alec and he were supposed to come back to town today... who are you and where is Alec?”, he asked, removing Magnus’ muddy boots from his feet. Clary stood on the door, still alert and ready to fight. The overnight journey and attempt to protect her brother had gotten permanently fed in her mind and she couldn’t really trust anyone with his life.

“Alec is... still in Idris. I am Clary and Magnus is my older brother. We had no time to pack or get anything. He needs a medic... and right now. Alec told me about you. Can you help or not? If you can’t... I will not hold it against you... but I need someone who can help my brother right away. Otherwise, I’ll be on my way. I cannot waste time”, she roared at the man. Luke nodded and dialed Dr. Abbott.

“Please calm down, Clary. Of course, I can help him. Alec sent you the right way.”, Luke sighed, holding his hands up in submission.

Clary wiped her tears and hiccupped, nodding. Luke asked her to take a seat on the couch lying in the room. She hesitantly took the chair without relaxing into it. If this was yet another trap, she had to figure out a way to get Magnus out. She wanted to trust Luke... not for Magnus at that moment but for her own beliefs. She had been betrayed by too many people in the last couple of days and she was hanging onto hope and humanity by a thin thread.

“You look like you could use a doctor too”, the older man’s voice was soft and caring. He walked out of the room and came back with a bottle of water and some towels for her. He gave the bottle to her and the towels and pointed at the bathroom. “Do you want to wash off that blood off your face and hands? I am sure you healing has closed all the wounds”

“I am fine. Help him first.”, Clary shook her head.

“Listen... Magnus is my friend. I have known him and Alec for months now. Alec was right to bring you to me. Dr. Abbott is on his way. He knows Magnus...”, Luke’s voice was calming the girl down. He looked at her as if he knew who she was... but he couldn’t have. Clary had never been out of Idris before. She had never met another wolf outside the members of the Council. An old and burly man ran into the room with a leather case. Clary was on her heels the next second, stopping the man from nearing her brother. She squinted her eyes and glared at the man. Luke raised his hand and
placed it between Clary and the man. “This is Dr. Abbott. He is here to check on Magnus”, he informed. The girl looked back and forth between Luke and the doctor and then stepped aside.

“What happened Luke?”, the doctor hurriedly dropped on the bed next to Magnus and pulled his eyelids up to check him. Magnus’ fever had broken down naturally and he was sweating now, having almost soaked his shirt. “Oh my God... how long has it been?”, he gasped, tipping his chin up to look at Clary. The girl wrapped her arms around herself and bit her lower lip, taking a deep and confused breath.

“What do you mean?”, she looked at the doctor and then snapped at Luke.

“How long has it been since insemination?”, the doctor asked her again, this time a little more clearly than before.

“The what?”, she squeaked, staring at Magnus’ horizontal frame from head-to-toe. Luke noted the horror on Clary’s face... and the obliviousness for the existence of a practice like that. He tipped his chin towards the doctor, asking him to take a good look at Magnus and see what he needed before turning to Clary whose palms covered her mouth. Tears were streaming down her face.

“Clary... I think you and I need to talk. You need to tell me exactly what happened last night... and why is Magnus here with you and not Alec”, he raised his hands on his hips and huffed. “Maybe we can have the discussion here so that Dr. Abbott can understand what he is getting himself into?”, he looked at the doctor and exchanged a nod.

Clary walked over to the table and poured water for herself. She drank the entire glass in one go and then turned around to explain everything.

... 

“The last thing Alec said to me was your name and that I would find you here in Brooklyn. I had no time to process any of that information or ask more questions about how and why you, Luke! Magnus was collapsing by my side and those lunatics were closing in on us. I had to run, without looking back and without stopping.”, she rubbed her jeans nervously and looked up at Luke. The man was shocked and speechless at the story. “I don’t even know if they survived... if Alec and Izzy are even alive. I want to call them... but its not safe. For the both of us.”, she looked at Magnus and saw his throat bobbing. He was in pain and his Alpha was far away from him... maybe even dead. She didn’t want to talk about the possibility of Alec being dead, but the fear was lingering at the back of her head. What if both she and her brother had lost the love of their lives?

“That explains this fever. He was not ready for this to be done. His body wasn’t ready for this insemination and that is why it is trying to reject it with every last bit of the energy it has left.”, Dr. Abbott sighed, wiping the sweat off Magnus’ forehead and unbuttoning his sweat-soaked shirt.

“Does that mean he is pregnant?”, Clary sniffed and reached the bed, curling her hands around the board.

“No... no. It’s too early to say that. The knotting is still happening inside his body as we speak... and it will continue like this for a while...”, the doctor corrected. “And even with time, there’s only a slight chance that he conceives the child. Considering the Alpha semen cannot always be compatible with every Omega’s blood. Statistically, only 7.3% of all such inseminations result in successful conceptions.”, he informed.

“You’re saying that he wasn’t inseminated by Alec’s semen?”, Clary gasped.
“We can’t be sure... but what are the chances, after the story you just told us, that they had Alec’s semen at their disposal? Although anything is possible, the chances of the fluid being Alec’s is very low...”, he countered.

“If... if it was Alec’s... how do the odds change?”

“Oh... it increases considerably. Marked pairs of wolves have a 41.5% chance of taking a successful insemination...”, he raised his arm. Clary walked around to climb onto the bed next to Magnus and entangled her fingers in his cold ones.

“When do we know of all this?”, she flicked locks of hair away from Magnus’ forehead. The man gasped at the human touch and tilted his head away a little.

“2 weeks. We’ll know that in two weeks if the insemination was successful or not”

“Is he gonna be this miserable for 14 more days?”

“No... no, this is temporary. It’s more to do with the mental trauma that he was put in because of his abduction than the insemination itself. I am fixing him a calming dose of adrenaline inhibitor. It will help him release the pressure of stress and he’ll wake up soon”, he said, pulling out an injection from the box. Clary eyed him suspiciously.

“Clary... you can trust him”, Luke assured the little Alpha.

She watched as the doctor emptied the barrel in Magnus’ wrist. He got up and excused himself, telling Luke that he would come back to check on Magnus in the evening. Luke walked him out and came back to the room to find Clary curled up next to Magnus and stroking his forehead gently. She had tears in her eyes. His hand was lifted to Clary’s mouth as she kissed the back of it.

“Clary, I have asked Maia to get me some clothes for you... and Magnus. Why don’t you take a shower and get yourself cleaned up so that you can help your brother into cleaner clothes? He will wake up any time and if I know Magnus, he’ll be a lot worse if he is dirty and drenched in sweat”, Luke gave him a soft smile. Clary nodded and picked up the clothes Maia had brought her.

[2 days later]

Magnus woke up almost 24 hours after the incident. Alec. He was disoriented and confused but mostly he was heartbroken and distraught by what he thought was a very horrible dream. He called Alec’s name in his sleep a few times and when he woke up, he wanted to see him... but he had to settle for his little sister. Alec. There was a singular name on his tongue. And that was Alec’s. No matter how hard Luke and Clary tried to distract him, all he could think about was Alec. He wanted Alec. Luke helped them with some dinner and juice that night and Magnus fell asleep again. The whole knotting thing had rendered him too weak. When he woke up the next morning, he found himself in the same room as the night before which was unusual because he could recall Clary telling him that they would be on the road soon.

This was the morning when it finally came back to him in his memories. Asmodeus had come home on that dreadful day after Isabelle dropped Clary and him back home for dinner. Magnus had been so happy to see his father after so long and they had decided to talk over some martini and chess. Asmodeus had listened to Magnus talk about his abduction with a fatherly concern on his face and then asked him to go for a run because it was raining outside. Going out for runs during rains was their thing. Magnus had been six since the time he and his father headed out during storms to feel the
weather on their wolf-fur. But this time, it was different. They didn’t turn into wolves and Asmodeus decided to walk... instead of run. Sometime during the walk, he had felt a sting on his neck before everything darkened out and he had fainted.

The rest of the day had been hazy with him remembering bits and pieces of everything. He knew what Asmodeus had done to him. Somehow that memory had been perfectly clear in his... both that and Alec sending him away after a hasty goodbye kiss. Magnus dragged himself to the bathroom and looked in the mirror. He was miserable. The dark circles around his eyes, his flat hair and his swollen face. He couldn’t recognize himself. This wasn’t the man he had been for 24 years of his life. He curled his fingers around the cold stone of the washbasin and groaned. Tears fell out of his eyes. He was worthless. He was loveless. No one loved him. Not even his parents. They had hated him enough to drive him to the brink of death. That was the brutal truth about his life. He was an abomination and no matter how much he had run from this truth, the truth that itself chased him right into his heart this time. And now, he believed it. In his heart. He knew his worth. He meant nothing more than a means to sustain Alec’s pack.

Alec.

Magnus choked on his sobs and breathed heavily – his chest not expanding enough to sustain his oxygen demands. He was losing breath... feeling suffocated. He hadn’t heard from the man in 2 days now. Clary told him he couldn’t make contact with the Lightwoods. It wasn’t safe. But what if Alec had just given up on him like everyone else. Knowing what Magnus had been put through by his father, it wouldn’t have been surprising for Alec to not want to have any relation to this man. He had been tainted and not even Alec wanted him anymore. And Alec shouldn’t. No one deserved to live with an abomination. Especially not someone who was as pure as Alec. Alec deserved someone who could love him back.

Magnus trailed one of his hands to his abdomen and felt the area around his pelvis. There was a chance that another life was growing inside him... or at least preparing to grow. A life who was innocent and didn’t know in what circumstances it was given birth. Bile built up in his stomach. He didn’t want this to happen to him. Not yet. And definitely, not like this. This was unfair and gruesome. He gagged a little because he could feel the burn rising up his esophagus. Turning his head towards the commode, he dropped to his knees and emptied the contents of his stomach. The gagging noise that accompanied it was loud enough and probably woke Clary who was sleeping on the couch in the same room.

In no time, she was at the door, rubbing her eyes off sleep. “Magnus...”, she gasped in her rough voice and jumped to grab him by the shoulder and support him. He was still weak and some of his ligaments and joints still hurt from the ritual and just general exhaustion. He placed a palm between himself and his sister, asking her to stop at the door. She didn’t need to see this disgusting moment. It wasn’t her mess to clear. Clary stopped and stepped back from the tiles. Magnus finished throwing up and stood up, pressing the flush lever. He stepped back and wiped his nose as tears flowed out of the nostrils. His throat was burning. He turned around and rinsed his mouth with water and then walked past Clary without saying anything and dropped lifelessly on the bed.

Clary took a deep breath and picked up her robe. She tied it around herself and then walked into the bathroom to fill a bucket with hot water. There were several washcloths that Luke had given her and was kept in the cupboard. She soaked the washcloth in water and mixed a little antiseptic liquid in it. Pulling a stool in front of Magnus, she settled on it and squeezed the washcloth of extra water before dabbing it to clean Magnus’ face. The man looked at her and stopped her midway. But she was his sister and just as adamant as he was. Maybe a little more.

She wiped his face and nose, removing all traces of vomit from them. She undid the top buttons of
his night-dress and wiped his neck and upper chest area clean – free from any forms of mess and infection. “Do you want to eat something or drink water?”, she asked while rubbing Magnus’ face with the cleaner end of the washcloth to dry him out. Magnus gulped and shook his head in a no before tearing his gaze away from everything. “Dr. Andre said that this morning sickness is very normal.”, she informed.

“Nothing about me is normal anymore, Clary”, Magnus retorted. Clary focused on how he didn’t call her biscuit. She nodded softly and then discarded the washcloth and the bucket back into the bathroom. Later today, she would wash this cloth along with the other dirty laundry. Luke had insisted that they could use his machine, but she argued that they were already a burden to him. The least she could do was help out.

“Fair enough. But I am slightly offended because you and I...”, she flicked her finger between herself and her brother. “We’re still who we used to be. And that is never going to change... okay? No matter what you think...”, she stroked his cheekbone with her thumb and smiled without breaking an eye contact until he looked back at her and nodded. She sat on the bed next to him and entangled her fingers in Magnus’ placing both their hands on her own lap.

“Did you talk to Alexander? Or Isabelle?”, he asked, snapping his head.

“No... it’s not safe, yet. You know that, Magnus. I already texted him when you were asleep... and even though I said that I am discarding the phone, I knew he would have called as soon as he got the text. But he didn’t. If his phone fell in the wrong hands and someone found out that you and I are here... it will defeat the whole purpose of running away without a trace”, she sighed. “Alec risked everything to get us out of there... the entire Lightwood family did... and I cannot let that sacrifice go in vain. Please understand? Alec promised that he would find us... and I am holding on to that promise and protecting you because...”, she swallowed.

“I don’t think he wants to get in touch with us, anymore Clary. Why should he?”, Magnus stuttered and interrupted his sister. “I am not the man he fell in love with and there is no reason why he would want to find us...”

“Magnus no... you know that’s not who Alec is... or the truth. You’re still the same man you always have been. Nothing has changed. Damned be the people who made you believe otherwise. They were wrong, Magnus. Our parents were wrong. The only thing you and I are allowed to be ashamed off is that we couldn’t see through their façade earlier. That we trusted him enough to fuck with our feelings and our lives... we should have been smarter than this. We should have anticipated their game plan sooner.”, she shook her head. She pressed his hand at the side of Magnus’ neck and guided him to her neck. “You’re not allowed to wallow in grief without me... let me grab a packet of apple juice and we’ll mope together...”

“It’s not funny, Clary...”, Magnus sighed, sobbing in his sister’s chest. Clary moved her fingers through Magnus’ hair untangling the knots.

“I don’t want to sound funny. I am just trying to make you understand and remember it... for the rest of your life that you are not getting rid of me. I am going to be there through everything. You are not alone...”, she promised turning a shoulder to wrap her brother in her tiny arms. It took her to get on her knees on the bed next to her brother to properly embrace but for his sake, she did. Magnus didn’t know if Clary was what he needed... but he was sure that he couldn’t have done this without her by his side.

“Now, I am going to go and get you some apple juice and vitamins for real... and you will sit here and take them because I am an adorable sister... who you can’t say no to? And then, we will watch some tv show and pass time?”, she pulled away from him and kissed his cheek before hopping out of
the room.

[5 days later]

Clary cut the call and pushed the door to enter the house again. Dr. Abbott was checking Magnus for any other visible signs of stress. He wore a loose t-shirt and Alec’s engagement ring hung over his chest, dangling on a chain. Alec had given it to Clary to sell it for instant money, but she couldn’t find the heart to do it. So, the night she drove to New York, she sold off her gold pendant instead that was given to her by Asmodeus and Kaya on her 16th birthday. She returned the ring to Magnus and Magnus wore it around his neck, using Clary’s now empty chair.

She sat on the armrest next to him and tried to focus on what the doctor was saying but her mind was reeling. Alec was in a coma. That’s why he hadn’t responded. He was in a coma and Isabelle sounded so distraught – she had never heard Isabelle sound so broken and unsure. And scared. To make matters worse, she couldn’t tell this to Magnus. Not yet. And that was the thing. He knew she had called Isabelle. So as soon as the doctor would be done, he would ask her. And she wouldn’t know how to reply.

They were ready to go back on the road right after Dr. Abbott had checked on Magnus, but Luke insisted that they stayed with him. His was the safest house in the whole of New York and no one would have ever come to know that Magnus and Clary had taken refuge here. Clary agreed to the arrangement only of the promise that he wouldn’t even tell Alec about this... if the man ever decided to call.

Fortunately, Luke returned from work early and called her aside for an update. He had been such a support in the last few days. Clary followed him to the kitchen. He opened a brown packet and handed over packets of food and juice to her. She tilted her head and sighed. He just smiled and messed up her hair. “I am putting it on Magnus’ tab and will deduct it from his salary next month. Stop worrying, kiddo”, he smiled.

Clary paused for a second looking at Magnus who was being checked by the doctor and then at Luke. Her eyes watered as she launched herself at Luke, burying her head in his chest and let her cry. Luke narrowed his brows – taken aback by Clary’s gesture. This wasn’t just a thank you. “What is it, Clary? Everything okay?” It was a stupid question. Of course, nothing was okay. In the last 5 days, the girl had devoted herself completely to her brother, not pausing to think about what had happened to her. There was no way she was okay after everything, but she was holding it all in for Magnus. And Luke admired that because she was just 20 years old... too young to understand the brutality of this world.

“I called Isabelle today...”, she wiped her nose. “I know I should have been careful... but Magnus was pressing...and to be honest, I needed to hear her voice... and see if she is alive. If they both are...”, she explained herself.

“What happened?”

“Alec is in a coma. He has been since the incident, and he isn’t responding to the medics and whatever they are doing”, she sobbed. Luke gasped and glanced at Magnus instinctively. He wasn’t ready to hear this news. Not yet. “I know Magnus... he will ask about Alec and I can’t lie... but how will I explain that Alec is okay, but he couldn’t talk to him? I can’t lie to Magnus. He has been lied to so much already...”

“I know kiddo... I know we can’t hide the truth forever but let’s just deflect the conversation for as
long as we can?”, he shrugged. It was a bad idea. There was no way Magnus would let it go so easily. He had been miserable without Alec off-late.

The doctor informed that Magnus was doing fine. There were no signs of infections due to the procedure that was performed on him. Now, the only thing they could do is wait for 2 weeks and then see if he had conceived the pregnancy or not. That night, Clary and Luke took Magnus out for a walk along the docks. Just to ease his mind a bit. He did ask the girl about Alec, but she told him that Isabelle had picked up the phone because Alec was occupied with something at the hospital. She saw his heartbreak because he assumed Alec didn’t want to talk to him. She hadn’t exactly lied... but deflected the truth.

...  

[10 days later]

Magnus’ morning sickness was getting worse. For the last four days, he had woken up only to throw up minutes later. If this was any indication to his condition, Luke and Clary were afraid that Magnus would most probably conceive the pregnancy. This was bad news. Not just for Magnus but because Alec wasn’t there with him. They wanted to see if it was Alec’s child... or some random Alpha’s... but they also needed him there to boost Magnus’ breaking self-confidence. They had tried and failed to do the same and the hope now remained with Alec. If someone could pull Magnus out of his darkness, it had to be Alec. The Omega had woken up to an empty room today. Clary was already up and out somewhere else. Magnus saw her through the windows. She was speaking to someone and by the small smile on her face, he knew it had to be Isabelle. He wanted to run out and grab the phone to talk to Alec, but his stomach had other plans.

He washed his face after throwing up and came out to find Clary still on the phone. That was good news. It meant that he could still speak to Alec. Luke and Clary were being very careful in the last 5 or so days. They never brought up Alec’s name... and Clary deflected every question about Alec whenever Magnus asked them. That could mean two things. Either Alec was not coming back to him... like he suspected, or something terrible had happened to him in the field. Maybe, Asmodeus had killed him for helping Magnus and Clary run away.

“What are the doctors saying, Izzy?”

“The same old...”, the girl chuckled wryly on the other side. “He seems to be stable and his vitals are fine... but he wouldn’t wake up... that fucking idiot. I have no idea what is wrong with him. He is healing fine. His bones are almost all repaired.”, Clary could hear the grief in her voice. The helplessness of not being able to do anything.

“Izzy... it is going to be fine... you’re strong...”, she shook her head and was about to continue when the phone was snatched from her hands. She turned around defensively and found Magnus holding the phone to his ear. It was no use trying to take it back from him... he was way taller and much stronger than her.

“Isabelle?”, he huffed. There was pin-drop silence on the other side... apart from an eerie occasional beeping of something behind Isabelle. Magnus heard her release a gasp a few seconds later... and then a rather long sigh of despair. “Izzy?”, he asked if she was still with him.

“Magnus”, she cleared her throat and uttered his name. “Yes, I am here”, her voice was low and sad. He couldn’t really believe that Isabelle Lightwood, Alec’s bright and happy sister could ever sound like that. Wow, he was so furious right now. He couldn’t believe that he was living in a time where his sister had to drive him all the way across the country to save his life... his fiancé hadn’t spoken to him for 10 days and his sister-in-law sounded like a complete mess. “How are you?”, she asked. Her
tone suggested that she knew everything. Of course, she did. Clary and she didn’t hide anything from each other.

“Where is Alec?”, he asked, point blankly. He wasn’t in the mood for small talk. He needed to know if he should stop hoping for Alec to call him back. If he should stop waiting for the love of his life and figure out what to do next.

“Alec…”, she sighed. “He’s around…”, she lied. And he could guess that she did. She sounded scared and unconvincing.

“Isabelle”

“Magnus… he is away on Council business… I am sure he will call as soon as he has some time on his hand. Don’t worry!”, she gulped.

“Izzy… stop. You’re not telling me the truth. I need to know where he is, okay? Please, please stop lying to me.”, he looked over his shoulder and found Clary biting her thumb nail in anxiety. “If Alec has decided to not meet me ever again, I need to know. I am not made of glass and I wouldn’t break, but… I need to know if I should stop waiting for my fiancé to come back.”, he shook his head in disbelief at his own words.

“MAGNUS!”, Isabelle yelled at that. “No… Alec could never…”, she protested. “That’s not it… okay, trust me?”, she sobbed.

“Then, you need to tell me if he is dead… and that’s why he wouldn’t talk to me. Because I don’t believe that he would ever choose to attend to a Council work… and not talk to me. So please, save all the excuses and tell me”, his tone was begging more than asking. He was desperate. “I have the right to grieve him if he is dead… you cannot take that away from me. You just can’t.”, he shut his eyes because they burned.

“He is alive, Magnus”, Clary responded from behind his back. He looked over his shoulder and then looked away again.

“Isabelle?”

“He is in a coma. After the fight, he lost a lot of blood… and the fractures and internal bleeding… there was this whole thing…”, she timidly muttered. Magnus stepped back in shock. The world around him blacked out. He could hear everyone, see everything… but nothing would register in his mind. There was a deafening silence in the back of his head. The beeping noise behind Isabelle finally making sense to him. She was in a hospital, by Alec’s bedside maybe. The phone slipped from his ear and hit the ground, breaking into two pieces. Clary jumped to put the pieces together and see if Izzy was still on the line. Fortunately, she was.

“Izzy... Izzy... I’ll talk to you later okay...?”, she hurriedly cut the call and grabbed Magnus who was about to collapse on the ground. “Magnus... MAGNUS”, she yelled his name.

“Can’t... breathe”, he gasped for breath and held his chest. She could hear him wheezing. “C-l-aryy”, he stuttered her name out of his mouth. Clary stuffed the burner phone in her pocket and lifted one of his hands to put around her neck and squeezed him by his waist. She dragged them both to the front porch of Luke’s house and made him sit on the bamboo chair. She could see him struggling for his breath. His eyes were bloodshot, and his lips were parted. She slapped his face lightly.

“Look at me... Magnus, look at me?”, she patted him until he locked his eyes with her. “He is alive... Alec is alive”, she assured. Magnus shook his head and bigger tears formed in his brown orbs. “Ok...
ok, breathe. Forget about it... just breathe”, she shook her head, holding Magnus steady within her grasp. “Breathe in... one...two... three... four... five...”, she nodded and counted – gesturing Magnus to follow and obey her. Magnus did as directed. “Breathe out now...”, she whispered. Her hands were entangled in Magnus and she was rubbing soothing circles below his knuckles. Magnus buried his head in her arms. She embraced him, now rubbing patterns on his back, urging Magnus to breathe in and out.

“He’s okay...”, she whispered a couple of minutes after Magnus had started breathing normally. Magnus pulled away from her. “Alec is strong. He will wake up... okay?”, she cupped his jaws and stroked his cheek.

“It’s my fault... he wouldn’t have gone after my father if it wasn’t for me...”, Magnus lifted his chin up and gazed at the wood ceiling of the porch.

“No... no... not your fault. Remember when Alec blamed himself for your abduction? You told him that it wasn’t his fault, right? Had he been here... he’d tell you the same. The only people responsible for this are dead now... okay? They’ll never get to you or Alec again”

“I want to see him...”

“We cannot go back to Idris...”, she shook her head.

“Clary, please...?”

“Magnus... it’s not safe. Alec clearly warned us to stay away from town. We cannot go against his words”, she reminded him.

“I can’t go to Idris... Alec can’t come to me... so what am I supposed to do? Sit here... and wait for the pregnancy result to come back positive? Sit idly as Asmodeus destroys my life even after his death? And what if Alec never wakes up... I’ll never get to say goodbye?”, he snapped. “He told me he loved me... and I didn’t get to say it back. It is not fair, Clarissa... and you know it. I love Alec... and I cannot wait any further. He needs me... I need him”, he begged.

“Alec is a tough guy. He’ll pull through. He promised you. Have faith in him, okay?”

[15 days later]

Dr. Abbott had come in to check on Magnus. It was time to take a pregnancy test to see if Magnus had conceived but the man had refused any checkups and tests unless he could be taken back to Alec. Luke and Clary both tried to convince him to not refuse his treatment, but he was too stubborn for it. And Clary couldn’t really blame him either. They had had no contact with Isabelle and Alec after the day Magnus found out... and frankly, both the siblings were worried now. To make matters worse, the Lightwood girl wasn’t responding to her texts. Andre looked at Magnus from the door and whispered to his sister.

“He has gained weight since the last time I saw him”, he noted.

“Is that a bad thing?”

“No... I would have expected him to lose weight... stress and everything else. But this is good. He is getting stronger”, the doctor whispered. “Listen... Clary, I don’t have all day. This is the kit. Coax him into the test and get back to me with the results. I’ll arrange for a bloodwork to confirm the diagnosis, alright?”, he handed over a sealed box and walked out of the house.
Clary looked up at Magnus. He was sitting on the couch by the window. His knees were bent up to his chest and his chin was dropped onto it. Luke joined her at the door and nudged the little girl’s shoulder. “What is it?”

“I think I should FaceTime Isabelle?”, she asked. “I don’t think my stubborn brother will do anything until he sees Alec... even if the man is not going to respond... and honestly, even I haven’t heard anything in days... and even I am a little curious”

“FaceTiming her means that you’ll give away your location. I hope you understand the risk it puts you and your brother in?”

“Asmodeus and Kaya are dead... even if someone finds out about us... we’ll run away from here. Magnus is fit enough to travel now. And I am willing to take the risk for his sake and mine.”, she shrugged. Her lips were pressed into a thin line of despair and frustration. Luke sighed and handed over his smartphone. She logged into her Apple account and called Izzy. She was too excited to call them, and Luke’s heart sank. He had been hiding the fact that Alec had flown into New York last night and was recovering in his infirmary. But he had clear instructions Clary who quoted Alec when she said that not even Alec could know where they were.

“How are you?”, Izzy squeaked as she picked up the phone. Relief washed over the redhead’s face when she saw her girlfriend after half a month. She looked so thin and exhausted. Her hair was tied in a rough ponytail that hung on her side with strands of hair poking out of it. Her eyes looked tired and the sockets looked dark and hollow. The girl wasn’t wearing any makeup and even her t-shirt was one of Alec’s discarded ones.

“How are you?”, Clary smiled. She wanted to touch the girl... and kiss her.

Izzy sucked her lips in as she tried to prevent tears from forming in her eyes. “I am fine. How are you? You look well!”, she replied. Clary walked inside Magnus’ room and the man’s head snapped up at Izzy’s voice.

“Look... and tell me I am taking good care of your brother-in-law?”, she tried to joke, ignoring what Izzy had asked her. Dropping on the couch next to her brother, she wrapped her arm around his neck. His own eyes widened when he saw Isabelle on a video call. Izzy’s lips curved into a sad and gloomy smile when she saw Magnus. Unlike her brother, he looked well. And she was very glad to see it with her own eyes.

“How is he?”, Magnus found his courage to talk.

“Still sleeping... but alive”, Izzy taunted, her gaze fixed at whatever she was staring at. “I could never really tolerate how full of himself he always was... but this is just beyond everything ridiculous he has ever done in his life. I am waiting for him to wake up so that I can kick his ass”, Magnus yearned to have a look at whatever Izzy was so fixated on.

“How can I see him?”, he requested.

“Yes... of course! But... you need to give me a minute of your time because right now, Mom is with him... scolding him I guess. And I cannot let her know that I have been speaking to the runaways...”,
she tried to lighten up the mood. “I should tape this moment. Mom never gets to shout at Alec without him shouting back... this is a first”

She stopped smiling when the squeal of a door opening sounded. Magnus and Clary heard Maryse’s voice afterward, whispering something to Izzy. *Who are you talking to?*

“No one”, Izzy turned the phone over and now, all Magnus and Clary could see was the fabric of Izzy’s t-shirt. “Are you done scolding him?”, she asked back.

*Yes... I asked him to get up because the doctors are saying some rubbish stuff... and I-*

“What are they saying?”

*Even though Alec’s stable... if he doesn’t wake up in the next few weeks, we should consider other options as well.*

Magnus gasped, holding his palm over his hand. He couldn’t say anything. Maryse couldn’t know that Isabelle had been in contact with them. The more people who knew, the tougher it would be to survive this situation.

“Tell them he *will* wake up... and that they can take the suggestion and shove it up their ass”, Izzy grunted.

*Isabelle? Language. I am going to get some food into your father. He hasn’t been eating since... since everything. Will you be okay by yourself?*

“Uh huh... I’ll just talk to Alec... tell him that he needs to wake up and kick those doctors’ asses. Otherwise, I’ll kick his ass”

*Be back to the room by 11, okay?*

“Yes, Mom”

Magnus and Clary heard footsteps fading into the background and then Izzy moved the screen back to her face, taking the phone inside a room which had a blue hue around. The screen was shaking because Izzy was probably must be looking for a place to sit next to Alec. Magnus gulped as he heard the beeping monitor again. He was so close to his fiancé.

“Don’t listen to what Mom said... these doctors don’t know anything more than we do. Alec is a fighter and he will come back to us.”, she whispered in denial and pulled a stool to sit down. The stool made an uncomfortable noise when she dragged it against the marble flooring. “You know he absolutely hates this sound. And, I keep doing it... hoping the guy would wake up but he is too stubborn for his own good. Anyway. I am certain that I will make him surrender to me one day”, she took a breath. “Alec? Hey”, she called out to someone and then the sound of fabric rustling against each other echoed on Magnus’ screen.

“Look who I have on the phone with me?”, Izzy was talking to Alec’s comatose body as if he were conscious. There was no response on the other side and Magnus just felt his heart sinking every minute that went by without a reply from his fiancé. He contemplated if he was even ready to see Alec in that horrifying condition. “Magnus, I am going to turn the phone towards Alec now... alright? Give me a second to adjust this stool...”, she warned him. Magnus took a deep breath and squeezed Clary’s hand that was kept in his lap, entangled with his fingers. The image on the phone blurred as Izzy rotated it. She adjusted herself on the stool so that she could lean onto the bed and hold the phone in front of Alec comfortably.
When the image focused, Magnus saw Alec for the first time in 2 weeks. He was wearing the traditional white hospital gown. His head was tilted to one side and there was a tube running through his mouth, held in position by a blue Hollister. Magnus winced in pain because that looked uncomfortable and painful. His lips were wide open, and they looked dry. His eyes were sunken and dark, and he looked thinner than Magnus had remembered him. He could faintly hear Alec breathing in and out and the monitor that recorded his heartbeat steadily beeping. Physically, Alec was living and breathing... but he looked so different to Magnus.

He reached out with his free hand, wanting to touch Alec as his visions clouded with tears. There was a thick band-aid peeking out from below his hospital gown. “Magnus looks so well... doesn’t he, Alec?” Izzy tried to make a conversation with Alec. The man looked lifeless and so unreal. Magnus couldn’t believe his eyes. The ever-attentive Alec Lightwood – the man who noticed everything... the one who was aware of everything around him was just lying there motionless and maybe even, thoughtless. “Magnus...?”, she focused the camera on herself. “The doctors say that there is a strong chance that he can hear us and if we talk to him, maybe he’ll find the motivation to wake up and come back to us... do you...do you... want to talk to him? Maybe ask him to wake up... he won’t listen to me... or Mum or Dad... but maybe he’ll listen to you?”, it was more like she was helplessly begging than suggesting.

“Alexander?”, Magnus calmed himself down and said his lover’s name out loud. It felt good to do that. He had missed calling his name out loud. He paused and waited, a part of him expecting the tip of Alec’s lips to curve into a smile but that didn’t happen. Not this time. Clary squeezed his shoulder as she fought her own tears. “Hi...”, he whispered again. The screen shook a little as Isabelle adjusted her hand and Magnus saw a glimpse of Alec’s hand lying on his stomach. There were tubes running through the veins and they looked thin.

“Clary and I are alright”, he sniffed and wiped his tears off his nostrils and eyes. “She took me to Luke...just like you asked. We are both fine... and safe. Just like you hoped for”, he wiped all the grief away from his face, ignoring the fact that Alec wasn’t responding to him – not even twitching his brows. He was still and breathing. That had to be enough for now. “I didn’t get to say something when I left... and I would be damned if I don’t say it”, he paused, hearing his heart thrum in his chest. “I love you too. And I am holding on to the promise you made me... that you’ll find me again.”, he shrugged. There was a lot more he wanted to say but he couldn’t bear to look at Alec anymore. He knew how messed up that was. But he couldn’t. “Izzy”, he whispered, and the girl took the phone away from Alec’s face.

Magnus stood up from the couch and rushed into the bathroom, slamming the door behind him. This was all too much. He slid on the door, falling on the tiled floor with a thud. His palm was slammed against his mouth as he tried to fight back the noise he was going to make if he broke into sobs. He closed his eyes and knocked on the door with the back of his head in frustration. This heartbreak had to stop now. They deserved a break.

...Izzy cleaned the food packets from the coffee table in Alec’s room once she was done with her video call with Izzy and dinner with Sebastian and Jace. The mundane had come by, just like he and Jace had been for the last 10 days, and for some reason, she had let him bring dinner for her. She still couldn’t forgive him for hurting Alec, but he and Jace were trying to make an effort and be there for the Lightwoods and even she couldn’t deny it. The last 2 weeks had been difficult for them as a family, and Jace and Sebastian had made an honest effort to make it a little easier for them.

Maryse had already left for the hotel and she was supposed to follow her mother because Maryse was returning to Idris, following an important business call. To be honest, she was kinda hoping that
something would change in Alec’s condition after Magnus spoke to her. The one thing that she was so sure would work and be successful in waking her brother up from his unending slumber. But now, she was sure that something was holding Alec back from waking up. He was in recovery and most of his fractures had healed up – but there was a block. Possibly, a mental one. And that was preventing him from wanting to wake up. At least that is what one of the doctors had told her. He needed to want to wake up and be alive again.

She threw the trash in the dustbin and came back to the bed. Alec’s face looked calm and peaceful – almost like he was smiling. She squeezed his hand that was devoid of tubes. “I am going to head back for the night brother. Please wake up, okay?”, she stood up and kissed his forehead before leaving the room.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for being with me through this journey. Strap in as we step into the final plot, and the final few chapters.
I love you all.

Alia.
Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

Hello! I am here with another chapter. Next week, I'll be a little busy with shopping for my University and other stuff, so I shall see you on Wednesday and next Sunday for new chapters. That will also give me time to work on the epilogue of this story that I am currently writing. So, see you then!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He could feel the warmth of Asmodeus’ blood as his sharp canines bathed in his blood. There was something about the taste of the Alpha blood and the heat it emitted when it oozed out directly from a live source. It tasted metallic and pungent, but the boy felt the ecstasy of the blood coating his tongue as it washed down his throat. Alec pressed a little and his poison glands excreted a little venom that started diffusing in his victim’s brain. That felt exhilarating.

Magnus was running away from him. He was going away – maybe forever. And that was Alec’s choice. Watching Clary disappear into the forest had been painful. He had only just started his life with Magnus and that life had been stripped off from him by the man who had offered Magnus’ hand to him in the first place. The irony. He dug his claws in the trunk of the tree as Clary’s final image disappeared far off into the bushes. She was gone. But Magnus was going to be safe. That’s all he could hope for.

“You’re too naïve to fight...”, he had heard Asmodeus taunt him. Naïve or not, Alec couldn’t say but he was fucking angry with Asmodeus. The man had ripped his lover apart from him and injured him emotionally and mentally. Magnus was never going to be the same again. Their relationship would never be the same again. Alec felt heat rush into his body as he arched himself up and gave one final push. It was time to become the wolf he had been born to become and tear his enemies head off.

“He needs a medic. He has lost too much blood. Alec!”, a myriad of voices surrounded him, engulfing him like a black hole. There was a sharp pain running through his body. He couldn’t move because his body refused to obey him. There was no strength in his limbs... it felt like he was a shattered framework of bones. He couldn’t lift himself off from the ground because his torso was on fire... everything seemed so fragile and volatile.

A loud crack and Alec felt his jaw back in place. There had been a pressure in the lower part of his head since the time he could remember and now, it was gone. He felt easier to move... but he couldn’t move because everything was hurting way too much. Only if someone could overdose him with sedatives. A sting in the upper arm was what he got and soon, the pain started fading away. All senses did. “He just said that he is in pain”, Alec heard in his head.
“Alec is fine. His bones have all been placed back together and he is healing. The heavy doses of morphine will prevent his wolf-healing to kickstart. But I am sure he will be alright. As for his coma, I don’t think there’s anything to worry about”, there were muffled voices around him. They spoke about him as if he was a thing that they were managing... an object without emotions. The one they had to just keep alive at each and every cost. He was aware that he was in this state of coma. Everything was quiet and peaceful around him. But that’s because he wanted to save his energies for when he found find Magnus again. This coma was necessary. Alec explained himself.

Alec couldn’t estimate if it was day or night in the world outside. He was much too satisfied with his own dreams and fantasies that encircled his drugged mind. He was slowly regaining control of his body, and it felt like they would move and obey him too if he wanted. Maybe he should wake up now and find it out himself. Maybe not. What if Magnus is not okay? There is no point going back to the world where Magnus doesn’t exist. In his dreams, the man is still very much alive and maybe Alec wanted to keep it that way for as long as they could.

Isabelle and Maryse sounded worried tonight. There’s something that they know, and he didn’t. Other than coaxing him to wake up, they didn’t talk much about anything else. And he doesn’t want to wake up right now. It wasn’t the right time. Izzy spoke to someone every few days and the tone of the voice changed every time she did. Could it be someone she cared about? Maybe that redhead girl who often accompanied Magnus in Alec’s dreams... what was her name? Biscuit... that’s all he could remember. Vague name. Or maybe it was just Alec’s drugged brain. He wanted her to ask if Magnus and ‘Biscuit’ are safe... but that means waking up. Nope. Alec. Not yet.

Maryse was pissed today. She was yelling at Alec... and pretty sure she was crying too. According to her, he had to wake up soon or something bad would happen. Something like “pulling the plug” – he heard in Maryse’s accusatory lectures. Like all other times, he wanted to talk back to her just to piss her off... but not this time. And it seemed like even that was pissing his mother off more than their usual banters. Off-late, he had started hearing more and more voices from his surroundings and not just the voices that spoke to him about his day. The sound of heels clicking on the floor announced that she had finally left. Phew. That was close.

Izzy was back to his room. She was speaking to someone again. Izzy was back. Alec’s mind reeled. He felt her sit next to him and then there his world shifted again. A voice he had long stopped hoping he would hear again. A name that only Magnus knew how to pronounce correctly. A-L-E-X-A-N-D-E-R, he repeated in his mind. “Alexander”. The cat like purring sound that accompanied it. Wow. Alec tried to recall the name of the owner of this angelic voice. He could swear that he remembered the name until a few days ago... maybe a few hours ago even.

A promise he made... a promise he made... a promise he made... Alec chanted in his mind. There was nothing but silence around him now that the angelic voice had disappeared. He had slipped into oblivion for a bit – a real state of unconsciousness but now he was back. Whoever Isabelle had been talking to was a someone that Alec’s mind wanted to hear more from. There was a singular thought
at the back of his head. He had a promise to keep. To someone. He should wake up now. It had been a while.

A plethora of images clouded his mind. There was Asmodeus wrapped in blood lying lifeless in front of him. His parents crouching over the body and occasionally looking at him as if they were concerned for him. He could hear his mother calling out his name, but he was okay. Why was she worried? And then the next moment, Alec was flat on the ground and people were calling his name, but he couldn’t answer them. His lips weren’t obeying him. And his fiancé was gone. Alec’s head tipped to the end of the forest where he had last seen the love of his life... maybe if he craned his neck, he would be able to catch a glimpse of him.

He needed to find Magnus. MAGNUS. Yes, that was the name. Magnus. He needed to wake up and find Magnus before it was too late. Magnus. Magnus. Magnus. Magnus. The love of his life needed him...and he needed the wake the fuck up now.

Alec’s eyes slammed open and he wheezed because he tried to breathe in through his nose with the tubes still lodged in his chest. Bad idea. The strange sensation around his windpipe constricted everything and he could feel himself choking on his own breath the next moment until the door opened, and people rushed in. People who were supposed to help Alec with this. He grabbed the tubes with his free wrist as the nurses tried to restrain him. It probably wasn’t the best idea to tear his respiratory system from the inside. “Calm down, Alec”, he heard a doctor say. They firmly pinned his wrists to his side as the doctor extubated him hastily. He felt a gush of air rush into his lung as he wheezed his first breath, almost like an infant.

A cough accompanied the response and the nurses gently tapped his chest until he felt better, more in control of his own lungs. “Welcome back to the land of the living!”, a strange man with a stethoscope around his neck smiled at him. Alec wanted to shift on his bed, but his chest was still very tender. The whole ordeal with the tubes sent a pang of pain across his chest. Maybe his ribs were still in the process of patching up. It wasn’t the best idea to move. He heard the doctors call out to Luke... summon him to the hospital room. Luke. New York. Brooklyn. Magnus.

Alec’s eyes rolled involuntarily.

... Magnus swallowed the gulp of water down his throat. This had been the third time he had thrown up since morning and he was sure his chest and his body couldn’t handle the pain if he threw up again. He peeked out of the bathroom and saw Clary snoring on the couch. Usually, she was attentive enough to wake up whenever Magnus did... but talking to Isabelle last night had relaxed her and Magnus thought that she deserved to rest. It was still 6:30 am in the morning and there was no reason for the girl to have gotten up, even if it was for Magnus’ help. As for himself, the man had barely slept all night. It was a nightmarish thought for him to close his eyes after that video call. Images of Alec lying lifeless in front of the camera was all he could see. He washed his face and stepped out of the room. The windows of the living room were wide open and morning breeze tainted with the scent of the ocean was blowing across the house.

Magnus loosely adjusted the hoodie on his shoulders and walked over to the bench below the windows. Ever since he had woken up at Luke’s house two weeks ago, this had become his favorite
spot. It reminded him of their balcony in Manhattan... and how much he missed his home. He sat on the bench, with his back against the armrest and pulled his knees to his chest. The slightly warm air brushed against his face. He closed his eyes and dropped his head on his knees, hugging his legs in the process.

The doorknob turned, and Magnus opened his eyes defensively. It was just Luke. He relaxed his muscles and looked away to the windows again. He must have been out all night – judging by the sleepiness and exhaustion in his eyes.

“Good morning. You’re up early?”, Luke smiled. He looked worn-out. Magnus knew he had gone to bed with them, but he was coming back from somewhere. A late-night emergency call maybe? Magnus eyed him. He didn’t look like he had been at the hotel either.


“Are you feeling alright, Magnus? Do you want me to call Andre? Did you take the pregnancy test he asked you too?”

“No... I am fine. Other than the morning sickness. And, I am not ready for that test, yet. But that’s beside the point, I don’t think I can play along with you and Clary for a very long time”, he pinched the bridge of his nose and started playing with his toe-nails, cracking them nervously. “I get that my sister made some weird promise to Alexander right before he asked her to run away... but he needs me now... and it bothers me that I can’t be there for him”, Magnus snapped. “My father is dead. Alec killed him. There’s no reason why I need to be away from him anymore. I saw him yesterday, Luke... and –”, Magnus paused taking a second to calm himself down. “I have never seen him like this... unresponsive... still... almost like he was...”

...dead.

Luke felt like he was drowning in the river of guilt. Alec was in New York... almost in Magnus’ reach and he had hidden the fact for over 48 hours now. At the condition he had seen both Alec and Magnus in the last few weeks, he had to be very careful with everything. And if that meant that the boys had to stay apart even though they were so close to each other in the same city, then be it. “Magnus... you didn’t see how freaked out Clary was when she knocked at my door... she was petrified to lose you... and you were no better...”

“I don’t blame her for taking me away from Alec. I don’t blame you either, Luke. But I am fine now... and I need to get back to Alec and help him... he risked his life for me... his entire family did... I know if I can just talk to him in person... or maybe if he feels me around him, he might wake up. I can’t lose him”

“Magnus...”, Luke sighed, dropping his head in his hands and shaking his head. He had a terrible idea in his head and as much as it defied all the logic and reasoning, he wanted to do this for the two men who he had grown to care about almost like his own sons. Through the 5 months that he had spent time with Magnus and Alec, he had understood the kind of love and mutual respect the two men had for each other and how much it was killing them from their inside to be apart for so long. To make matters worse, he had been the one to blame for the last 48 hours of their separation. He looked at Magnus who was staring at him with confusion written all over his face. He was waiting for Luke to say something. “Your sister is going to kill me for this...”, he muttered. “Go... grab your jacket.”, he gestured with his hand.

“Why?”
“I am taking you somewhere... don’t ask too many questions, please. I cannot answer them all... and I know that this could backfire at all of us... but I can’t keep doing this... come on!”, he rubbed his temple. Magnus took a deep breath and rushed inside without another word. He came back with one of Alec’s leather jackets that Maia had brought after Luke gave him their apartment address in Upper East Side.

Luke was ready with his jeep keys when Magnus returned. They locked Clary inside and Magnus left her a note in case she woke up. Luke had an open jeep – a very old Jeep Wrangler Renegade. The engines roared as Luke pressed the gas pedal and the birds around them flew off the ground. The drive was a quiet one and Luke looked nervous. Magnus was confused where Luke was taking him even though he trusted the Alpha completely. It took them 10 minutes to reach wherever Luke had taken him and then the jeep abruptly stopped in front of a warehouse.

“Exactly how many warehouses do you own?”, Magnus chastised his boss, trying to lighten up the mood and ease Luke’s nervousness. The Alpha wolf scoffed and jumped out of the car and tilted his head towards the door. Magnus nodded, following Luke through the main door. There was a scent of spirit in the air. Magnus jolted as he realized this was a hospital. “I am not going to be pressured into taking that test Luke”, he snarled.

“Whether or not you decide to take the test is up to you, Magnus. And that is not why we are here. I could have summoned Andre home. That is not what this is. Remember I had to go out for an urgent work two nights ago? Someone was brought here overnight.”, Luke swallowed hard as he walked sliding his ID at all the security gates. Magnus zipped the hoodie tightly and hummed. “Clary had made me promise that I was not supposed to tell anyone about the two of you...”, he added. “...and Alec was the one who had instructed her...”, he explained.

“I know all of that”, Magnus rolled his eyes. “You know Alec used the phrase ‘not even me’ when he gave the instructions to Clary!”, Luke clarified and swiped his card across the security key of a smaller door. Magnus shook his head. He didn’t know about that. But it wasn’t odd. Alec was just being extra careful. That is it. Luke pushed the door open and asked Magnus to go inside first. Magnus narrowed his brows and walked inside the room and froze when he realized what he had just walked to. The world fell silent around him except for the familiar monitor beeping and his heart thrumming in his chest. In the bed in front of him, Alec lay peacefully with his eyes closed.

Magnus’ eyes widened, and his lungs stopped breathing for a few seconds. Alec. His Alec.

He wasn’t intubated like the night before but had an oxygen mask assisting him in breathing. His head was tilted away from Magnus and he was still and quiet otherwise. “Isabelle and Mrs Lightwood brought him here after the medics in Idris said that there was nothing else they could do for him.”, Luke informed. “I would have told you before... but I had to be sure that it was safe for you to get out of the house. Maryse left for her hometown late last night. It is just the sister here now and she’ll be here soon.”

Magnus settled on the bed next to Alec and entangled his fingers in his fiancé’s. He couldn’t believe his eyes. This is all he had been able to think about for 2 weeks. What it would be like to hold Alec again, touch him... and now he was? Alec’s fingers were cold... and stiff but they were still so familiar to him. He had missed the feeling of touching Alec’s soft skin. Half of his face was covered in thick facial hair. Magnus chuckled as he ran his fingers through it. The man needed a good ol’ shaving session.

“He woke up last night”, Luke informed. Magnus’ head shot up at Luke. He was shocked and delighted all at once. “The nurses rushed to his side when he tried to pull out his breathing tubes and
the doctor-on-call alerted me. I have been here all night”

“He’s out of the coma now? He is awake?”, the Omega gasped and dropped his gaze back to analyze Alec’s body and how different it looked. He was leaner than the last time Magnus remembered – both learner and weaker. Maybe if Magnus pulled his hospital gown up, his gorgeous abs wouldn’t stare at him like they did before.

“Uh hmm... but he lost consciousness soon after he was extubated and given this oxygen mask to breathe. I am not sure if he slipped into the coma again. But, Andre will be here very soon. We’ll know more about his present condition then”, he licked his tongue. “I’ll... go out for a bit... give you two some time to catch up”, he scratched his beard and walked out of the room. “Don’t go anywhere, Magnus. I have people watching this room”

“I wouldn’t expect anything else, Luke. Thank you.”, Magnus chuckled, his eyes still fixed on Alec. There was no way he was wasting any more time by looking somewhere else. He lifted Alec’s right hand to his mouth and planted a kiss on his knuckles. “Hi...”, he whispered. His kiss was wet and sloppy, and he had to wipe the saliva with the sleeve of his hoodie when he pulled the hand away. He continued to scan the rest of Alec’s body. There were bruises... fading ones but they were there. He lifted his hospital gown to check his chest and abdomen. There was a band-aid around his chest area that went all the way up to his neck.

“You look better today, you know?”, he sniffed, clearing the locks of hair off Alec’s forehead and trailing his fingers down to his cheeks. They were sunken, and his bones felt more prominent. Alec looked weak. We have so much to catch up on, you know? I don’t even know where to begin. Maybe from where you wake up first. Magnus directed his words to his thoughts. It had been so long now that his mind felt empty and lonely. He had gotten so used to Alec being in his head that the fact that he hadn’t shared his thoughts with his fiancé for 15 days now had slowly started bothering him more and more. He wanted to crawl on the bed next to Alec and wrap him protectively. “I love you”, he mumbled, combing Alec’s messy hair with his fingers.

“2 weeks and all I can think about was what if I could never see you again. What if my Dad destroyed everything that was beautiful about my life...”, he trailed his fingers down Alec’s chest... careful to not hurt him. All this looked like a good dream... almost too good to be true. Having Alec back with him... being able to feel him... what if something worse was coming for Magnus? The Omega shuddered at the thought, but the way things had shaped up last few weeks, he wouldn’t be surprised if he woke up on his bed right now... and all of this end up being nothing but a very beautiful and far-fetched dream.

He didn’t notice Alec’s fingers curling around him while he was lost in thought. Alec wheezed out another breath and pulled off his mask from the hand that was raided with tubes. “Magnus...”, he coughed and whispered. His voice was hoarse and rough, and he had to clear his throat a few times to make an audible utterance. Magnus’ pupils flickered, and a tear spill out of his eyes. He looked and saw Alec opening his eyes.

“Alexander”, he gasped. Alec gulped, wanting to lubricate his dry throat and his Adam’s apple bobbed. He wandered his eyes around the room and then fixed it on Magnus. There was a surprise in them – delight and fear as well. He didn’t know that he had been flown to New York... so the possibility of Magnus being in an infirmary in Idris was a scary one. He bent his elbows and tried to sit up straight balancing his weight on them when a sharp pain hit his chest and he dropped back. “Alec stop... you’re still hurt I suppose”, Magnus placed his hand on Alec’s chest and pushed him back down. “Let me see if I find a doctor here...”, he got up to go out and check for a doctor when Alec slid his hand around Magnus’ wrist and pulled him back.
“Stay here... it’s not safe outside. I can’t protect you there... not yet”, he gasped in fear and coughed because the throat felt itchy and hoarse. The last thing he could clearly remember was the guilt of not being able to save Magnus from Asmodeus and watching him disappear with Clary. Magnus gave him a weak smile and turned to him.

“Nothing worse could happen to me...”, he added, weakly. Alec nodded not really grasping on the use of worse instead of bad by Magnus. “Luke has placed guards outside the room... we’ll be alright”, he added and walked towards the door. Peeking out from it, he spoke to someone and then returned closing the door behind him. Alec was puzzled at everything.


“Idris...?” Magnus narrowed his brows. Right. Alec was in a coma, he couldn’t know. “This is Brooklyn, Alec... Isabelle flew you here, two nights ago. I am not sure why though. I didn’t even know you were here until a few minutes ago...”

“Where’s Clary...? Is she okay?”

“She is at Luke’s. Sleeping right now. She is fine... holding up strong for the both of us”, a smile swept Magnus’ lips as he recalled her sister’s courage.

“And you, Magnus? Are you okay?”, Magnus knew this question was coming. He curled his fingers around the hem of his hoodie and plucked at it softly. There was a tight-lipped smile on his face because that was all he was capable of at the moment.

“I am fine”, Magnus twitched his cheek, brushing off the question as if it was a stupid one to ask in the first place. “Doesn’t matter...”, he rolled his eyes and looked up. “You’re awake now... so everything will be great...”

“My ribs are broken, Magnus... not my brain. Come here”, he tapped the space next to him on the bed. Magnus had taken to the stools when he returned from the door. He swallowed and obeyed, lifting himself up to settle next to Alec. Alec lifted his hand up to Magnus’ cheek, wincing a little in the process as his abdominal muscles contracted. Magnus bent down a little to avoid Alec from exerting too much. Alec placed his palm on Magnus’ cheek and squeezed it. “It feels like I haven’t done this in forever...”

Magnus leaned into the touch, tilting his head a little. His throat bobbed as he tried to control his tears which were ready to spill out of his eyes. “How are you?”, Alec asked again, this time sincerer than the last. “Please be honest with me...”

Magnus looked at Alec for a second. His hazel eyes didn’t leave Magnus’ giving them the assurance that he was here... and he would listen to him. Magnus curled his own fingers around Alec’s wrist and turned his lips to kiss him on his palm. “I am not fine... far from it, Alexander”, he mumbled. His eyes were fixed on the monitor recording Alec’s heart rate. “But I am going to be. Eventually. Because you’re okay now... and awake!”, he plastered a smile. “I missed you so much”. That was an honest response. They were interrupted by Andre Abbott who rushed into the room with Luke on his heels. Magnus shuddered at the sudden outburst of the door. He had become very jumpy since everything. His hands clung to Alec’s as he stood up to give the doctors space.

“Alec”, Luke’s grin was wide and genuine. “Isabelle is on her way here. She had to go and drop your mother at the airport. I am sure they’ll all be thrilled to hear that you’re okay. And that Magnus and Clary are safe too...”

“No one breathes a word about Magnus and Clary to anyone in Idris. No one has to know they are
here under your protection.

“Alexander, we don’t have to run”, Magnus moved forward and lifted his hand back to his heart. “I am fine. I told you that I will be... as long as you’re with me. My parents are dead. They cannot harm us anymore.”, he sniffed.

“I am not leaving you again, Magnus...”, Magnus saw the determination in Alec’s eyes and the disinterest in his own safety. Something hit him. A realization. A bitter truth about what his life would be like.

“Alexander, Luke... we’ll talk about that later”, Magnus shushed his fiancé and turned to his doctor. “Please go ahead and check him.”, he left Alec’s hand on his side and stepped away. Andre sighed as he took to Alec’s side and started observing his vitals. There was a strange pit in Magnus’ stomach that he couldn’t understand. He had been dying to meet Alec for weeks now... but all of a sudden, he just didn’t want to be in the same room as him anymore. He didn’t want to go back to the point where Alec had destroyed himself to keep Magnus safe. These last 2 weeks in oblivion had been much better. Alec was fast asleep in a coma, and not worrying or risking his life for the boy. Seeing Alec go back to being protecting about him was all too much. He hugged himself and stepped back, heading to the door in the backward direction. Luke watched him leave and followed him out.

Magnus turned around once he was out of the door ready to leave. Alec had called his name once or twice, but he didn’t stop. Luke grabbed his shoulder outside the room and stopped his way by coming in front of him. Magnus looked up and gave a defeated look to his boss. “What happened? Where are you going?”

“I can’t be here right now. I need to go back home.”, Magnus gritted his teeth together.

“But you wanted to see Alec”, Luke reasoned.

“It was a mistake, Luke. Look at him. He was in a coma for 2 weeks and the first thing he tells after waking up is how is ready to run away with me... ready to sacrifice his whole life for my sake. His entire family has sacrificed everything for me. And I don’t deserve it”

“And why not?”

“Because it was my father tried to kill them all...”

“And...?”

“Luke... why do you...?”’, Magnus waved his hand.

“Listen... I’ll take you back home, okay? But... you don’t get to blame yourself for your father’s crimes. And you cannot... and should not shut Alec out, alright? You two can figure it out... I know it...”, he started walking towards the door and Magnus followed him. In no time, they were back in Luke’s jeep and heading home. Luke had already filled Clary in and when they reached home, she was waiting for Magnus. The man headed straight into the room and she didn’t try to question him. Neither did Luke. They just let him be.


...

Isabelle sat on the stool next to Alec’s bed, reading out the updates from Robert later that evening.
Alec’s breathing aids were removed earlier this morning, after Andre had checked him. He was now breathing on his own. Magnus had left without saying a word and Luke had to lie to Alec saying that he had to take Magnus back to safety because he had been out for too long. Of course, Alec was buying none of it. He knew that it was Magnus’ choice to leave because of something that Alec had noticed in Magnus’ eyes.

“Ingrid Blackman downed an entire bottle of Musk she had hidden in her dress after that battle in the woods. They tried to save her... but the poison had already spread. The other offenders, however, are in the City of Bones... and Dad says that the case has been closed and the files have been marked confidential, thanks to Uncle Stephen’s help. He really went out of the way to do this for Dad. And we were blaming all of this on him.”, Izzy brought Alec back from his thoughts. “I mean... we couldn’t have known though, that Magnus and Clary’s parents would be the ones that we’d need protection from...”, she took a deep breath and let it out in a strong blow of air. Alec was plucking at his blanket and making patterns with his left thumb because the right arm had been plastered to his chest to give his ribs a stability as they healed. He was in a great deal of pain because Andre had removed his morphine drip on his request.

“With morphine out of your system, your healing will kick in... and your ribs should be patched up within the next day. Before that, you’ve to stay in the hospital, Mr Lightwood”, he had heard Andre tell him before he was leaving the room. Alec gave him a nod immediately because he couldn’t wait to get back on his feet and find Magnus.

“I don’t care about Ingrid, Izzy... or any of that drama right now.”, he mumbled, his head tilted away from his sister. It was difficult to focus on her when was actively trying to distract him from his thoughts about Magnus. “Did you talk to Clary about Magnus... he seemed off”, he ignored Isabelle’s talks about the case.

“I did speak to Clary and Magnus hasn’t spoken to her all day... he has locked himself up in his room and wouldn’t meet anybody... But, can you really blame Magnus for seeming off, Alec? His father shoved his beliefs onto him... broke his trust and Clary’s...”, she deflected. “In fact, we are all off in one way or the other, but that guy took the heaviest of it...”

“I am not blaming him Izzy. I am trying to make him realize that I wouldn’t leave him... and that I want to help him... and be with him through all this...”

“I know, big brother... but Clary and Magnus aren’t the people we used to know 2 weeks ago... they’ve changed... and, so have we? I am sure he’ll come around when he is mentally ready to face you... and face the way you look at him.”

“What did the doctors say about Magnus? Did Clary tell you about that...?”

“She did. And it’s not bad or anything... but Andre has been keeping a close eye on Magnus... and he gave him a kit to test whether pregnancy stuck or not”

“And?”, Alec’s heart sank. He knew this was going to happen but to hear it in the present was something else. He wasn’t sure if he was to ready to hear if Magnus had really conceived his kids because of that ritual that Asmodeus did on him.

“Clary says he wouldn’t take the test... says he is not ready to do it yet’, she shrugged. Alec felt helpless and angry at the moment for being so close to Magnus and yet so far. If only the man would talk to him, maybe something could change between them. The door pushed open and a nurse walked in with a small tray full of medicines – mostly vitamins and supplements to help him heal. Izzy took the cup from her and offered it to an unwilling Alec. The man grunted, swallowing all the pills and then gulping a full glass of water with it.
Magnus sat next to the window all day, watching the sun go down and stars twinkling in the sky again. There was motion outside the door, mostly Clary and Luke... and some other people who kept coming in and leaving after they were done with their business for Luke. Clary had given him his space, only talking to him during lunch when she gave him food. It was almost dinner-time and instead of getting the table ready, Luke and Clary were packing something on the kitchen island. Magnus could hear the boxes being wrapped up.

A minute later, there was a knock at the door. Magnus looked up and saw Clary standing with a smile on her face. “I am going to see Izzy and Alec at the infirmary and have dinner with them... do you want to come with me?”, she asked. Magnus shook his head in a no and turned his head away from Clary. He heard a soft ok instead of the beginning of an argument and then footsteps receded from the door. When he looked back up, there was no one at the door. Only a few seconds later, she returned with a tray full of food and settled on the couch in front of him – keeping the tray on both their laps. There was the usual smile on her face as she mixed the rice and curry together.

“You’re not gonna talk me into coming with you?”, Magnus licked his lips, and wiped his hands on a tissue paper.

“No... why would I?”, she shrugged. “I was just asking so that I knew if I had to pack your dinner as well...”, she added without even wanting to press Magnus into doing anything. She handed over the plate to Magnus. “Maia will be here soon... to keep you company”

“I don’t need company”

“Yeah... I know. She offered, and I couldn’t say no”, Clary shrugged, pulling one of her knees to her chest and dropping her chin on it. “I’ll be back soon though. Don’t wait up or anything but I don’t plan to stay the night...”

“You can... if you want to?”, Magnus spoke with food in his mouth.

“Nope. Hospitals and that smell – not really my thing”, she waved her hands. Her phone vibrated in her pocket and she pulled it out. “Hey, Luke”, she chimed picking up the call. Magnus wasn’t surprised. Luke’s was the only contact Clary had on her new number that she had gotten for herself this morning, under a false name. “Izzy...”, she spoke a few minutes later and Magnus’ chin snapped up.

“I know... don’t worry, I’ll give you my number when I see you... yet”, Izzy grumbled on the other side. Magnus watched the twinkle in his sister’s eyes as she spoke to Isabelle. It had been so long since he had seen her so happy and carefree and it warmed his heart. “I was just finishing up here... and leaving for the infirmary in a bit. Is there something you need me to get for you and Alec from the stores?”, Clary stood up and walked a little away from Magnus to give him space to eat his food. Ah, shit. Magnus couldn’t even ask her to come back because what would that say about him. He fixed his ears on Clary and the phone-call and continued chewing.

“No... nothing. We’re good”, Izzy brushed it off.

“How is Alec?”, Clary asked next. She knew Magnus was eager to know. Both of them heard a squeak on the other side. Izzy must have opened some door.
“Oh, you know... the usual. Alec is such a delight when he is off painkillers.”, she taunted.

Stop complaining about me to Mom. I was barely pointing out the lack of salt in the food they supposedly want me to eat.

Magnus and Clary paused when they heard Alec’s voice in the back. Clary’s lips curved into a smile while Magnus just pretended to not be affected by any of it. “See”, Izzy chuckled. “Like I said... a delight”, she said in a taunting tone. “The lack of salt in the food is deliberate. How else are we going to balance it against the bag of salt you are? And by the way, it’s not Mom... it’s Clary”, the Lightwood girl corrected her brother.

Oh.

They heard Alec’s voice again.

I mean... it isn’t that bad. I can eat it I suppose.

Clary’s lips curved into a smile and she looked at Magnus who was trying so hard to look unaffected by the whole thing. “Anyway, making you listen to my brother is not why I called... I needed a headcount of people for dinner. Are you and Magnus both going to come?”

“No... just me”, Clary informed. “Magnus is a little tired. Why exactly do you need a headcount, though?”

“I was thinking of ordering food so that we don’t have to wait when you come?”

I don’t care if you wait or not, Clary... because I am going to be eating this delicious bone broth no matter what food you order. Don’t count me in, Isabelle.

“Alec... shut up”, Izzy growled.

“Uhh... you don’t have to worry about the food because Maia sent in some of her homemade delicacies and I am bringing them with me”, she announced.

“Okay...? Wow... now I am hungry. Hang up and get your pretty face down here as soon as possible. I can’t wait...”, she hung up the call leaving Clary smiling from ear-to-ear. She turned on her heels and dropped back on the couch in front of Magnus, eyes fixed on her phone.

Magnus watched her wait for him to finish his food... and maybe deep down expected that she would coax him to go... but the request never came. He waited anxiously, quietly eating his food in the process until he ate the last bite and placed the empty plate back on the tray. Clary looked at the tray and picked it up. “I am going to head out... okay?”, she whispered before leaving the room. Magnus shook his head for a bit, making one last attempt to stay strong and then his shoulders slumped, and he gave up.

When Clary got to the door with the food packets in her hand, Magnus was leaning on the door and waiting for her with his jacket on. Her lips curved into a delighted smile and she held the door open for him without really saying anything.

... 

“The next time Magnus drops by... I am going to ask how he does it?”, Isabelle sighed, scooping some soup in a spoon and lifting it to Alec’s mouth. Alec moved his mouth away from the disgusting smell and scrunched his nose.
“Does what?”, he snapped.

“Make you obey him... and also tiny bit intimidated...”, she had been struggling to make him take that soup for half an hour and Alec had managed to take only half of the whole preparation. Her patience was gradually running out.

“Magnus doesn’t intimidate me...”, Alec widened his eyes.

“Oh, shut up... I noticed the way your tone changed when you heard it was Clary on the phone and not Mom. Because Clary meant that Magnus was nearby... and most likely listening to you whine about food...”, she called him out. Alec rolled his eyes pretending that she hadn’t just caught him red-handed and continued to dodge the food.

“I did no such thing”, he shook his head. “Magnus doesn’t scare me...”, he announced holding his finger up in the air.

“I would hope not...”

Magnus gave him a tightlipped smile and entered the room behind Izzy’s shoulder. Izzy saw her brother-in-law and squeaked, jumping right into his arms. He encircled her waist and hoisted her off her feet. Alec was half-sitting on the bed with the backrest lifted up. He smiled looking at Magnus who was staring right back at him. “Go... Clary is waiting for you outside... rush”, he patted the girl’s shoulder, shooing her away to his sister.

“I am sorry for leaving without telling you in the morning”, Magnus turned back to face Alec and admitted. He walked over to Alec’s bed and sat on the left side. The boy definitely looked better than he did this morning, but Magnus couldn’t bear to look at the plaster that looked so suffocating while it was wrapped around his torso and right hand.

“It’s okay. You don’t have to apologize, Magnus”, Alec lifted his free hand and waved it, dismissing the apology. “Do you feel fine? I thought you told Izzy that you were too tired to come? You should have rested alright? I wasn’t gonna go anywhere. Literally strapped to this bed until Luke’s doctor lets me go.”, Alec furrowed his brows and tried to ease Magnus’ nerves which were written all over his beautiful face. His left hand reached out to Magnus and entangled his fingers in his. Magnus smiled and nodded his head. He lifted his other hand and adjusted the stray strands of hair from Alec’s forehead.

“I wasn’t tired... just a little afraid...”, Magnus admitted. He used his thumb entangled in Alec’s fingers and started making circles on the back of his hand. Alec could notice that Magnus wanted to say something to him.

“of what... if I may ask?”

“Of noticing how you will look at me now... and then I saw that the look hasn’t changed in the last two weeks... even after everything that has happened with me...”, he chewed on his lower lip. “Actually, I... kinda expected that things will be different... and I was prepared for it... and then you woke up from sleep and looked at me like I was the same person... before all this happened... and I freaked out...”

“But you are still the same person...”

“I am not”, Magnus narrowed his brows and clenched his teeth as he tried to control his tears. “I am not, Alec... and you don’t have to do this... you don’t have to keep fighting for me... and waste your own life when I am not Magnus you agreed to get married to. I have changed and it’s fair if you...”,
he covered his lips with his palm and sniffed. Alec slid his hand around Magnus’ other wrist and pulled him closer to his body, so he could hug him. He shifted to his right with much effort and cupped Magnus’ cheek pressing him into the crook of his neck.

“You’ll always be the same person to me, Magnus... no matter what? I know what I signed up for when I said yes to that engagement and you haven’t changed...”

“You’re not understanding what I am trying to say...”, Magnus shook his head as Alec’s hand cradled it to his neck.

Alec pressed his lips onto Magnus’ hair. “No... I don’t have to. I love you. And that is not going to change. Your soul... your heart... your wonderful brain... your values, Magnus... those are the things no one can change about you – especially not your father who had neither of the qualities you have. Your heart and soul are still as pure as they always have been... and so is my love for you...”

“I am tainted, Alexander...”

“No... you’re not! You are still as beautiful and inspiring as you have always been, my love.”, Alec tipped his chin and made him look at him. “Nothing can taint you... not as long as you don’t want it to... okay? Come here”, he gestured him back into a hug even though his upper body was in pain without the morphine. Magnus lifted his legs up on the bed, toeing his shoes off, and curled them in Alec’s. He buried his head in the left side of Alec’s neck and used his palm to push Alec’s head down and capture his lips for a kiss. The first time in almost 15 days. And it felt so good. Like he had found a new inspiration for his life. “Magnus... we all change on a daily basis... alright? We’re never the same person we were yesterday, and we’ll never be the same person tomorrow. But sometimes, life decides to give us a push... and change us more rapidly than we’d expect... but we cannot let those experience affect us... or make us lose our faith in love and hope...”

Magnus kept his eyes fixed on Alec as he spoke... registering every word he said. There were tears wetting those brown eyes, but he didn’t wipe them off. Alec wasn’t the person Magnus wanted to hide his fears and grief from. His soul was bare to Alec and Magnus trusted him enough to protect that soul.

“You taught me that... when I had lost hope that I could ever fall in love again... you entered my life and changed it. You inspired me... and you gave me confidence. And I want you to trust me. This is a bump in the road okay? Maybe a very big bump... but you and I... we will get through this. Together. It will be tough... some days harder than the others but we’ll sail through... because I trust you and I know how brave you are. You can do this? I just need you to let me help... let me be there for you. And that’s all I ask for... because I know you’ll be there for me too...”, he shrugged and shut his eyes. Moving the shoulders wasn’t probably for the best. “Look at me... I am a bag of broken bones... and I need you too...”, he mumbled, puffing his cheeks. Magnus gave him a weak smile and nodded. “I love you and these 15 days were the longest 15 days of my life...”, he swallowed. Magnus reached Alec’s lips again and crashed his own against it.

“I love you too”, he whispered, parting his lips from Alec’s. Alec gave him a smile and then shifted his body down, one step at a time until his head was perfectly snuggled in the crook of Magnus’ neck. Magnus raised his body up so that he could give Alec space to cuddle. There was not a lot of movement Alec was capable of at this point, but he adjusted himself enough so that he was very close to the love of his life.

“I missed you... so much”, Alec whispered, sensing how much he had missed Magnus’ soft skin and his scent. Magnus kissed his hair and then entangled his fingers in them, gently massaging and rubbing his scalp. He was at peace... and it was a different thing because he hadn’t been so calm and relaxed for a very long time.
“I haven’t taken the pregnancy test... yet”, Magnus cleared his throat. Now was as good a time to rip that band-aid off as any. Alec looked up at Magnus for a fraction of second and then gave him a nod, before dropping his head back in his neck.

“Whenever you’re ready Magnus...”

“What if I have conceived?”

“We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it...”, Alec hummed, closing his eyes as sleep gripped him. “I know we have so much to talk about Magnus... but I have missed your arms. Can we just sleep and talk about it tomorrow?”

“Yes...”

“If you want to go back home, just wake me up...”

“I am not leaving you tonight... or any night, Alexander”, Magnus tipped a sleepy Alec’s chin and pressed a quick kiss on his lips. Alec gave him a weak smile and then nestled on his fiancé’s chest. It had been one of his favorite nights in a very long time.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you thought about the chapter in the comment section :D
Isabelle greeted Magnus and then rushed out to finally reunite with her best friend. The infirmary was rather quiet at this time in the night with only a few nurses and attendants on the floor that Alec was in. She went over to the reception and asked for Luke Garroway. The receptionist told him that he and a guest were waiting for her in the canteen. Isabelle’s lips turned into a full-blown grin as she turned towards the direction of the canteen. It was at the farthest end of the gallery and as the beta wolf made her way to through, she could feel the anticipation in her heart and how close she was to finally be seeing the girl she loved so much. She stopped a foot inside the canteen hall and then turned to her left. In the corner of the hall, lodged in a quiet booth by the window was her favorite redhead in the entire world. She was sitting opposite Luke Garroway and her head was thrown back in laughter because of something that he had said.

Isabelle felt tears appearing in her eyes because the last time she had seen Clary, the girl was holding an unconscious Magnus in her arms. Her hands were smeared with dried out blood of Kaya Bane who the Alpha had murdered. “Morgenstern!”, she tipped her chin and called out to her. Clary paused, and her eyes widened when she heard the voice. She didn’t move her gaze and her lips opened into a dopey smile.

“Lightwood”, she responded and then finally turned her head to look up at where the sound had come from. 4 tables apart, Isabelle Lightwood stood wearing a lose floral dress and a short leather jacket over it. Luke looked back and forth between the two girls – slightly perturbed by the title that Isabelle had called Clary by. He didn’t really expect to hear the word *Morgenstern* ever again in his life. This was interesting. Clary jumped out of her seat and ran across the hall until she was a foot away from Isabelle. Isabelle scanned Clary’s face, memorizing her happy smile and then threw her arms around Clary’s neck and crashed their lips together.

Clary stumbled a few steps back and caught onto the end of Isabelle’s jacket behind her back and curled her fingers around the edge of it. She was struggling hard to giggle between their kisses because the beta wolf was so gullible. “I missed you”, she parted her lips from Isabelle’s and spoke between bouts of laughter.

Izzy lowered her grasp around Clary’s back and scooped her in her arms until the girl was off her feet. Clary squealed as Izzy twirled them around. “I missed you too”, she huffed, putting Clary down on her feet. Luke stood up near their table behind them. “Magnus is with Alec in his room right now... so, it’s just us and Luke, I guess”, Izzy tilted her head and looked at the Garroway Alpha who was looking surprised and shocked.

“You look alright... are you alright?”, Clary moved her fingers through the strands of black hair, having missed how soft and silky they felt between her fingers, and then trailed her palm down to cup her face. Izzy rolled her eyes and nodded.
“I am... now, I am...”, she assured. “I can’t believe you and Magnus were here all along. With Luke. I mean... I can’t believe you were so close...”

“I know... I didn’t know Alec would be flown to Brooklyn for treatment. Luke told us that we would be safe here... but Magnus knows this city, and the areas and keeping him comfortable was important because of everything...”, she shrugged. Isabelle nodded and scanned Clary’s face. The girl was still the same, but Isabelle could notice the slight changes. Clary looked a little exhausted and worn out, but only to people who really knew her. The eyes were sunken, only slightly and there were dark circles that she had tried to cover up with makeup. She also seemed to have lost a little weight but that was the least of Izzy’s worries. Clary had brutally snapped the neck of her adoptive mother and murdered her in cold blood. It was done to protect her brother... but the act was still brutal, and Clary had never hurt anyone before... let alone end someone’s life. That must have been taxing for the redhead. Izzy couldn’t expect otherwise. She placed her hands on Clary’s shoulders and pulled her in another tight and comforting hug.

“You’re not alone anymore, alright. We’re all here”, she rubbed her back. Clary smiled and hummed a yes in Izzy’s shoulder.

“Now... before Luke kills us for starving him to death... let’s go and eat something!”, she pulled away from Izzy and pulled her towards their booth where Luke was waiting to greet the girls. Izzy gave him a kiss on his cheek and then slipped into the seat opposite to Luke and Clary. Clary lifted the food packets and placed them on the table and started unpacking the boxes. Luke looked back and forth between the girls and then tapped his kneecaps to release his anxiety and just go for it. Maybe it could be a coincidence.

“Isabelle... I am sorry to you know...pry into this... but you called Clary ‘Morgenstern’, if I heard it correctly?”, he gulped, presenting his question in front of both the girls who looked a little puzzled by the sudden question. Isabelle furrowed her brows and exchanged a glance with Clary before turning to look back at Luke.

“Yeah... coz that’s her last name”, she waved her fingers towards the girl.

“Clarissa Adele Morgenstern – that’s my full name, Luke. But why do you ask... did you know someone else who went by the surname Morgenstern?”, Clary squeezed her lips together and gave him a tightlipped smile.

“Speaking of... the Clave recovered a few artifacts from your house – hidden in Asmodeus and Kaya’s vault... and this was one of them. Mom gave it to me, because I was missing you a lot, but you should take it now... it is high time the pendant is returned to its rightful owner.”, Izzy interrupted Clary’s question, putting her hand inside her pocket and pulling out a beautiful locket from it. It was made out of platinum with gold and diamond studded in the design. There was a pendant dangling from the chain – a combination of two flowers, daylily and anemone. The pendant was bracketed by the letters ‘V’ and ‘J’ written in cursive and floral fonts. It wasn’t a very heavy piece of jewelry and although it looked old, there was a traditional richness to it’s design. The pendant and the letters together jingled when Izzy placed the necklace in Clary’s hand.

“It belonged to you, a gift from your parents... Asmodeus and Kaya took it from you after the accident and never gave it back... none of us could figure out why. It’s so beautiful... and one of the only things that was recovered from the crash site...” Izzy licked her lips as she felt the color on Clary’s face vanish. She curled her wrist around the necklace and kissed her own hand.

“You parents, Clary?”, Luke rubbed her arm.

“Yeah... I thought everything was destroyed in the blast...”, she sniffed and flicked the tears away
from her eyes. She plucked the letters between her fingers and showed it to Luke excitedly. “These letters J and V stand for their names – Valentine and Jocelyn”, she remarked proudly. “It’s so pretty... right Luke?” Luke gasped, holding his palm to his mouth. His eyes were wide with shock and there were sweat beads forming on his forehead.

“Jocelyn Fairchild and Valentine Morgenstern?”, he asked.

“Yeah... how do you know my mother’s maiden name? I don’t think I have mentioned anything about who my parents were before... not to you...”, Clary chimed, turning to grin at Luke when she saw his shocked expression. “Luke...”

“I... used to know them... your parents. They were my classmates in school”, Luke shrugged, pulling himself together.

“What??”, the girls said in unison.

“Yeah... when I saw you with Magnus... I could see that you are exactly like your mother. The same eyes... the hair... your smile. Everything reminded me of Jocelyn and I was surprised to see such an uncanny resemblance to someone I used to know such a long time ago, Clary. Even the fire that you have in you... the Morgenstern fire is what Valentine used to call it... we used to play in the school volleyball team and he would always rub it on me. But he was my best friend”, Luke remarked, recalling the good days. “...closer to me like my own brother. But then you told Magnus was your brother and I thought that the resemblance was just a coincidence.”

“Wow”, Isabelle gasped. “I don’t really believe in destinies but of all the people Magnus and Alec could have met in New York, Valentine and Jocelyn’s school-friend would have been the last person to join that list but here we are... . And if you knew them... I am sure there are things you can tell her...”, she smiled.

“I am sure”, his smile vanished for a second and then he replaced it.

Clary hooked the necklace around her neck and then started unpacking the dinner boxes again. “How is Alec?”

“Grumpy. Whining. On the edge”, Izzy rolled her eyes.

“Normal”, Clary clicked her tongue. “What happened there... after we left?”, she shook her head unable to control her mouth.

“Alec injected the entire exciting serum into his blood... right after you left”, Isabelle gulped, recalling the horrifying events of that battle. “His eyes glowed red, Clary... and I have never seen him so lethal and dangerous... losing Magnus, letting him go... he channeled all the anger into crushing anyone who dared to come close to him... or follow the path you and Magnus run towards”

“That amount of serum would have...”

“Yeah... the doctors said that if he hadn’t bled out of his wounds, that amount of poison would have killed him on-site”, Isabelle wiped the lone tear falling from her eye. “And right before he bit Asmodeus... and killed him, your step-father crushed his bones and let him bleed internally. Had it not been for the doctors there... Alec would have succumbed to those injuries”

“He’s alright now, Izzy... that’s all that matters, okay?”, she reached out and squeezed Izzy’s hands in her.
Luke owned the property the infirmary was built on. Therefore, it was not an issue for him to book a visiting room for Isabelle and Clary to sleep at the hospital so that they can be close to their brothers and check on them. Luke placed two of his trusted guards outside Alec’s room and gave strict instruction to not let any visitor know that Alec was staying at the infirmary with a partner in his room. He had booked the room under the false name of Dominique Schultz for Alec just to keep prying eyes out of Alec’s hair. Isabelle peeked inside Alec’s room and found him sleeping in Magnus’ arms. They both looked so relaxed that she didn’t wake up him and turned off the lights. Clary was waiting for her in the visitor’s room.

“They ok?”, she asked as soon as Isabelle stepped in.

“I haven’t seen them so relaxed since the morning you woke them up... right before we were supposed to leave for the Library to do the research...”, Isabelle gave a tearful smile and pulled off the jacket off her shoulder. “No one could have expected the events to turn around so unexpectedly and then the way the entire day ended...”

“That’s the last time I remember Magnus being himself... remember all the jokes we cracked sitting on the floor and eating sushi during our lunch break? I wish Dad hadn’t come back home that day... or asked you and me to go out and talk for a while when he whisked my brother away”, she reminisced. “Magnus hasn’t been himself since”, Clary sighed, dropping on the bed and lifting the knees to her chest and placing her chin on it. She grabbed the blanket in her fingers and plucked on it while Isabelle locked her room from the inside. “I can’t believe that my step-father broke Magnus’ confidence. My brother has been the strongest person I have known my whole life... and now he’s just... closed off... and always in his thoughts, believing how worthless he is... no matter what I tell him... or Luke... I hope Alec is doing better... for his sake... I would like to hope!”, she took a deep breath and hid her tears away from Isabelle.

“I don’t even know what to expect from Alec. He just woke up today... and...”, she rubbed her cheeks with her palm and climbed onto the bed next to Isabelle, placing a pillow on her lap. They had a small TV in the room and she turned it on and logged into Netflix. “I cannot begin to imagine how much it would have affected Magnus...?”

“I don’t know, Izzy. He’s so broken... so doubtful of himself and I don’t even know if he would ever be able to forget all the stupid accusations Asmodeus made on him. How could Dad be so horrible to him? Magnus has always been so bright... and talented. And the thing that bothered them was his fucking gender? Why?”, she shook her head. She moved her fingers through her hair and closed her eyes.

“I would like to think that Magnus and Alec would help each other and heal each other’s wounds... I want to hope that... for Magnus’ sake... and Alec’s... and even yours. Because all of us deserve some time off to pull ourselves together and gather our shit... get back to our lives that was so brutally taken away from us...”, she tilted her head and placed it on the wall that the bed was pushed against. “But... I want to talk about you... Clary... how are you?”

“Fine...”, she shrugged.

“No, you’re not!”, Izzy argued. “You just spent the last 2 weeks protecting Magnus every second of every day and night... running from the memories of your terrible adoptive parents... and... just being on the edge because...”

“...I murdered my mother in cold blood... and felt no remorse doing that...”, Clary completed the sentence for her with a sad smile on her face. She tilted her head towards Izzy and found her eyes tearing up. “I am fine. I didn’t think I had it in me... to become so closed off after everything... but I don’t regret killing my mom’”
“I know you don’t... but you still took another life... and that has weight... no matter how bad the person who died was”, Izzy swallowed.

“Magnus needed me at that time. It was expected that I don’t let emotions guide me and I did what I was supposed to do. What Alec expected me to do? So, I couldn’t have drowned myself into those thoughts... or pause to feel guilty”

“That was then... you and Magnus were alone and unprotected. But, I am here now... and you can talk to me...”

“I will... Izzy. If I want to talk about it... I would...”, she slid her hand behind Izzy’s neck and pulled her in for a soft kiss. “I promise...”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah...”, she relaxed onto the bed and pushed Izzy back on the pillow and settling on top of the Beta wolf with her hand rubbing up and down the back of Isabelle’s neck. Izzy smiled in their kisses and curled one leg around Clary’s, digging her heel in the back of her thigh. Clary slid her other hand behind Izzy’s back and deepened the kiss, slowly using her tongue to chase and lick her partner’s soft lips. “You know...”, she pulled away and whispered against Izzy’s lips.

“Mm?”

“We never really... you know...”

“What...?”

“What are we... Iz?”

Isabelle understood what Clary was trying to say.

“You’re my brother-in-law’s sister?”, the Lightwood wolf teased. Clary rolled her eyes and kissed her lower lip, gently biting on it.

“And so are you... but you know that’s not what I meant?”

“What did you mean, C?”, Izzy chuckled.

“Isabelle Sofia Lightwood”, Clary gasped, pulling away from Izzy and looking in her mischievous and naughty eyes.

“Yes?”

“Would you be my girlfriend?”, she wiggled her brows.

Isabelle smiled and hoisted Clary completing on her top, pulling her upward until her palms squeezed Clary’s butt. “I thought you would never ask”, she winked.

“Is that a yes?”, she confirmed.

“Yes it is”, Izzy pulled Clary by her neck for a kiss.

...
setting startled him, until he remembered that he had slept with Alec in his hospital bed. Speaking of, he dropped his gaze next to him and found Alec sleeping with his back to him. He lifted his head up to have a look at his fiancé. Alec was sleeping with his weight on his fractured arm. But, he didn’t look like he was in pain. His eyes were shut, and his hair was messily fallen over his forehead and the pillow. His stubble which was now a full-grown beard looked really bad and unkempt today. Magnus decided to pester Alec into shaving today. He bent his head down pressed a kiss on Alec’s cheek, right next to his ear. The sheets rustled when Alec moved and opened his eyes and tilted his head to look back at Magnus.

“Did I wake you up?”, Magnus widened his eyes.

“I have been awake for 5 minutes now”, Alec spoke in his morning voice and turned around to face his fiancé.

“Careful!”, Magnus gasped.

“It’s just a minor sprain... letting go off morphine really helped with the healing.”, Alec nuzzled the tip of his nose against Magnus’ skin to take his scent in. Magnus smiled and flicked the strands of Alec’s forehead. He used his hands to Alec’s jaw and just scan his face... feel it between his own fingers before bending forward to kiss his cheek.

“Good morning”, he whispered.

“Good morning”, Alec grinned, sliding his good arm around Magnus’ waist and turning around on the bed so that his unplastered side of the body brushed against the Omega’s chest. “I have missed waking up next to you”, he added.

“Me too...”, Magnus dropped a kiss on Alec’s cheek again and then settled in the crook of Alec’s neck, sliding down on the bed.

He slid his hand down to the hem of Alec’s hospital gown and curled his fingers around his waist. He hadn’t slept this peaceful in 2 weeks. Alec heaved a sigh of relief against Magnus hair and tugged him closer with his arm that was wrapped around Magnus’ back. Magnus lifted one of his legs and dropped it between Alec’s. It was just enough for him to feel Alec’s groin rubbing against his thigh and his own digging in Alec’s hips.

“Alexander?”, Magnus mumbled, barely opening his mouth.

“Mm?”

“Could you... when you were in a coma...?”, he lifted his head up, just enough to catch Alec’s expression when he spoke. “Could you hear people around you?”, he lifted his hand and placed it on Alec’s collar bone – palm facing down and then dropped his chin on the back of his wrist. Alec blinked twice and then parted his lips.

“I heard you...”, he shrugged.

“You did?”

“In bits and pieces...”, he tilted his head. “But... yeah, I was aware of things around me... my mother... Isabelle... even my Dad came and tried to wake me up one time...”, he narrowed his brows. “... I think I wanted to listen to those voices and wake up...?”

“But...you couldn’t?”
“No... it’s not that. There was another voice in my head... the one that told me it wasn’t the right
time... that I needed to be sure of something before I woke up... it’s all very hazy in my mind right
now...but that is what it is...”, he swallowed. “...but then I heard you... and then everything blacked
out for a few minutes...or hours... and then the next thing I remember... was that I was trying to pull
out the tubes lodged in my chest”, he rolled his eyes.

“You’re crazy sometimes”, Magnus rolled his teary eyes in response and scoffed.

Alec lifted his thumb to wipe the lone tear that escaped Magnus’ eyes and then dipped his head
down to press his lips to his forehead. “I am absolutely fine now, Magnus. Please don’t cry. I am
alive... and well and in your arms... there’s nothing more that I can ask for... right? What is bothering
you now... please talk to me?”

“I just remembered seeing you strapped to that ventilator... on the video call... and wanting to touch
you, ease your discomfort...”, he shrugged. “Let’s just say that it isn’t one of my favorite looks of
yours”, he tried to joke.

“I’ll keep that in mind”, Alec hummed.

Magnus held his fist to his mouth the next moment, his expressions constipating with passing time.
Alec stopped stroking his back and widened his eyes. “Magnus?”, he called, narrowing his brows.
The Omega swallowed and held out his finger. He looked uncomfortable. Alec had no idea what
had just happened to Magnus in a fraction of a second. And then, Magnus swallowed again. Fuck.
He lifted himself off the bed and jumped onto the floor the next second. Slipping into his shoes, he
crashed open the door of the bathroom and closed the door on his back before dropping on his knees
and throwing up the contents of his stomach in the commode. He could feel the burn of bile and acid
all the way down to his stomach.

He dropped his butt on the ground, pushing himself against the wall and holding his knees to his
chest. The vomiting was far from over. Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he took a deep
breath to calm his burning chest down. His stomach still felt funny and nauseous. The taste of vomit
in his mouth only intensifying the nausea. There was a pressure at the back of his head... not a
headache... just a pressure and he knew that the pressure will be released only once he is over his
morning sickness. He burped once, the bile rising to his throat again and then positioned himself in
front of the commode as he threw up, again. He could feel his heaving chest and aching muscles as
the food regurgitated in his mouth, giving him a terrible taste in his mouth. Amidst the discomfort, the
sound of doorknob twisting, and door opening didn’t alert him.

Magnus was almost done throwing up the second time when he heard a palm pressing against his
back and gently rubbing all the way down his spine. He closed his eyes and pressed the knob for the
flush. “Alexander... go out, you don’t have to see this...”, he choked on his coarse voice and tears
rolled down his eyes. Alec didn’t respond but continued making comforting strokes on his back
instead. The second round had been quite painful for Magnus and he had teared up because of the
tensioning of his muscles.

“Alexander, please...”, he requested.

“Shh... I am not leaving. You calm down and breathe.”, Alec comforted. Magnus was about to
respond to him when he threw up again, this time... not expecting the reaction and it hurt his muscles
just a bit more than usual. Alec retracted his hand to give Magnus space and he had teared up because of the
regurgitation of bile. Magnus pressed the flush again and dropped
the cover on the commode before sitting on top of it – tired and exhausted by his morning routine.
He was in tears now, and his hands were pressed against in mouth. The situation was embarrassing
on a whole new level for him.
“Come here”, Alec asked holding out his hand. Magnus looked up and saw Alec staring at him, unfazed and unaffected by any of the disgusting things (according to Magnus) he must have just witnessed. Magnus hesitantly lifted his hand to give it in Alec’s and then stopped thinking that his hand was dirty. He stood up and brushed past Alec to open the tap and wash his face and hands while Alec patiently waited for him. Once he was done brushing his teeth and cleaning himself, he turned around and Alec stepped closer with the dry cloth he was holding. He dabbed the cloth against Magnus’ mouth, gently drying his face. The Omega kept his gaze fixed at Alec, tears streaming out of his eyes as the Alpha cleaned and dried Magnus’ hands, neck and face.

“You okay?”, he asked, throwing the washcloth aside.

“I am fine...”, Magnus licked his lips and looked away. “I am sorry you had to see that... it is just... these...”

“You don’t have to apologize... for anything, Magnus”, he wiped off the tears with his hand that wasn’t plastered to his torso. He placed that hand on one side of Magnus’ jaw and came closer to kiss him on his cheek when he was plunged into a hazy vision as soon as his lips touched the warm skin of Magnus’ cheek.

Flashes of Clary running away with Magnus on her arm that rapidly changed into Magnus waiting on the porch of Alec’s house while Clary packed their duffel bag. The vision looked like Alec was seeing the world through Magnus’ eyes. The vision was hazy, and the eyes felt watery. He saw Clary rush down the stairs and grab him again as they hopped in the car Alec had given him and Clary drove off while it was still thundering and raining outside.

The vision shifted to the dockyard in Brooklyn when Luke pulled Magnus in his arms and took him to their home. He heard faint voices of the doctor, Clary and Luke talking about what happened with Magnus and then Dr Abbott telling Magnus and Clary about the right way to tackle this situation and the chances of Magnus conceiving the pregnancy. They also spoke about the chances that this child was Alec’s and how that fact altered Magnus’ chances of conceiving. The vision looked very real... and scarier than the dreams because here he could feel the fear that Magnus had gone through. It was just like reliving this fear again.

Magnus jolted in his place as he was taken back to the battlefield where everyone around him was calling him “Alec”. His vision was clear but there was a red hue to everything – probably because of Alec’s anger. He saw his father again, launching an attack on him in Alec’s body and Alec dodging the attacks, punching the guy back. He looked at his own hands and they were smeared with blood, as was his shirt and pants. The vision shifted to a low grunting sound as anger boiled within Alec and he pounced on Asmodeus, choking him within his canines. Magnus could feel the way Alec’s sharp teeth dug into his father’s skin.

He felt his flesh being ripped out by Asmodeus’ soft claws and the sting felt very real. The warmth of Asmodeus’ brush that bathed his canines was also livid. He felt his bones cracking under the older Alpha’s chokehold and the way he gradually lost control over his limbs and collapsed on the ground right after Asmodeus succumbed to Alec’s venom.

“Holy shit. What was that vision, Alexander?”, Magnus gasped, pulling out of the memory. Alec was staring at him with disbelief. They had just shared each other’s memories and experiences. Was
that possible? It hadn’t happened to them before. “Did that... really happen? Did Dad really...?”, the Omega asked.

“Your father crushing me?”, Alec arched a brow.

“Yeah... right before you killed him with your Alpha venom?”, Magnus gasped, covering his mouth with his palm.

“Well... yeah. As far as I remember the details, I was in his chokehold and my bones were cracking and crushing in his hold. The last memory I have is when his arms slid around my chest and cracked my collarbone into multiple pieces... and how air escaped my lungs when that impact punctured them. The rest of it is very hazy... Isabelle told me about some of the details, but I don’t remember them...”, he shrugged. “So... I guess that vision was very much real”

“How did we?”

“I have no idea”, Alec rubbed his temple.

Magnus was horrified at what he had seen. The brutality with which Asmodeus had tried to kill his fiancé and crush his body. He couldn’t be thankful to God that Alec was alive and breathing after all that. They walked out of the bathroom and Alec a glass of water for Magnus. Magnus dropped on the stool next to Alec’s bed and held his head within his palms. Everything was so broken and wrong at the moment.

Alec gave him the glass of water and sat on the bed in front of Magnus, urging him to drink. Magnus looked up from his lap and took the glass without saying anything.

“I didn’t think that this would be easy...”, Alec huffed, rubbing his overgrown beard.

“Alexander... this is nothing that you signed up for”, Magnus argued.

“Meaning?”

“When my father came to you to propose this marriage, all that you agreed for is to get engaged to me... no one mentioned that risking your life... or sacrificing you family’s life... and watching me throw up my gut every morning would be in the clause... My father is responsible for those things... and my mother and you don’t have to...”

“You’re right, Magnus. I didn’t sign up for all this...”, Alec gasped, a little offended by Magnus. “...frankly, the way we began this relationship... I would have never thought that I would do those things for you... but I also didn’t imagine falling in love with you... and when I killed your father... or saved your life as you call it... it was because I love you... and maybe that makes me selfish... but I don’t want to lose the man I am in love with...”

“Alexander...”

“No, Magnus... those are my reasons...”, the Alpha swallowed. Magnus looked back and forth between Alec’s eyes and lips... unable to respond to Alec and his explanation. Fortunately, the door opened, and Dr Abbott walked in to check on Alec as per his morning routine. “We need to talk”, Alec whispered just before Magnus stood up and gave the doctor space to check on Alec.

Andre placed his palm over Alec’s plastered arm and inspected the fracture. It felt better... and not tender. Even the swelling had gone down a little. He summoned a nurse and slid down Alec’s gown to reveal the full plaster. He pulled the edge out and started removing it slowly. Magnus stood at the edge of Alec’s bed with his hand crossed over his chest as he closely watched. As the layers of
plastic fell off, Magnus saw the scars of wounds that Asmodeus’ claws had created. They had healed up but some of the scars were still pink.

“Magnus... how do you feel this morning?”, Andre tipped his chin. He kept his gaze fixed on Alec’s plasters.

“Fine...”, Magnus lifted his shoulder. He moved forward and reached the other side of Alec’s bed to look at his fiancé’s scars. “Are these going to leave a mark?”, he asked, brushing them with the tip of his fingers.

“Some of them... definitely...but most of them will disappear with time”, Andre answered. Alec’s hand dropped to his when the last wrap of plaster came off. He winced a little and then wiggled his shoulders to gain movement. “Alec... lift this hand for me?”, he placed his palm below Alec’s right wrist and nudged him. Alec did as he was asked, and he managed to lift his hand to the level of his eyes without any pain. “Good... alright, you can stop now”, the doctor whispered. “Take care to not move this arm too much. I am going to get the nurse bring you a sling so that it is easier to remember, alright?”

“Thank you, doctor”, Alec smiled, relaxing under Magnus’ touch. He threw the discarded plaster in the trash bin and then settled on the stool in front of the men. Magnus was standing behind Alec, squeezing his shoulders with his fingers.

“I have been meaning to talk to you both for a long time”, he cleared his throat and unbuttoned his suit. “Magnus... did you take the test yet?”, he questioned. Magnus stiffened and shook his head in a hesitant no. “We would need a sample if we have to establish the parenthood...”, the doctor sighed, shaking his head.

“I am pretty sure that the semen was mine”, Alec gulped, raising his good hand to place it above Magnus’ on his shoulder. Magnus turned his hand around and entangled their fingers to obtain the support he needed.

“And how would you say that with such surety?”

“When Magnus left... I confronted Asmodeus... and he confessed that he had extracted some of it... while I was out and unconscious... just in case we didn’t end up mating through natural ways”, he cleared his throat... repeating Magnus’ father’s horrifying words.

“But you can’t be sure that he was telling the truth?”

“Yeah... but, I don’t think Asmodeus would have left this to chance... considering how low the probability of Magnus conceiving would be if it wasn’t his Alpha’s fluid”, Alec licked his lips recalling the odds that Andre had mentioned to Clary and Magnus.

“How do you...?”

“I had a vision... it was like I was in his body... watching the world, reliving that memory as if I were Magnus...”, Alec recalled.

“You what?”, Andre gasped.

Magnus and Alec narrowed their brows. There was something Andre wasn’t telling them?

“What is it?”

“Come here”, the doctor stood up and placed his hand on the side of Alec’s head and then did the
same to Magnus who bent down a little for convenience. Andre threw his head back and closed his eyes, murmuring something in his mind. All of this felt barbaric to Alec who rolled his eyes, trying to understand why the doctor was behaving like that. “You’re right, Alec”, he gasped, opening his eyes a few minutes later. “Your mating bond has been solidified”

“What?”, Magnus choked.

“But Magnus and I haven’t... I haven’t knotted him...?”

“Sometimes... highly compatible wolves don’t need physical presence to complete the ritual. The phenomenon is rare, but it is known to happen. You and Magnus... you had a strong emotional bond before you got mated and that helped Magnus channel your energy when he received a part of you. The knotting happened inside him, without your presence... but since your thoughts and emotions are so strong and bonded with each other... the presence became a secondary need”, Abbott explained to the men.

“Doctor Abbott... can you... be clearer?”

“You and Magnus are mated now, Alec. The ritual is complete. Now, even if Magnus doesn’t conceive the kids, you would not be asked to go through this again for the sake of completing the ritual. It will be your choice... and yours only...”, he smiled, letting go off Magnus and Alec’s heads. “I am going to head out now... but keep a check on those wounds, alright Alec? Don’t try to do anything that reopens them”

“Yes doc”, Alec nodded, pulling his gown back up.

The doctor turned on his heels and left the room. Magnus took a deep breath and dropped on the bed behind Alec. He placed his forehead against the cold skin of Alec’s shoulder and pressed a kiss above his shoulder blade. There was a lot that they needed to talk about and discuss. And time was running out on them. Every minute. Alec sighed and dropped his weight, pressing his body against Magnus’ chest and leaned back to take in his scent.

“We cannot do this alone, Magnus”, he mumbled, opening his eyes and tilting his chin up to look at Magnus. “Please trust me... you and I will make this work... and we’ll fix it”, he begged. Magnus’ eyes were closed, and he choked a little before nodding – agreeing with Alec but not looking back at him. The nurse returned with the sling that Abbott had promised, and Magnus promptly stood up and helped Alec wear the thing. The Alpha winced when he parted his hand away from his chest and Magnus had to go about it very gently.

“I am going to go and get us some tea”, Magnus tapped Alec’s shoulder and then turned around, walking out of the room.

He needed that time alone to process everything. From getting Alec back to knowing that the prospective child was Alec’s and that they were mated now. It wasn’t just his decision anymore. If he was actually pregnant, he couldn’t just decide anything by himself. It had to be a mutual decision between him and his fiancé. He hadn’t himself come to terms with the fact that he was looking at losing 9 months of his career, until the child was born... and then who knows after? Maybe Alec would not appreciate his mate working and neglecting their newborn child. Well... he couldn’t say the same for himself... maybe he wouldn’t want to leave his child alone and go out to work.

Was he ready for that?

Ready to lose a career he had worked so hard to build and barely just begun. He had dreamt of managing an entire hotel once upon a time and now, that dream looked like it would never be
fulfilled. Magnus would end up running a house for his husband – just like every other Omega in their community. He turned around the corner and entered the canteen. It was empty, and the waiter was playing on his phone. Magnus ordered two cups of tea and then gave held out the cash for payment. He sat on the table and waited while his order got ready. The waiter packed his order 10 minutes later and gave him the packet along with the bill and Magnus was on his way back when he saw Isabelle leaving Alec’s room.

He quickened his pace and pushed the door open to find Sebastian Verlac sitting on the stool next to Alec and a few packets of food lying on the coffee table. Alec’s eyes lit up with a twinkle when he saw Magnus enter with tea. But Magnus disregarded that because he couldn’t bare to look at Sebastian sitting so close to his fiancé.

“Magnus!”, Sebastian’s heavily laden Irish accent greeted him.

“Mr Verlac!”, Magnus replied, dryly.

“I just brought Isabelle and Alec some donuts and coffee for breakfast. I didn’t realize that you’d be here too... my apologies”, he swallowed.

“Of course... why would Alec’s fiancé be with him in the hospital... not that Alec is injured or anything, right?”, Magnus deadpanned. Sebastian’s smile vanished as he realized that Magnus probably wasn’t in the mood to talk.

“I am sorry... I just... didn’t mean it like that!”

“Like I said Sebastian... Magnus is here... and I am fine. I appreciate all that you and Jace did to help my mother and sister... but we’re good here... okay? You don’t have to go through so much trouble of getting breakfast”, Alec hissed.

“Don’t worry Alexander... I am sure Sebastian means well...”, Magnus shook his hatred away and plastered a smile on his face. “I just went to get Alec some tea... but I guess he’ll prefer the coffee now. Old habits die hard.”, he pressed the lever of the trashcan and threw one cup of tea before Alec could stop him or make a move.

“Magnus?”, Alec gasped, sitting up on the bed and widening his eyes.

“I have a slight headache and I am going to head home for the day... Sebastian, why don’t you make yourself at home”, he taunted and marched out of the room without waiting for Alec to give an explanation.

“Thank you, Sebastian”, Alec hissed, rubbing his scar.

“I didn’t mean to upset him...”, Sebastian gasped.

“Well, not all of us are a fan of your presence. Now, can you please be done with the breakfast with my sister so that you can go back to your boyfriend... and I can see how to make amends with the man who I am in love with”, Alec stood up from the bed and sat on the armchair in front of the coffee table. Isabelle joined them a minute later, puzzled by Magnus’ absence. The boys said nothing to her and continued eating in silence.

Chapter End Notes
Hey y'all <3
I hope you enjoyed the chapter? I'll see you guys on Sunday with a little dose of angst?
Meanwhile, you can find me here to yell in the comments... or on Twitter @aliaawrites

chapter 29

“His words were true. I am a mistake”

“No... you’re not!” Alec was panicking now. He had never seen Magnus so low on self-esteem and confidence. “You’re not a mistake...”

“I brought shame to my father’s name”
Chapter 29

Chapter Summary

magnus and alec talk :) and I cried while I wrote the second half of this chapter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Hi”, Clary chimed happily as she saw Magnus walk into the portico of Luke’s house. His shirt was messily tucked in his pants and his hair was spiked up in every direction. To make matters worse, Magnus looked angry and enraged and his face was wet with tears. He ignored her greeting and headed straight into his room without any word coming out of his mouth. Once he was inside, he crashed the door close and bolted it from inside making Luke and Clary jump in their seat from the sudden noise.

What happened at the infirmary? Magnus is pissed.

Clary typed a quick text to her girlfriend and exchanged a confused look with Luke. She had returned home with Luke after Isabelle proceeded to have breakfast with Jace and Sebastian. They were now seated on the dining table, having coffee for breakfast.

I have no idea. Alec’s ex-boyfriend Sebastian brought us breakfast... something that he has been doing for two weeks now, and Magnus just rushed out of the infirmary before I could even greet him this morning.

Clary read the text from Isabelle and turned to Luke. “Alec’s ex happened.”, she whispered. Luke rubbed his temple and pinched the bridge of his nose. “Magnus has been on edge for weeks now, getting irritated with every little thing... no wonder Alec’s ex is the reason behind this outburst?”, she leaned closer and whispered.


“Should I go...talk to him?”

“Just let him be for some time... he’ll come around, Clary. We’ve seen it for the last 2 weeks. It is not a good idea to poke Magnus when he is upset over something.”, Luke patted her back. “I am off to the hotel. Text me if there’s something?”

“I will...”, she smiled and watched Luke leave.

... 

Isabelle stood up and held out her hand to walk Sebastian out of the hospital. After Magnus fumed out of the infirmary, the breakfast had gone really silently with an awkward lack of discussion across the table. Alec followed them to the door, escorting Sebastian out when he saw Jace walk into the infirmary. Well. Fuck. Alec rolled his eyes and rubbed his eyelids as the man kissed his boyfriend and asked him to wait in the car. He gave Jace space and the man walked right into the room, with a weird sense of authority.
“By all means... come inside. Be my guest”, Alec taunted, gesturing to Jace to walk inside and settle on the couch. “Have a seat... would you like some tea or coffee?”.

“Alec... just, please. Can we not do this for one day? I don’t want to argue with you!”, he gestured to Alec to stop with the taunts. “How are you?”, Jace pinched the bridge of his nose before placing his hands on his hips.

“Fine”, Alec taunted.

“I am glad”

“Are you, though?”, Alec squinted his eyes and argued. “Forgive me if I have a little difficulty believing that you’re glad that I am not dead right now!”, he added with a roll of his eyes and a disgusted grin on his face.

“Alec... calm down alright?”, Jace raised his palm in the air.

“The audacity... Jace... the audacity? You want me to calm down? As if you are not the one who is here without an invite?”, Alec was in no mood to take any more bullshit sweetness from Sebastian or Jace. “Why are you and your boyfriend here anyway? Like really? You never go and meet someone until you have a personal favor to ask... so let’s just get right to it?”

“I came to check on Izzy...”, he rolled his eyes.

“Well... she doesn’t need you anymore. I am awake, and I can check on her. And in my absence, she has a rather loving brother-in-law who is more than willing to check on my sister as well his own. We don’t need your favors anymore!”

“I can see that... listen, Alec... can you hear me out for one second? I don’t want to do this as much as you... in fact, I didn’t even want to come here after Seb told me you woke up...”, he stepped forward and Alec released a low grunt from his mouth. Jace raised both his palms in the air and stepped back, almost giving Alec’s Alpha instincts the pleasure of watching another Alpha surrender to his orders. There was a red glow in Alec’s eyes and Jace didn’t want this situation to get anything like it had become all those times in the past.

“What do you want to talk about? What now? If it isn’t a favor you need then why are you here...? Jace Herondale doesn’t do casual visits! What does your boyfriend want to accomplish by this? Did you two have a change of heart because you saw me almost die? Or did you finally realize that cheating on your best friend with his boyfriend was a wrong thing to do in the first place?”, Alec squinted his eyes and growled.

“I am not going to apologize for falling in love, Alec”, Jace said, as a matter-of-factly.

“I don’t expect you to!”

“Good. We have that settled I guess”, he spat.

“What else do you want to talk about? Are you here to tell me that I am no longer working on the Vogue project? Did you try to sabotage my job? Am I fired? Is that why you’re here because that is something that Jace Herondale could do!”

“What? Why would I...? I am not that petty, Alec?”

“Oh, dear God...”, Alec chastised, chuckling in an attempt to mock Jace. “You... and not petty... aah? Of course... my bad Mr. Herondale... I am very sorry!”, he apologized, holding his palm to his
“Alec... listen, I am here for a reason. Don’t ruin this... okay?”, Jace huffed. “I want nothing more than to say what I have to and then leave...!”

“Fine... say what you have to and then just disappear before I do something or say something that I won’t regret”

“Your father agreed to my request to ask for Sebastian’s hand in marriage... and now, I can bring him with me to Idris without the threat of being incarcerated in the City of Bones for marrying outside the wolf community and letting a mundane in on our secret. My partner can visit my home... and I am happy...”, he shrugged.

“And... care to explain why you are telling me this?”, Alec blinked. “If you think that I would be jealous of Sebastian... and you... well, it’s a bummer because I won’t be. I have a man in my life that I am completely in love with... and very happy with. I don’t care what is going on with your life... if it wasn’t previously clear, I am sure I just spelled it out for you, again. Yeah? We are done now... please leave!”, Alec pointed out.

“Alec. Please.”, Jace sighed, rolling his eyes. “I wanted to thank you for not sabotaging that agreement because you and I don’t see eye-to-eye”

“You think I would do something like that? Really...? I might be stupid in your opinion but thinking that I would try and extract revenge for something like this? You are delusional, Jace Herondale. I am not the petty one among the both of us.”, Alec gritted his teeth.

“I didn’t say you would... but I still needed to get it out of my chest”, Jace crossed his arms over his chest.

“Well... first, I didn’t even know that you had put in such an application with the Council... Dad doesn’t talk Clave business with me or anyone in the family for that matter... and second, even if I did... my feelings for you wouldn’t have sabotaged anything because I don’t believe in banning people from coming back home based on who they fell in love with or making decisions based on personal vendetta against someone. That is not who I am, and I am sure my Dad has the same beliefs because he is the one who taught me. So... congratulations on that success and just... I didn’t do anything to deserve thanks... so”, he shrugged.

“I am still grateful. Thank you Alec.”, he offered his hand. Alec looked back and forth between his hand and Jace’s eyes and they looked genuine and compassionate – something he hadn’t seen in his former friend’s eyes in a very long time.

“Well... I guess I need to thank you as well then”, he grabbed Jace’s hand and shook it. “Thank you for helping my mother and sister while I was unable to. They needed the support you and your boyfriend so generously provided”

“Isabelle is like a little sister to me...”, Jace shrugged.

“No, she’s not. Please don’t associate with any of my family members like that. But, I am glad you helped. Thank you for it... but please, back off now. I am here, and I can protect them now”, Alec replied.

“Fine. See you on-set soon. Jem and Tessa have postponed the shooting to next week when they heard that you and Magnus had been in a terrible car accident”

“What?”
“Luke sold that story... and it gave you and Magnus time to come back to your jobs when you can... I just didn’t call his bluff”, he shrugged. Alec looked at him for a second – his best friend making an appearance before his eyes before that man disappeared and Jace’s present self took over. He walked Jace out of the room and shut the door.

...

Clary peeked inside Magnus’ room hanging by the door sometime after lunch. She had slid the tray of food in Magnus’ room and left him alone to eat while she ate on the dining table alone. “Is it okay if I join you for a bit?”, she asked, hoping Magnus would respond to her. Magnus looked up from the book he was reading and nodded, asking her to come inside the room. She tiptoed inside as if there were eggshells in the room. There were crumpled tissue papers lying all around and a box sitting right in front of Magnus on the bed. “What are you reading?”

“Fault in Our Stars”, Magnus sniffed. She folded her legs on the bed in front of Magnus and slid her fingers below it. There were huge tears ready to fall out of Magnus’ eyes and there were big bags under them.

“And why would you read such a sad story, today of all days? Don’t mind me, I am just curious.”, she tilted her head.

“I wanted to read angst. I feel like it is complementing my mood and I just... wanted to read pain and heartbreak”, Magnus slapped the book close and snuggled in the pillow backrest that he had created, slipping down on the bed. Clary gave him a soft smile and took the book from his hand, throwing it to the edge of the bed.

“Magnus... angst is not a good way to complement your mood. I know how beautiful that book is... but you should have read something lighter... and happier maybe? Tell me what is bothering you...?”, she got up on her knees and crawled next to Magnus, settling on the stack of pillows that Magnus had collected against the headboard of the bed. Magnus wiped his nose and dropped his head on Clary’s shoulder.

“I am so stupid, biscuit...?”, he confessed.

“Why would you say that?”, she picked up Magnus’ laptop and pressed the power button. Luke had asked some of his people to get Magnus’ things from his apartment in Manhattan. His laptop was just one of them.

“Because I am... I got jealous of another guy... and it’s... so stupid and insane of me...”, he sniffed and hooked his arms around Clary’s.

“You’re not stupid...”, she rolled her eyes, typing in the password. The home screen lit up with a photograph of Alec – one from his photoshoots. It was just a small gesture by Magnus – having Alec as his wallpaper but it said so much about his feelings for the guy.

“Alec is never going to speak with me”

“Oh my love, there’s no universe possible where Alec wouldn’t talk to you... okay? You’re practically his lifeline... so don’t worry about that”, she nudge him on his shoulder and patter her older brother’s cheek lovingly.

“I don’t know, biscuit... I am sure I pissed him off today. I don’t know what got into me. I am never like that... the person who stood in front of Alec in the morning was such a crappy version of me”, Magnus complained.
“Do you want to talk about it...?”

“Yes... no? I don’t know...”

“Well... until you make up your mind about this, help me out then!”

“What do you need help with?”, Magnus straightened himself and looked over her shoulders to the laptop screen.

“I was thinking that we should move out of Luke’s and find a place to live... and by that, I specifically mean me finding my place to move into...because you and Alec have that gorgeous studio apartment in fucking Upper East Side. But I cannot stay with Luke forever.”, she shrugged, opening the forrent.com portal.

“I can’t let you rent an apartment in this huge city and live by yourself!”

“I can’t live with the two of you!”, Clary gasped. “Besides... I am going to have to find a job for myself very soon... and then I will be able to afford the place... I cannot keep living off your money Magnus it’s not right!”

“Clary... you haven’t finished your degree. It will be so hard to find a job without that. And then, I don’t want you to just find any job. You loved cooking... and you should have finished your culinary studies”, Magnus rubbed his temple.

“And now I can’t. Because doing that means going back to Idris... and we don’t have a place there anymore... we don’t have a home there anymore... I don’t think if we can ever go back there...”, she licked her lips and the smile vanished from her face, recalling her room and the house that she had lived in her whole life.

“We’ll figure that out. Maybe one of the Universities here will agree to let you transfer to their department and continue your education here... I’ll speak to Luke and Alec...”, Magnus waved his hand and then stopped at Alec’s name. The incident in the morning flashed in his mind again. “...well if he ever forgives me...”, he added.

“He is not angry with you, Magnus. Shut your brain up...”, she slapped his shoulder and continued browsing for studio apartments around New York. Magnus yawned at the response and slid down on the pillows to rest more horizontally. They shortlisted a few places and Clary noted the contact numbers to give them a call. Magnus closed his eyes for a bit. Crying the entire afternoon had exhausted him and maybe it was a good idea to rest his eyes for a bit.

... Magnus stretched his arms above his head and opened his eyes. It was dark outside. He slammed his eyes open and looked at the time on his phone. It was eight-thirty in the evening. His room had been plunged in darkness, but he could see light coming in from below the door along with muffled laughter and shadows moving outside. Magnus got up from the bed and rushed into the bathroom to wash his face. For the first time in forever, he felt good about himself and opened his bag that Clary had stalked with new makeup and toiletries. He picked out his eyeliner and applied a thin layer right above his eyes. He used his finger pad to add a little eyeshadow to his eyelids and a touch of his characteristic glitter. He applied a light lip gloss and then styled his hair in a loose quiff to complete his look. He could see his cheeks puffing up a little. He had also gained a few kilos since everything went down and this only pointed to something Magnus didn’t want to talk or think about right now.

The living room was lit with lanterns and lamps in a subtle yellow hue. Magnus noticed the change
of tone in the house when he walked out. Luke and Clary were in the kitchen, laughing and drinking wine with Izzy? Magnus looked at the girl and then turned around to look the other side. Izzy? He gasped and snapped his head back towards the kitchen to confirm seeing Isabelle Lightwood in Luke’s kitchen. It was indeed Alec’s little sister sitting on the countertop and laughing with his own sister and Luke. But how?

“Did you sleep well?”, Clary noticed her brother standing outside the door of the guest room and called out from the kitchen. Magnus scoffed and smiled. Over the past 15 days, he had forgotten that he was the older one of the two.

“Yes, I did... but why did you not wake me up earlier if Isabelle was coming over? What kind of an impression did you let me make on her, biscuit?”, he waved his hands dramatically in the air and started walking towards the kitchen.

“You looked tired... and I figured I should let you rest for some more time. I would have woken you for dinner, bro... for sure!”, Clary shrugged, handing him a glass of juice from the tetra pack. Magnus didn’t look impressed. He leaned forward and pressed a kiss in the air next to Isabelle’s cheek to greet his sister-in-law and his sister’s girlfriend. “I would have you know... I was about to wake you up when they came...”, she eyed her girlfriend. “But Alec asked me to not disturb you in your sleep... and I can’t say no to your fiancé.”

“Alexander?”

“Yeah... he is outside... speaking to someone from Vogue on the phone. He’ll be inside soon”, Izzy pointed her thumb towards the door. Magnus craned his neck up and saw Alec’s shadow sitting on the stairs of the porch and his heavy baritone speaking to someone. “I am going to go and give this wine to Alec... be back soon”, she picked up the glass and was about to jump down when Magnus took the glass from her.

“I’ll do that”, he smiled and walked away without any further question.

“Nicely done, Lightwood”, Clary winked and whispered at Isabelle. The Lightwood girl raised her shoulders in pride.

“Thank you, Morgenstern”, she wiggled her brows.

“Haha, Jem... I am sure you are going to extract every last bit of revenge from me”, Magnus heard Alec’s unrestrained laughter echoing in the porch of Luke’s house as he closed the distance between them. How had he missed Alec being so happy and carefree? He stepped onto the wood porch and neared Alec. It was dark, and Alec’s figure was visible as a silhouette against the grey tone of the evening sky. His slid his hand over Alec’s shoulder before sitting on the stair next to Alec. The Alpha looked up from the phone and his eyes widened in delight and followed Magnus until he was next to him. He pulled the phone away from his ear for a fraction of a second and leaned to press his lips against Magnus. Magnus kissed him back, slightly surprised that Alec wasn’t angry about this morning. The Alpha gave him his usual smile and took the glass of wine from Magnus’ hand before shifting closer to his fiancé.

“No... jokes apart, I am really excited to join back work. My sprain has gotten better and as soon as I get rid of my sling... I will be at your service...”, he threw his head and laughed. Magnus turned to his right to sit perpendicular to Alec and leaned back on the pillar. He folded one of his legs over the stair and the ankle slid below the leg that was resting on the stair below. “I give you my word, Carstairs”, Alec concluded his phone call and threw the phone aside. He lifted the rim of the glass to his lips and drank the entire content in one go.
“You asked Clary to not wake me up when you came over?”, Magnus asked, looking at his hands fisted in his lap.

“I came to your room a couple of hours ago. You looked so tired but so peaceful and relaxed... I couldn’t find the heart to wake you and rob you off that sleep because you looked like you needed it!”, Alec shrugged. Magnus rolled his eyes and looked away, gazing at something far away on the docks that were visible from Luke’s porch.

Alec used his good hand and lifted Magnus’ hand from his lap. He turned to his side and then leaned back to settle in head comfortably in Magnus’ lap and letting his hands fall back in his hair. Magnus’ lips curved into a smile, but he didn’t look down or remove his gaze from wherever it was fixed. Instead, he entangled his fingers in the locks of Alec’s hairs and gently started massaging his scalp with his fingertips.

“Hi”, Alec hummed, closing his eyes as Magnus’ touch relaxed him.

“You’re not upset...?”, Magnus asked.

“Well... why would I be?”, Alec mumbled.

“Because I acted like a child seeing Sebastian in the morning? Because I left without an explanation?”, Magnus arched a brow.

“I would have reacted the same way if I didn’t know how much he helped Izzy and my mother when I was in a coma”, Alec shrugged.

“Clary told me... I am sorry”

“Come on... had I been in your position, I would have reacted in a worse way... maybe thrown a fit or something... you just dramatically left the room. It’s fine. It wasn’t like I was guilty or anything. I knew that you knew that there was nothing going on...”, Alec joked. Magnus grinned and let out a short chortle. He felt Alec’s hand curl around his wrist as the man brought Magnus’ hands to his mouth and planted a kiss on both his palms. Magnus bent forward, cupping Alec’s jaws between his hands and kissed both his eyelids.

“I love you”, he mumbled when Alec opened his eyes, enthralled by having Magnus so close to him and the wetness on his eyelids reminding of the kisses that Magnus had just planted on them. The Alpha tipped his chin up and Magnus leaned forward until their lips were perfectly in position against each other. Alec raised himself up from Magnus’ lap and parted his lips, trying to find Magnus’ lip in the process. Magnus scoffed as his lips sandwiched Alec’s and closed around them. Alec released a sighing breath when he felt Magnus’ lips playing with his and the warm breath hit Magnus’ chin, making him shudder. Magnus’ hands slid behind Alec’s hand, his thumbs still grazing his jaws to keep their heads in position. Kissing someone upside down wasn’t as easy as Mary Jane and Peter Parker had made it look in the movie. Alec thought.

Magnus’ eyes slammed open when he heard Alec’s dramatic comment and he scoffed between their kisses, blowing out air and saliva in Alec’s mouth. “Alexander... could you not think about some other couple when we are kissing...?”, he pulled away from the Alpha’s lips slightly and whispered against his mouth.

“Sorry... please come back”, Alec swallowed before using his hand behind Magnus’ neck to push lips back on his. The kiss may have been intended as a short one, but it ended up being a lingering one. Alec bracketed Magnus’ lower lip between his own and sucked at his, warming it up with his tongue and licking. He slid upward and did the same to his upper lip. They parted a few moments
later and Alec felt like he was looking at stars.

That moment felt so surreal. Gulping the wine down in one draught had rendered him a little tipsy but this wasn’t alcohol. This was Magnus.

“I love you too”, Alec responding, catching his breath. They closed their eyes when a gush of wind blew. It was cool and coming from the sea, it smelled of salt and other aquatic life. “Want to go out for a little walk?”, he asked.

“Yeah”, Magnus grinned. Alec got up from Magnus’ lap and stood tall on the stair below where Magnus was sitting, holding out his hand for his fiancé. Magnus smiled and took the hand. Alec pulled him up and pecked him on his lips before they climbed the stairs down and proceeded towards the warehouses and docks for the walk. The docks were quiet and lonely. It was very late in the evening and there was practically no one around. For a while, they didn’t talk to each other but just kept walking with their hands entangled together.

The creeping silence found its way in Magnus’ mind and he started thinking about the ritual and the outcome of it. Alec squeezed his hand, hinting the Omega that he could decipher and understand what was going on in Magnus’ mind. “Are you ready to become a father, Alexander?”, Magnus asked, unable to resist his thoughts.

Magnus looked down at the ground for a second and then back up. “I haven’t given it a thought...”, he shrugged. “Are you?”

“I don’t know... I haven’t thought about it like that... I mean I don’t think that matters right now. I just don’t know how to cross the bridge and take the damn pregnancy test.”, he leaned closer and curled his other hand around Alec’s bicep, pulling him closer.

“Eventually... I mean, yes, I do want to have kids and a family with you... but I am still 22... and I didn’t think that I would have to do this... right now. At this age.”, Alec responded, honestly. “But... I don’t think you anticipated any of this either... and it is very important for me to know if you are ready for this...? I need to know!”

“I don’t think it matters, Alexander”, Magnus rolled his eyes.

“Why not?”

“Because if I am pregnant... then that’s it!”, he huffed.

“If you are pregnant Magnus... then we are looking at 9 months of you breeding a life inside you. There are medical consequences of this outcome. You will gain weight and have diet restrictions. People will begin to notice your unusual weight and mood swings as well as those multiple tests and reports... and that means you will have to stay in after you start showing. If people see you, they will grow suspicious and I don’t think I can let you be that exposed so that it risks your life...”, Alec pinched the bridge of his nose with his slung hand and winced in pain.

“It means I will have to resign from the Plaza”, Magnus mumbled.

“Or take a sabbatical until your delivery. But it has to be something you decide. And that is why it is important for you to be ready and well-prepared... and okay with it. Both mentally and physically. Maybe slightly more mentally but you need to be ready... and it’s okay if you’re not. I am sure there are ways we can handle this...”, Alec sounded like he was determined about what he was saying to Magnus.

“You can’t possibly mean that we can look for other options in case I don’t want to have the child
right now? And that you’ll be okay with it?”, Magnus scoffed, rolling his eyes. Alec stopped and turned towards Magnus.

“That’s exactly what I mean, Magnus. I don’t know if I am ready to be a father or not... but I know for a fact that I am ready to support you in whatever decision you make. Because at the end of the day, I need you to be confident in that choice. That is the only way we can come out of the other side stronger and successful.”, he whispered.

Magnus’ breath hitched in his throat as he paused and glanced at Alec. Alec was serious... he meant what he had just said, and he wasn’t joking about it. He gasped when Asmodeus’ words rang in his mind. You know how long it took me to find you a mate so that I could get rid of you. And then you got a fucking job in New York City. He stepped forward and wrapped his hands around Alec’s neck, dropping his forehead on his shoulder wanting Asmodeus’ words to stop echoing in his mind. “I am so scared, Alexander...”, he stammered.

Alec slid his good arm around Magnus’ waist and pulled him closer. “I know, babe”

“I failed my family... and for most of my life as an Omega... I brought nothing but disgrace to them... and I just...”, Magnus spoke, letting his mind go back to the time when Asmodeus hurled those accusations at him right before he inseminated him. He recalled each and every word and understood where they were coming from and why Asmodeus said what he did. “…I don’t want to fail you too”, Alec furrowed his brows and threw his eyes open when he heard those words come out of Magnus’ mouth. He had never seen Magnus feel so lowly of himself and his gender. “I am supposed to give you your pack, Alec... and I don’t think…”

“Woah woah woah... hold on?”, Alec pulled away. Magnus wasn’t looking at him. His eyes were fixed at something behind Alec. Alec looked over and saw that he wasn’t staring at anything in particular. In fact, his mind was somewhere else entirely... somewhere deep in his memories. “Why are you saying that?”

“Because it’s true... I am an Omega, Alec... and I should have remembered that before. I don’t get to live my life the way I want to. That is not a privilege my kind has. My life belongs to the Alpha I am mated to. And that is you, Alexander. I am glad that I love you because it is easier for me... than giving in to someone I barely knew. But, I should have realized my duties to you earlier and not taken this bond and you for granted. My dad just made realize that and I am going to remember it.”, he said, not moving his pupils.

“Magnus, you don’t believe that? Please say that you don’t because that’s not the Magnus I got engaged to... this is not who you are Magnus... please?”, Alec placed his hand on Magnus’ shoulder and shook it.

“It took my Dad 5 months to fix my mistakes. I should have mated to you when we were in Idris. And we would be nearing the birth of our kids now”, his gaze flickered, and Alec noticed tears shining against the streetlights. “Instead... I decided that coming to New York for a job was the better choice... and ashamed my parents in that process. Maybe if I hadn’t done that, they would still love me... and want me”

“MAGNUS”, Alec shook him again. Magnus gasped and looked up at Alec. “No... don’t believe that. Please don’t believe that? Your parents were wrong. They were wrong. You were not. Please don’t let your father’s words get to you…”

“His words were true. I am a mistake”

“No... you’re not!”, Alec was panicking now. He had never seen Magnus so low on self-esteem and
confidence. “You’re not a mistake...”

“I brought shame to my father’s name”

“NO. Stop it, Magnus. You didn’t!”, Alec almost yelled, lifting his other hand to hold Magnus. It hurt like crazy, but Alec didn’t care at all. “Please don’t say that... please... please”, he begged, shaking with fear now.

“Alexander. My mother didn’t even look me in the eye when my father was chaining me to the log. And when she did... all I saw was contempt and shame instead of love and pride. I brought that shame upon them. Had I been the Omega they had expected me to be... had I taken an Alpha’s knot... they’d have been proud of me. And they would not have had to resort to these extreme measures of using you for artificial insemination...”

Alec felt power leaving his knees and he wanted to collapse on the ground. He couldn’t hear this any further. It was breaking him to shreds. He couldn’t even imagine how it must have been for Magnus when Asmodeus told these words for the first time. He held Magnus’ hands firmly and dropped his head down, tears falling onto the mud. “Please don’t say that... it is not true”, he begged Magnus to stop.

“Alexander... I am not ashamed. It just took me a while to wrap my head around the fact... but I know he was right... and that it is time for me to pull my shit together and make my life worthwhile for the Alpha I am betrothed to.”, he mumbled.

“Shut up, Magnus. Shut up”, he grunted, breathing rapidly. He clasped their hands together and squeezed him. “Look at me...”, he tugged their hands. Magnus closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He stuck out his tongue and licked his bottom lip and then finally lifted his eyelids and fixed his gaze at Alec. “Do you trust me?”, the Alpha asked, letting go of their hands and lifted them up to curl around Magnus’ neck and brushed his thumbs against his jawline.

Magnus’ eyes twinkled with tears and he nodded. “I do”, he responded.

“Then... I need you to believe me... believe what I have to say. Trust me on what I need to tell you... okay?”, he sniffed and came closer. Magnus scanned his face and saw the subtle discomfort in his eyes because his injured hand was loosened out of the sling. Alec cleared his throat and realized how crucial the choice of his words was going to be now. If he had to begin healing Magnus of all the things his father had broken in him, he had to be careful with what he wanted to say and how he wanted to say it. He had to choose his words wisely so that he could get through to Magnus’ broken heart instead of breaking it further. He couldn’t let Magnus believe that he was doing him a favor by helping him... or if he was helping him out of his duty or responsibility. He wanted Magnus to realize his worth and heal himself. He wanted Magnus to be strong enough to fight his fears. He wanted to aid Magnus while he healed himself. Because that was important for Magnus’ broken self-confidence and low self-esteem that Asmodeus was responsible for.

“You are an Omega. Yes. That is the truth. But your life is not meant to be a duty to any Alpha... not even me. I am your fiancé. I will be your husband one day, if that is what you want... and you are my equal. You and I are life-partners, Magnus... and you are not supposed to serve me because you are an Omega. If anything, you just need to be by my side through everything. Your father was wrong when he said that you were bestowed with the responsibility of bringing them glory and you didn’t. Because if you ask me... or anyone sensible enough – you did your parents so proud with everything that you have accomplished in the last 24 years of your life. Not everyone has credentials suited for them to land a job in freakin’ New York City... and that in one of the biggest hotels in the world. And you managed to do that because you are worthy of that opportunity. You lived and studied in Idris your whole life and never stepped out of the town. Yet, you came over to an entirely new city
where you knew no one... where everyone else was a mundane and you and I were the only werewolves in Manhattan... as far as we knew. You chose to take up this challenge because you were confident and skilled at your job.

Magnus closed his eyes and absorbed the way, Alec, rubbing his thumbs on his jawline felt. “When I came to New York for the first time, I couldn’t function for months... and I started finding jobs that were easier... and with people, I already knew because that was comfortable for me... instead of taking up projects with people I knew nothing of. And I am an Alpha, Magnus. I am supposed to be strong and confident”, he shrugged. “But you... you started working at a place where you knew NO one and everything was new... including the work culture... and you made such amazing friends in a single week. I have lived in New York for two years before this and the only people I knew were Jace and Sebastian – one was my boyfriend from Dublin... and the other was my best friend from my hometown... so really, I did not make any new friends...”

“Alec”, he released his defeated breath and dropped his head in Alec’s hands. He couldn’t feel any strength in him to pull himself together.

“Who cares what an ancient asshole of a man had to say about you? He doesn’t know you for the person you are? He never knew you beyond his capacity as a father, which he was terrible at. But, I DO. I have seen you in your skin... and Asmodeus had no right to say those things... those disgusting and completely ridiculous things. NONE of which are true or based on reason! Please believe me when I say that. He couldn’t even fathom how amazing you are... how awe-inspiring and good your personality is? You, Magnus Bane, set an example for the members of our community that your parents couldn’t even imagine or anticipate if they tried. You did not fail them... nope. They failed you. And they failed Clary. They were an insult in the name of parents and did not deserve the amazing children they had. None of what Asmodeus and Kaya said could be deemed as logical or reasonable. Their ideas were clouded by their orthodox sentiments that define half of the packs in Idris. Such people function in blind faith and thrive on other people’s sufferings. They deserve no place in anyone’s heart or mind. What happened in the massacre was long due. The Clave needed to know that there is a part of their kind that does not believe in the bullshit they serve. You are not to blame for any of it.” Alec lifted his thumbs and wiped away the tears that had freshly fallen out of Magnus’ eyes and then pressed a sloppy kiss on the Omega’s forehead. He slid his hands down to find Magnus’ fingers and entangled them together when he did. He stepped back and then dropped down on one knee, holding their hands together near his heart. Magnus felt his gut-wrenching when he saw Alec on his knees in front of him.

“You are so confident in your skin that you motivate me... you make me want to get better myself, Magnus and that has nothing to do with the fact that you’re an Omega. That is all you. You went back to doing your job on the third day of your cycle. When you were barely able to stand the day before... doesn’t that say how strong you are? How many people have that courage to overcome their weaknesses... tell me? I can tell you from experience that no one can do what you can... and I am honored that I have had the pleasure of knowing you.”, he dropped a kiss on both of Magnus’ hands and then tugged them close to his heart again.

“You inspire me, Magnus Bane”, he said, with utmost confidence and assurance. “I look up to you and theirs no one else that I respect more than I respect you. If only I could become half as good as you...”, he shrugged his shoulders softly. “And knowing that you love me makes me one of the luckiest people in this whole world”, he shook his head, as a matter-of-factly. “No matter what happens after this... whether you are pregnant or not, I need you to know that I am here. I know you don’t need me... because you are strong enough to get through this, but I am here. In whatever capacity you need me to be. I won’t leave your side and I wouldn’t let you lose your confidence like this. I will be there to catch you when you fall. You will find me behind you every time you turn
around and when the entire world is cheering for you... I’ll cheer for you the **loudest**. But, I won’t let you give up on yourself... or your dream”, he took a deep breath and released it, forming a white cloud in front of his mouth. “I won’t let you lose against your father. Not as long as my heart is beating. And maybe, not even after I am dead.”, he shook his head firmly.

Magnus closed his eyes as he carefully registered Alec’s words. He lifted his chin up and his chest heaved, trying to keep those sobs inside him and not let them out. Tears squeezed their way out of his closed lids and trickled down his neck, soaking his shirt. He pulled Alec up, holding his shoulders and then collapsed in his arms. There were 15 days of grief huddled up in his chest. 15 days of breaking down on the inside while presenting a strong exterior. All of that came out when he tightened his hands around Alec’s chest and curling his shirt between his fingers at the back. Everything came back to him in the flash of a second. Asmodeus had broken his confidence and his words had become etched in his mind. He had been walking through a dark cave, not knowing if there was an exit on the other side, for over 2 weeks now and now, he could finally see a dot of light on one side. He could feel like he would be able to live through this darkness and then the light would follow. That happiness would follow him. Sooner or later. Alec’s hand, carefully placed at the back of Magnus’ head, made soft strokes in his hair.

There were no words with his Magnus could reply to what Alec had assured him. The Alpha had rendered him speechless by the amount of dedication he was ready to offer to Magnus and their relationship. He cried until his eyes started burning with pain and inflammation. His head started throbbing with pain and his nose got blocked eventually but tears looked like they were not going to stop anytime soon. His throat moaned and made loud noises as he cried, and Alec made no efforts to pull away or make Magnus stop crying. He just let him express all his heartbreak and emotions without interfering at all. If comfort and company were what Magnus needed... that is what Alec was going to give it to him. But he needed to let all his pain out in order to begin his journey towards healing. Magnus’ wails tore Alec’s mind and body and his hatred for his father-in-law grew ten-fold. “My father... Alexander... my father...”, he sniffed, trying to unblock his nose. Alec placed his fractured arm on Magnus’ back and started rubbing it up and down. “He lied to me... all those times he said he was proud of me...”, Magnus whined. “What did I ever do to deserve so much hatred...?”, he shook Alec, as if he was accusing himself and asking an explanation from Alec. The Alpha closed his eyes and pressed his lips together to remain strong in front of Magnus and not break down.

He couldn’t lose himself now because Magnus needed him. “You did nothing”, Alec assured, pulling his emotions together and rubbing his back in comforting strokes. “None of that was your fault. And it never will be...”, he pressed his cheek at the top of Magnus’ head. Magnus’ sobs were ripping his heart to shreds. “He told me how ugly I was... and how my birth was an abomination to his pack... that he wanted to get rid of me... and not have anything to do with me...”, Magnus’ voice broke into hiccups and got hoarse from crying.

“**There is nothing** ugly about you”, Alec tipped Magnus’ chin and made him look right into his eyes. “You hear me?”, he asked. Magnus gulped the lump in his throat and nodded, biting his lower lip. “You are not an abomination. Far from it”, Alec shook his head and planted a kiss on both of Magnus’ cheeks. “You are the **greatest** blessing I could have ever asked for myself and this cruel world.”, Alec swallowed, moving to Magnus’ eyes and kissing them right above the lids. He could taste the saltiness of the tears on the wet lashes of his lover’s tired and exhausted eyes. “You are so beautiful. Your soul is so loving and faultless.”, Alec wiped Magnus’ face dry until there were red marks on his caramel skin... from rubbing too hard. He pecked his forehead next. “You make people around you so happy...”, Alec bent and captured Magnus’ lips for a soft and loving kiss. Magnus sighed and snuggled right back in Alec’s arms, inserting his head in the crook of the Alpha’s neck.

“Will I ever feel like myself again?”, Magnus sniffed, brushing his words against Alec’s skin.
You will. I cannot promise you when... but you will, Magnus. And I will be there for you. Through everything”, Alec tightened his grasp around him.

“I love you, Alexander”

“I love you too, Magnus!”

As the desire to cry reduced, Magnus felt the heaviness in his eyes and the throbbing in his head. Everything was beginning to hurt. He shifted a little in Alec’s arms to find a cooler place on Alec’s shirt to curl his fingers around. A wince escaped Alec’s mouth. Magnus pulled away and noticed the frown on Alec’s face before he could make it disappear. He looked down towards the shoulders and recalled that the doctor had asked Alec to not move his right arm and Alec had been challenging himself with pain for the last hour while Magnus cried in his arms.

“Did I hurt your shoulder?”, Magnus gasped, pulling away from his fiancé. Alec shook his head and lied. He adjusted the sling and tightened the belt around Alec’s hand to stabilize movement in the arm.

“I’ll put an ice pack once I reach home. Don’t worry about it, alright?”, Alec waved his other hand and pressed a kiss on Magnus’ cheek. Magnus narrowed his brows and stepped forward, wrapping his arm around Alec’s waist and tugging him closer. Alec let his hand slide behind the small of Magnus’ back and ushered him close enough until their chest brushed together.

“Home?”, Magnus upped his brows and bridged them together.

“I was thinking of going back to the apartment today... and maybe just inspect things around. See if that place is still risky for us to move back. If the locks were breached or something.”, Alec cleared his throat.

“I’ll come with you...”

“Magnus... it’s not...”

“Safe...?”, Magnus arched a brow. “I can hold my own, Alexander. People took my surprise once... they can’t do it again”, he shrugged. “Plus, I think the whole point of your speech was to remind me of how independent and strong I am... don’t you think keeping me away from a supposed danger would sort of... be an oxymoron to that?”, he felt his lips curving into the smile, but he stopped himself – holding up a strong demeanor.

“I didn’t think that you cannot defend yourself if it comes to that... I just... you don’t have to stress yourself right now”, Alec cheekily licked his lips.

“...and you have to?”, Magnus deadpanned. “Because I am sure I am not the one who was in a coma for two weeks”, Alec sighed listening to that. “Anyways, I am not trying to mess you up, Alexander. I just don’t want to stay away from you tonight”, he admitted. That was the brutal honesty that Alec had brushed off on Magnus from their time together. Alec applied pressure on Magnus’ back and guided him back into his arms.

“Let’s go home, Magnus”
I'll see you guys next week!
Have a good weekend y'all <3
Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

magnus and alec come back to their apartment, and start building their life back up. also... maybe things are looking a little better?

Chapter Notes

hey y'all <3

i hope you will like this chapter ;) i tried to write explicit content but since I suck at it, please forgive me if it was too awkward or bad to read. i will try and avoid doing that in the future.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Alec swiped his keycard against the lock on the door and it clicked open. The apartment was plunged into darkness and an eerie silence prevailed. Magnus raised his hand and groped on the wall towards his right where he knew the main switch was. Pulling the lever down, he looked ahead as the apartment lit up again. The whole place smelled dusty and suffocating because of the locked air. There was a stinking smell of rotten food coming from the sink because Magnus had been abducted on his way to the office in the middle of day. He had put a sticky note to remind him to do the dishes when he returned home that night, but the night never came. The sticky note still hung on the freezer door of their refrigerator as if it had been put there only yesterday. They stepped inside and toed their muddy shoes off in one corner of the wall, stepping on the carpet with naked feet. Even with the apartment being in that condition, it felt very relaxing and home. Magnus went to the balcony and unlocked the door, opening it apart so that fresh air could infiltrate the room and ventilate the locked apartment. Alec walked over to the kitchen and threw away the stale packets of food, fruits and vegetables from the fridge and the cabinets into a black discard bag. He gloved his hands and discarded those dirty plates in the same bag and then walked out of the apartment to throw them in the main bin outside the building.

When he came back to the apartment, Magnus had a bandana wrapped around his mouth and a vacuum cleaner in his hand. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows and he was cleaning the carpets and the sofa sets. There was a very long broom lying on the ground that they had bought for the cobweb problem in their house. Alec’s lips curved into a lopsided grin because of how adorable Magnus looked when he was engrossed in cleaning the house. He shook his head and proceeded to the kitchen and pulled out a disinfectant from the lower cabinets. His one hand was tied up in a sling which made him work slower than usual... but he didn’t want Magnus to do all of that by himself. Using a clean wash cloth, he wiped the counters and the kitchen top clean of any remaining food particles as well as dust and then washed the sinks and the wiped them dry and clean with a single hand – after being threatened by Magnus multiple times to not stress himself out. He sprayed the disinfectant and sanitized the kitchen area.

He called Isabelle and informed her about their impromptu visit to their apartment and that they
won’t be joining Luke and them for dinner. She shrieked on the other side and threw some Spanish slurs at the man – expressing her irritation on being surprised like that but then calmed down the next minute. She informed about the elopement to her girlfriend on the phone and Alec heard a dramatic gasp from redhead Alpha. But she was also cool the next second and just warned Alec to keep Magnus safe and that he should bring her brother back to Luke’s place next morning for a family meeting. Alec scoffed at his little family and realized that he wouldn’t be here without any of them. Clary’s courage and resilience had made sure that Magnus was whisked away from danger right in time. Isabelle fought everyday for the last two weeks not knowing if Alec would ever wake up from the coma and Luke. Luke Garroway. Magnus’ boss... and well, Magnus’ friend. If not for Luke, Alec and Magnus wouldn’t be here... together and alive. The man had promised them safety and security and he followed through on it even though Alec had just given his name to Clary with a hope that the man could help.

Magnus turned the vacuum cleaner off and coughed, dusting his hands off. Alec was on the phone with a restaurant outlet just outside their apartment complex, ordering them dinner. His hair looked like a mess and his shirt had come out of his pants. Magnus took a deep breath and looked around the house as a careful inspection. It looked clean and habitable for now. He had also changed the covers on their bed and placed fresh bedsheets and blankets – throwing the older ones in the laundry machine. He could do the laundry tomorrow. There was no way he could manage to complete the laundry in one day along with the cleaning. The work had exhausted him. He pulled off his bandana and wiped his forehead with it to dry off the sweat. He was in dire need of a shower before sleeping and eating anything. There were perspiration stains under his arms and back and they sure looked hideous to the man. Throwing the dust from cleaner in the bin, he set the machine inside a cabinet and joined Alec in the kitchen. The place smelled of bleach and floor cleaner, but it was shining clean.

Alec muttered a thanks and cut the call. “All done?”, he asked.

Magnus shrugged. “Yeah. We don’t have to freak out over bedbugs or dust...”, he wiped his nose and yawned.

“That’s very comforting to hear”, Alec whispered, pressing his lips to his forehead. His eyes were inspecting his surroundings to see if there was any place that needed cleaning. “By the way, the food will be here soon. I ordered us something while you were on a mission to rid the house of bedbugs”, Alec shook the mobile phone in his hand and smiled. Magnus nodded and then turned around to move towards their room.

“I am starving, thank you Alexander. I am going to take a shower because I stink”, he scrunched his nose and wavered his hand. Alec scoffed, watching Magnus unbutton his sweaty shirt and discard it in the laundry bin next to the bathroom door. He turned the knob and opened the door. Before stepping inside however, he looked over his shoulder and smiled wickedly – as if an idea had just struck him. “You have a sling on your shoulder... would you need help with the shower?”, he asked, biting his lower lip.

It was a simple and innocent question, really. But Alec felt his cheeks heating up with flush and his lips curving into a deep smile. He tapped the kitchen counter with his nails and then hopped out, catching up with Magnus. The Omega smiled and stepped inside, leaving the door open for Alec who walked in happily. He bolted the door from inside and then followed Magnus whose pants slipped down from his body and collected below his feet. He was naked now except for a pair of boxer briefs that clung to his body, enhancing the curves of his butt. He turned around, stepping away from the pants, to face Alec without any awkwardness between them.

Alec was frozen a step ahead from the door. Magnus smiled and stepped forward, walking on his
toes to avoid sensation he got from the cold tiles. He gently placed his hands around Alec’s neck and
started undoing the sling that was holding Alec’s hand to his chest. After the sling came off of the
Alpha’s shoulder, he placed it on a high above on a shelf, to safeguard it from the splatter of water in
the bathroom.

He guided Alec’s arm and lifted it so that it rested on Magnus’ shoulder for support. There was a
little swelling near his shoulders and elbows. Alec had exerted himself again. Magnus shot an
annoyed glare when Alec understood what he was looking at. You are a child, Alexander. He placed
his fingers on the Alec’s shirt and started unbuttoning it. There were stains of black eyeshadow
smudged around the collar area, thanks to Magnus’ crying. The Omega swallowed the lump in his
throat, proceeding towards the lower buttons and then pulled out the shirt from the side of Alec’s
okay shoulder. He let the shirt fall and then stepped closer to catch a hold of it from behind Alec’s
back. Alec saw the opportunity and ducked his face to gently place a kiss near Magnus’ ear, making
the man jump. “Alexander...”, he hissed. “I am dirty and sweaty. Why would you want to kiss me in
this state? I couldn’t kiss myself like that”, he complained. He heard a scoff very close to his ears and
his senses shuddered.

“I want to kiss you all the time, babe. It doesn’t matter how dirty you think you are.”, Alec
whispered, making Magnus lose his ability to breathe. Alec was just so close to him and that was
driving him insane. He rounded his hands behind Alec’s back and then dragged the shirt out from his
injured arm very slowly. Crumpling the shirt in his hands, he discarded it in the sink and proceeded
to unbutton Alec’s jeans and push them out of the man’s unending legs. That was easier. Alec
stepped out of his jeans and followed Magnus under the faucets.

Magnus turned all the knobs at once and they were clouded with showers sprinkling from all
directions. Alec blinked when water hit his eyes and parted his lips so that he could breathe better.
Magnus used his hand to brush away the hair away from his forehead because it was clouding his
view of his beautiful fiancé’s wet face. The water was warm... just the right temperature and their
muscles instantly relaxed. He adjusted Alec’s hand carefully to his side. “Don’t move it, alright”, he
whispered. His voice was muffled between the sound of the shower. Alec kept his hazel orbs fixed
onto Magnus, taking in every inch of that beautiful man he had just lost.

Magnus pressed his fingertips on Alec’s skin, rubbing them and observing those claw scars that now
marred his chest. Dr Abbott was right, some of them had begun to disappear but even he could
predict the ones that would forever remain on Alec’s skin, reminding him of that terrible massacre
where everything was lost. He leaned forward and kissed Alec’s chest, right over one of those scars
and felt Alec gasp. “I am sorry my father did this to you”, he whispered. Alec shuddered at Magnus’
touch and moaned.

“It wasn’t your fault...”, he managed to say. The doctor mentioned that most of them would
disappear... don’t worry Magnus. Alec added in his thoughts. It felt so good to be able to
communicate like that. It felt so normal and natural. Magnus smiled when he realized that Alec’s
head was thrown back, baring his neck to him and his eyes were closed because he was getting
excited. He could feel Alec hardening inside his briefs against his body. To any other person, this
was such a normal reaction. But for them – not so much. Life had been so complicated for the two of
them, right from the start, that they had not had the time to do normal couple stuff. They had gone on
one date as an official couple... and they hadn’t even had a chance to flirt with each other... or throw
sexual innuendoes at each other. If they were mundanes... they would have courted each other...
teach each other... made naughty comments. But all of that... and their quiet time together had been
ripped off from them from the start.

Maybe he could give himself and Alec that moment sometime. The normal human and very romantic
moment.
He licked his lips and inserted his thumbs inside his briefs and pulled it down, his cock popping out as soon the brief fell to the tiled floor. When he stood back up, Alec was staring at him, intently. And he wasn’t just staring at him... he was staring at him. Magnus felt heat rush to his cheeks as he realized how exposed he was. But also because of how much he wanted this too. He lifted his hand and cupped Alec’s chin between his fingers and thumb, pulling him closer. “Like what you see, Alexander?”, he licked his lips and bit it.

Fog and steam were rising around them, making it difficult for them to see each other clearly. Alec pressed his body closer to Magnus’ and whispered. “I think you already know the answer, Magnus?”, Alec blinked, gently nudging Magnus’ hip with his own. His hard cock brushed against Magnus’ pelvis and the man let out a conspicuous gasp without parting his lips. “I think the real question you should be asking is... do I need you to do something about that?”, he gestured towards his groin with his eyes and shrugged softly.

“Touché!”, Magnus gasped. He slid his hands behind Alec’s back and pulled him closer, rotating their positions around and crashing their lips together in that process. He turned the knob and raised the temperature of the water slightly. Water trickled down from the side of their necks while their heads were smashed together. He could feel himself hardening when Alec’s rough chest hair brushed against his smooth skin. His throat bobbed when he pulled away. He tugged his thumbs in Alec’s briefs and looked up for Alec’s permission. The man licked his swollen and tender lips and nodded. Magnus pulled the brief down and Alec’s hard cock finally got the space to breathe. In five months of their togetherness, Magnus and Alec hadn’t been so close and so naked with each other. They had seen each other before. Yes. But this was different. This was intimate. This was just very romantic. He stood up, brushing his body against Alec’s, feeling Alec’s hard cock rub on him and pinned Alec to the tiled of the shower area. Alec gasped – the cold of the tiles not helping him with his condition. He pressed his fingers into Magnus’ hips and pulled him closer. Magnus’ cock brushed against his and he closed his eyes... feeling the pleasure in that contact. Magnus flattened his palms on the cold tiles next to Alec’s head and swallowed his lips in his own. His tongue found its way out and hit Alec’s. This passion was something they had deserved to feel such a long time ago. And they were robbed of every opportunity. This kiss was wet and sloppy, and widemouthed. “Magnus”, he gasped between the kisses. “...closer please”, he pleaded. Magnus bit back a smile as he scanned Alec’s face. The Alpha was so red and so turned on.

“Is there something you want me to do...?”, he teased, taking in Alec’s lower lip within his teeth and pulling away softly. His teeth grazed Alec’s skin without being too sharp and rendered it pink and plump when Magnus pulled out. He didn’t wait for Alec to respond and took the entirety of Alec’s upper lip between his own. His teeth slid closer and cupped Alec’s jaws to hold him in position. His tongue licked on the inside surface of the lips, brushing against his teeth and playing a little game of hide n seek with Alec’s tongue. He trashed away all thoughts of how this was not the best timing for this. He and Alec deserved some normal time together. They had earned it. He pulled away and looked at Alec. The man’s eyes were closed. “Alec”, he whispered again. “I asked you a question”, he upped himself on his toes and kissed both of his cheeks with a loud noise accompanying the kiss. He slid one hand down to Alec’s hips and let his index finger graze the lining created by his boxer briefs. Alec choked on his breath and slammed his eyes open.

“Touch me...”, he whispered. Magnus’ lips curved into a grin, but he wiped that grin off and looked at Alec with a serious expression on his face.

“What was that? I didn’t quite hear it?”

Alec groaned and ushered Magnus closer to him with his working hand. “I said... touch me, Magnus”, Alec stared right in Magnus’ eyes. Magnus slid his finger down to the side of his thighs,
dangerously close to the lose skin of Alec’s cock.

“Is that an order...?”, the Omega quirked. He knew he was getting Alec flustered every moment he delayed.

“Magnus”, Alec closed his eyes and sighed. “Please...”, he let out another breath. “I am begging you... touch me”, he swallowed the lump in his throat, very distracted by the tip of Magnus’ finger that was making patterns on his hips and thighs. He opened his eyes and looked at Magnus. The man was grinning now. He licked his lower lip in a defined pattern, making Alec lose his senses and then curled his fingers around Alec’s cock.

Fuck.

Alec felt the neurons in his body fire up in all directions. A jolt of electricity ran through his body and blinded his senses. All of them. He felt his knees unable to hold his weight anymore as Magnus started stroking his cock between his fingers – slowly at first. He slid his other hand around the back of Alec’s neck, brushing his hair and crashed his lips against Alec’s long and slender neck. The skin felt soft and tender because of the warm water.

Alec slid his hand down Magnus’ hips... stopping right above his butt. “Can I...?”, he asked. Magnus nodded against Alec’s neck, humming an immediate yes. Alec moved his hand down and dug his fingers in his round butt. He gently started rubbing his palm on Magnus’ butt making soft and round circles. Or according to him it was a circle. His mind was reeling with Magnus’ hand caressing him with so much love and passion and the way his lips sucked trails along his neckline. “...faster...”, he moaned, begging Magnus to not go gentle with him.

“I am going to mark you Alexander. Is that okay with you?”, Magnus whispered. Alec’s throat bobbed in response.

“Please do it...”, he requested. Magnus bared his teeth and dug right into his neck again, leaving soft and pink marks all along the nape of Alec’s skin. “Magnus...”, he chanted his lover’s name. His movements around the neck and up to Alec’s jaws quickened as did his strokes around Alec’s dick. He let his own hard member graze Alec’s thighs and hips. “Faster... babe... faster”, Alec gasped a moment later, flattening his palm on Magnus’ butt. “Yeah... Magnus... I think...I am going to come...”, he announced. Magnus made the movements faster and stronger and dug deeper on Alec’s shoulder, biting his skin until Alec reached the peak of his orgasm and emptied himself on Magnus’ arm and on both of their hips and thighs. He heaved a sigh, collapsing a little against the tiled wall. Magnus finished his artwork on Alec’s torso and pulled away.

They were panting with pleasure and excitement. Magnus rubbed off Alec’s cum from his and Alec’s body and smiled, grabbing the bottle of shower gel from the cabinet before turning off the showers for a bit. He poured some of it on his palms and made it lather before pressing the soaped hands onto Alec’s chest, rubbing down to his abdomen, spreading the foam all over his body. He lifted Alec’s injured hand and placed it back on his shoulders before continuing applying soap all over Alec’s torso and back.

When he moved closer to rub the soap on Alec’s back, their chest slipped against each other. Alec ducked his head and positioned it on one side so that his cheek could brush against Magnus’. “That felt...”

“Normal?”, Magnus joked.

That’s exactly what Alec had in mind. “Yeah”, he mumbled. This was normal. He concluded, pulling away from the man and giving him space to work. Magnus swiftly moved to Alec’s hands
and underarms, applying the shower gel everywhere. He let Alec’s hand hang in air for a few minutes as he crouched down to apply the soap on Alec’s thighs and butt... and his now limp cock. He rubbed the lather everywhere and then poured some more gel on his palm to do the same to himself. “One day... I am going to return the favor, Magnus”, Alec sniffed, watching Magnus so efficiently clean himself. His caramel skin looked even more beautiful with lather over it. Magnus lifted his gaze up and smiled as he continued rubbing himself with soap.

Once he was done, he turned the showers on and water trickled back onto them. Alec jumped at the temperature of water. Magnus had lowered it. He chased away the lather as it escaped their bodies and collected over the drainage hole. “I am going to wait”, Magnus answered, giving him another mysterious smile. Once they were clean, he turned the faucet knob again and stopped the showers. Grabbing a towel from the rack, he unfolded it and went around Alec’s back to completely wrap his chest in a towel before he started drying him.

“I look like this child who cannot take care of himself”, Alec mused, his hand still steadily placed on Magnus’ shoulder. The Omega rolled his eyes and continued dabbing Alec’s skin to dry him before wrapping his waist with the towel and tugging the extra length right in front of his waist, below his belly button. Alec jumped when Magnus tugged him.

“A child who desires to get touched and then has a full-blown orgasm in the shower. Wow, Alexander?”, Magnus teased, grabbing another towel and drying himself. He wrapped the towel around his waist once he was done and pulled both of them out in the bathroom, grabbing Alec’s sling with him.

“Magnus”, Alec faked getting offended and earned a peck on his lips. Magnus walked over to their wardrobe and pulled out their night clothes. He wore his own silk pajamas and a robe around his torso and returned to Alec with his sweater and pajamas. He applied a light coat of ointment on Alec’s shoulder and then helped him wear the sweater and the pajamas. Once Alec was fully clothed, Magnus inserted his sling back again and tightened the hooks around his chest to restrict movement of his arm around. Alec winced and complained but that didn’t stop Magnus from doing what is good for Alec’s broken ribs and hand.

Their phone rang just a couple of minutes later and Alec walked down the apartment building with his wallet to get their food order.

Magnus picked up the empty boxes of food from the coffee table and threw them in the trashcan in the kitchen. He picked out a bottle of water from the fridge and poured it in two glasses, bringing them back to the couch where Alec and he had been watching Zodiac. This was one of the movies that Magnus had seen but Alec hadn’t. Such an abhorrent truth – Magnus had commented. He couldn’t believe his ears when Alec had confessed to not having watched this amazingly written movie, according to Magnus. Therefore, they had settled with their food on their laps and then legs on the coffee table while Magnus logged into Netflix and selected the movie.

Alec’s head was now thrown on the backrest of the couch and his legs were still spread over the table. He handed over the glass of water to Alec and then came back to prepare an icepack for his fiancé’s sprained shoulder. In the process of cleaning the room and taking a rather passionate shower with Alec, Magnus had let himself forget that there was a constant fear looming over their head. His stomach churned as he realized why Alec had not ordered anything made with seafood or beer to accompany the food. He hadn’t even made coffee for the two of them. It had been sixteen days since his insemination and he should have properly taken the test by now. If he was pregnant, there was a whole list of stuff that they would have to manage and take care of – including Magnus’ diet.
Magnus had evaded the test, but he could have only done that for so long.

Pondering over these thoughts, Magnus settled on the couch next to Alec and pulled out his sweater, inserting his hand inside and placing the icepack right over his shoulder joint. “Hold it there for some time!”, he instructed and wiped his hand before standing up from the couch. Alec’s eyes followed him as he walked around the couch and grabbed one of his coats heading towards the door. “I am going to the medical store in the basement. I’ll be back before you know it. Don’t worry ok?”, Magnus made a futile attempt to assure Alec.

“Magnus?”, Alec gasped, craning his neck up.

“It’s just this apartment complex, Alexander. I’ll be fine. You can come looking for me if I am not back in the next 20 minutes, alright? Because that is all it is going to take me!”, Magnus waved and locked the door, leaving Alec all alone in the apartment. The cool air outside was exactly what Magnus needed. He had a tough day today and even though Alec had made it much less miserable, it had still been emotionally taxing for the man. He pressed the basement button in the elevator and leaned on the back wall of the descending box. He tipped his chin up and took a deep breath, all sorts of thoughts coming to his mind. The pharmacist was someone Magnus already knew. He bought 3 pregnancy test kits. The man eyed him quizzically because he knew that Magnus had a male life partner but said nothing.

He came back to find Alec pacing up and down the room, possibly waiting for Magnus’ safe return and calculating the alternatives if something went wrong. Magnus scoffed while removing his shoes at the door and pecked Alec on his cheek. “I said I’ll be back before you know it...”, he patted the boy’s cheek and stepped towards the washroom.

“How did you go to?”, Alec asked, following Magnus as they walked back into their room.

“To the pharmacist to pick up these. Did you put the icepack on that shoulder joint like I asked?”, he picked out the test kits and fanned them open in front of Alec. Alec swallowed and paused, looking back and forth between the kits and Magnus’ face, trying to analyze the man and finding the right words to speak.

“I... yeah. I just kept it back on the counter because it was beginning to melt now. Are you sure about this?”

“I am terrified, Alexander”, Magnus shrugged, letting his jacket fall off his shoulder. “But... I have to do this... it is not like the truth is going to disappear if I look the other way?”, he blinked and clutched the kits tightly in his hand. Alec stepped forward to cradle Magnus’ shoulders and comfort him, tell him that he is there but Magnus gestured him to stop. “Don’t worry about me... one of the reasons why I am doing this today is because I know you’re here...”, he sighed.

“I am”, Alec reiterated.

He gave him a small smile and shifted his weight between his feet. Alec took a breath and then stepped back. “I’ll be here... if you need me. Please don’t hesitate to ask.”, he waved, gesturing towards the house. Magnus nodded and then turned around on his heels. He twisted the doorknob and entered the bathroom, locking the door behind him. The place still smelled of lemongrass and oil – the shower gel that he and Alec had used earlier tonight. Couldn’t they just remain in that moment and delete all the other memories of the past few weeks?

He let his mind wander off to the moment when the two of them were squeezed against the cool tiled walls of the shower panel with steam and fog engulfing them. He felt a smile tugging his lips because he had allowed Alec and him to have a small moment of normalcy in their tumultuous life. He placed
the kits on the counter in front of him and pulled his pants down. He tore open one of the kits and took out the instructions manual.

“Here goes nothing, Magnus”, he mumbled.

... Luke took Clary and Isabelle to the first floor of his house. Clary had only been there once before, when Luke was collecting fresh blankets and towels for her and Magnus. There was a small attic that was locked. Luke unlocked the door and pulled a string hanging midair to light a singular bulb in the small attic.

“You know, Luke... often attics like this have a doll like Annabelle”, Clary sighed, holding the door knob and hesitating to enter. “Are you sure your attic is not haunted?”, she arched a brow and rubbed her arms because it was rather cold here. Luke rolled his eyes opened a small wooden box lying in one corner of the attic.

“Clary... Izzy... come in!” Luke gestured with his hands as he crouched down in front of the opened box. Clary and Izzy grabbed each other’s hand and reached behind Luke, peeking over his head to see what he was so excited to show. There were football shirts. Garroway and Morgenstern printed on their backs. Clary gasped and sat on the ground next to Luke. She reached her hand inside and felt the fabric of the shirt with her fingers.

“Val and I used to play for the school football team. And Jocelyn was our biggest cheerleader without even being in the cheerleading troop.”, Luke informed, picking out both the shirts and handing Valentine’s to Clary. Clary let the shirt hang between her closed fists and felt the fabric close to her chest. It smelled ancient. Her face fell because she had hoped that it would have some of her father’s memories on it... but it was so old. “He gave this box to me... for safekeeping and said that he would need it back when he shifted back to New York... but...”, the old Alpha paused and looked away. That day never came. Clary repeated in her mind. She eyed Isabelle who was giving her the most genuine smile the girl had ever seen.

“Can I take it...?”, she asked.

“It is yours, Clary!”, Luke replaced the smile on his face and ruffled her hair. “Your father owned all this... and now it is yours”, he confirmed, picking out another item. It was an old photo-frame. There were three people in it. A rather young Luke... and Clary’s parents. She gasped and grabbed the photo from his hand. This was one of the only photographs she had seen of her parents. Izzy peeked into the photograph and smiled.

“You look exactly like her, babe”, she pointed out, looking back and forth between the photograph and Clary. Clary looked at her mother. Jocelyn was a gorgeous woman. She was peeking out from between Luke and Valentine’s arms that rested on each other’s shoulder. She had bright red hair... matching Clary’s color and she wore a polka dot silk blouse over loosely-fitted bellbottoms. A total fashionista – Clary noted. Her hair was tied up in a cute pony high up on her head and there were gorgeous white boots beneath the jeans.

“They always told me about the land they came from... how beautiful it was. The forests and the hills, everything was picturesque. For whatever reason though, they never mentioned the name of the Town or how to reach it... I was supposed to visit you all for Thanksgiving the year we last made contact.”, his voice dropped to an all time low. Clary crawled forward and wrapped her arms around Luke’s neck.
“I never could have imagined that the reason they stopped calling me was because something happened? I tried to find them... but there is no record of Idris being on the map of America. Your town is so well concealed in the paper work that I never really heard back from anyone in the Government. No one could find out about this unknown town in the middle of nowhere and Val and Jocelyn were lost to me forever... until of course you showed up at my door.”, he shrugged. Clary rubbed his mumbled. “If I had known that they left their beautiful Clary alone... I would have come for you sooner...”

“I know, Luke... it’s not your fault. I am glad we met... years later than we should have... but we still met”, she pulled away and smiled. “I bet my parents would be watching us from somewhere and so excited to see this reunion”, she added.

“I have asked one of my workers to get the DVDs burnt into memory sticks. Jocelyn had a video camera and she had recorded a few of our football matches... and our parties. It is mostly nothing... you know, but I guess you’ll be happy to see what your parents were like when I used to know them.”, Luke scratched his stubble and informed. Clary’s eyes lit up at the prospect of seeing videos of her family and she turned to Isabelle who was beaming at her.

“I love you Luke”, she chanted and threw herself on the Alpha, making Isabelle throw her head back in a muffled laughter.

Alec was seated on the edge of the bed – his elbows resting on top of his thighs. Magnus had been inside the bathroom for over 45 minutes and there had been nothing but silence coming from inside. Alec knew Magnus was okay because he could hear him walking around the bathroom, footsteps coming closer to the door and then receding in an almost periodic fashion – but he needed to know the result. His mind had been divided in two halves. One that was so scared of the fact that he was about to find out if he could become a father in the next nine months and the other who just wanted Magnus to know the result so that they could get it over with and focus on repairing what was broken between them.

The door clicked open and Alec stood up abruptly, his breath choking in his chest. Magnus came out and stopped at the door. He gently pushed it and the door slammed shut into the frame. Alec scanned Magnus’ face. It looked so blank. There was nothing on it. No signs of grief or happiness. Magnus looked clueless and mysterious. The Alpha gulped and pressed his fist to his mouth, reminding himself to keep breathing normally.

“All the three tests...”, Magnus breathed out and lifted his gaze to look up at Alec. The Alpha arched his brows and leaned forward, waiting for Magnus to complete his sentence. “...they came back negative”, he heaved a sigh of relief. Alec’s lips parted, and he blinked, a small smile appearing on his face which only grew bigger. “I know these kits are inconclusive and we will have to get a blood test done...”, Magnus felt his own lips curving into a relieving smile. “But there’s a strong chance that I am not pregnant”, he choked and ran forward, jumping right into Alec’s arms and throwing himself off his feet.

Alec wrapped his good arm around Magnus’ back and twirled them around in their bedroom. His grin was so wide that his cheek muscles were hurting now. The relief on Magnus’ face – the happiness in his eyes and the first hint of a genuine grin on his fiancé’s face was worth all of this effort. He chuckled against Magnus’ shoulder and then dropped him back on the ground. Magnus kept his chin resting on Alec’s shoulder and his hands curled into Alec’s shirt behind his back. The Alpha could hear his erratic heartbeat and Magnus’ chest that was shaking, along with his whole body. “My father failed... Alexander”, he breathed out. Alec turned his head and planted a kiss on
Magnus’ hair right above his ear and hummed.

When Magnus pulled away, he had fresh tears in his eyes... but he was happy. Alec used his palm and wiped off the tears from his face. “No more tears for tonight... your eyes are so swollen already Magnus... don’t make them fall off”, he reminded. Magnus stepped forward again and pressed a quick kiss on his lips. He closed his eyes and a yawn escaped his mouth – sleep and exhausting finally catching up to him. Alec asked Magnus to slip onto the bed and he went out to check on the locks and passcodes. Once the apartment was secure to his satisfaction, he returned to his room and found Magnus lying on his side of the bed. He arched a brow and stopped. Magnus looked up from Alec’s phone. “Your right hand needs rest. I don’t want to hurt it in my sleep. Come on”, he tapped on the bed next to him. Alec settled under the covers and guided Magnus’ wrist to his abdomen so that the man could spoon him in his sleep. He slid a little lower on the bed and settled the back of his in the crook of Magnus’ neck.

Magnus lowered himself and placed his cheek over Alec’s, nuzzling and brushing them together. “Alexander. I love you”, he whispered.

“I love you too, Magnus”

“Good night”

... 

Magnus walked out of the bathroom next morning after throwing up and found Alec fast asleep under the covers of their bed. He yawned and stepped into the living room where he could see dust particles floating in the air and shining in the sunlight. This morning had been good – keeping his sickness aside. He hadn’t slept so peacefully in so long and right now, he felt rejuvenated and happy. He yawned and walked over to the kitchen to fetch himself a glass of water and then settled on the kitchen island to read the morning news.

There was a knock on the door and Magnus checked the time. It was 7:30 am in the morning. He frowned and stood up, peeking into the room. Alec hadn’t woken up. He shrugged and walked towards the door, peering out through the peephole. His lips curved into a smile because it was their sisters and Luke... and Doctor Abbott. Magnus chuckled and opened the door and the girls barged in with food packets in their hand. Clary pulled Magnus in a tight hug and he kissed her cheeks.

“Where’s my brother?”, Isabelle turned around.

“He is still sleeping”, Magnus pointed towards their bed where Alec was fast asleep, and little snores were coming out of his mouth. Clary entangled her fingers together and looked around the house, analyzing everything.

“This house is beautiful, Magnus”, she gasped. “And what a gorgeous view”, she pointed towards the balcony where the Manhattan was lit by the rising sun.

“I know... it’s a beautiful feeling to just sit outside and have a cup of tea, sometimes”, Magnus added.

Luke walked in with Dr Abbott and they settled themselves on the armchair next to the couch and sofa-set. “Should I wake Alexander up for a checkup?”, Magnus asked, fetching all them a glass of water.

“Depends on whether you took the test or not? If you did, you can let your fiancé sleep for some more time while I check on you”, he quirked.

“I did actually...” Magnus mumbled, putting a jug of water on the coffee table for a refill.
“You did?”, Clary squeaked.

“I did the tests thrice, just to make sure that there is some accuracy.”, Magnus sighed, settling on the couch next to Clary. “...and they all came back negative”

Clary heaved a loud sigh of relief. “Oh, thank God”, she commented. She wrapped her arms around Magnus and kissed his cheek. “It’s good news!”, she whispered. Magnus gulped softly and took a deep breath. “What’s wrong?”, she asked.

“If I am not pregnant... why the hell do I throw my gut up every morning?”, he rubbed his fingers together and added.

“That morning sickness is because of the process of insemination. As long as a single drop of Alec’s semen in inside you... you will have those symptoms... and don’t worry Magnus. If you’re not pregnant, they will fade in the next month”, the doctor informed.

Magnus nodded in relief and settled in his sister’s arms.

“Well then... let me take a sample of your blood and then we can be sure about this”. He unzipped his bag and took out a syringe and a vacutainer. Magnus pulled the sleeves of his robe up and offered his arm to the doctor. The man inserted the needle and drew out a vacutainer full of blood and then bandaged the prick.

He threw the needle in the discard bag and stored the sample on ice.

“I’ll go and wake up Alec”, Magnus noticed Andre looking towards Alec’s room and stood up.

“If he is tired... let him rest. He looks fine other than the scars and those will heal... given proper rest. Just give this to him after breakfast and after dinner... for 5 days. It will help him cope up with the pain of the swelling”, the man handed over a leaf of pills and stood up. Luke followed him out of the door and both of them left.

Magnus came back to the kitchen and saw the girls taking out groceries. “Clary told me that you make amazing Belgian Waffles. We brought everything you need. And I am hungry.”, Isabelle tapped the kitchen counter with her painted nails and smiled.

Magnus tilted his head and smiled, taking his place behind the counter. “Oh... I brought your stuff here... all the clothes and your toiletries from the bathroom... figured you would want to move back to your apartment. It is all over there in that bag.”, Clary pointed at the duffle bag lying on the coffee table. Magnus pressed a kiss on Clary’s cheek and muttered a thank you in her ear. He ducked down and picked out a large bowl to mix the ingredients.

Clary turned around and displayed her back to Magnus. “Magnus... look what Luke gave me”, she chimed. Magnus’ eyes beamed when he saw the Morgenstern shirt on her. She had crumpled the oversized cloth into a knot on her abdomen and now wore it as a crop top over ankle length slim-fit black jeans.

“It looks beautiful, biscuit. You look beautiful my love!”, he commented, whisking the eggs and flour together.

Their heads snapped towards the room when Alec walked in, rubbing his eyes and ruffling his hair. He still looked so sleepy and exhausted. Without noticing their sisters, he walked straight to the counter and dropped his head on Magnus’ shoulder, pulling the man close to his chest. He sighed and closed his eyes, relaxing in Magnus’ presence.
“Good morning, Alexander”, Magnus scoffed, adjusting himself so that he could continue working while in Alec’s hold. Alec nodded on his shoulder and did not open his eyes. He tilted his head towards his right and nuzzled his nose in the crook of Magnus’ neck, just taking in his scent that was mixed with cologne.

“Did you sleep well, Alexander?”, Izzy teased, imitating Magnus’ way of pronouncing Alec’s full name. Alec’s eyes slammed open and he looked up to find both of their sisters wiggling their brows at them. He scratched the back of his neck and pulled away from his fiancé with his cheeks pink with embarrassment.

“Morning, girls”, he muttered.

“Good morning, Alec”, they said in unison.

Alec excused himself and disappeared into the washroom to brush his teeth and wash his face. Magnus took out the waffle maker and preheated it while Isabelle and Clary busied themselves fighting over where they would all have dinner the following night. Magnus looked up from the waffle mixture and realized that this right here was his family. His sister, her girlfriend and his fiancé Alexander. One small but extremely supportive family. These three people would sacrifice their lives for Magnus... and he had seen that up close. Truth be told, he would do the same.

Chapter End Notes

we’re one chapter away from the story ending, and a massive epilogue that is still a work in progress. (~27K words and counting) I still have about 10-12 scenes to write before I am done... and then editing and all. But I will try and complete the major part of it by this week!

please do let me know what you thought of this chapter and i shall see you on Sat/Sun with the last chapter of the story and because i am in a splendid mood today, here’s a little snippet from chapter 31

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**chapter 31 snippet**

“Don’t let go my hand, Magnus!”’, Alec squealed, grabbing Magnus’ hand back. Magnus rolled his eyes and scoffed. “This was a mistake”, he grumbled looking around himself. They were almost in the center of the white ocean of ice. Young boys and girls, children even were skating all around them with such perfection. It was the middle of the winter and Alec was sweating with fear. Magnus shook his head and glided closer to Alec, wrapping a strong arm around his waist to steady the man. He used his gloved hand and wiped off the sweat from Alec’s forehead.
here we are at the penultimate chapter of this story. I wanted to delay posting it, but
uhm... I know I shouldn't. This story has been special, and will continue to be special to
me. thank you for liking it so far, and I hope I can give you closure through the epilogue
that is currently wip!

I hope you'll like this chapter because I had a good time writing it :')

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Clary and Isabelle left Magnus and Alec’s apartment after breakfast to explore New York City now
that they were not running for their lives. Alec gave Isabelle his credit card and asked them to make
the most of their time together. Clary had insisted that she could help Alec watch over Magnus in
case he needed some help, but Alec had insisted that she had done her duties as a sister. Now, she
could relax and spend some good time with her girlfriend doing things that people their age should
do... instead of worrying about their safety from their murderous parents. Magnus was in the shower
right now. He had removed Alec’s sling because his shoulder was almost healed up now, thanks to
removing the morphine drip on time and he had applied the ointment that Andre had given to him.
Alec could feel a lot of movement in that arm and it was a good sign. It meant he could go back to
work soon. Magnus had also told him how Andre had taken a blood sample to confirm the findings
of the test kit and that they would receive an answer by today evening or tomorrow morning.
Meanwhile, Alec had spoken to Jem on the phone and the man had agreed to resume the project on
Monday, working overtime to get it done within the deadlines.

Things were looking good, better than the entire last month, but Alec had been through so much that
he couldn’t help but fear the unknown and unexpected both for himself and the man he was in love
with. He extended his right hand to do some mild exercises to start building his strength in the
shoulder. It wasn’t an easy as he had assumed. Andre had also left him with a shoulder support strap
that Magnus had kept aside saying he would come and help Alec put it on once he was done
showering. He was stretching his arm when his phone buzzed on the bed next to him. He picked it
up and read the text message.

“Magnus?”, Alec knocked on the door of the bathroom. “I am going to the main gate for a minute.
There’s a delivery I need to pick up. Be back soon, alright?”, he informed the man and then grabbed
his jacket to rush out.

Magnus came out of the shower after Alec left and picked up a towel to wipe his wet hair. He was in
a way better place today. The breakfast with their sisters and last night with Alec had made him feel
like the older version of him – without the self-deprecating thoughts. He stood next to the wardrobe,
wiping his hair when his gaze fell on the stack of frames that he and Alec had hung up on the wall
when they had first come to New York. There was one peculiar photo with Asmodeus, Kaya, and
Clary... on the day of their engagement that really caught his attention because it seemed like such a
long time ago. Magnus had been wearing a black tux with a bow-tie and his father had a hand on his
shoulder. Kaya’s arms encircled Clary around her waist, as she was pulled close to her mother’s
chest. This was the night Asmodeus’ well-crafted plan to make Magnus become a true Omega had
begun and everything that happened thereon had been a well-planned lie in his master plan.
Everything his mother and father had ever told him was planned and false. Their singular purpose had been to control Magnus’ destiny according to what they believed was right. Magnus’ teeth clenched when the memories of his father’s touch and hatred flashed in his mind. He gasped when he relived the feeling of a cold gush of wind brushing his body right after Asmodeus had torn his pants off in front of dozens of people around. Placing a hand on his chest to steady his breathing, he stumbled back and shut his eyes. Cold beads of sweat were trickling down his forehead. His head was vibrating, and he could see a faint white light everywhere.

He extended his other arm behind him to find the bed or anything he could use for support when he was losing balance every second, but it felt like the ground was shifting beneath his feet. “Easy...”, he heard Alec’s voice as the man grabbed him messily by his waist and pulled him back onto his feet. Magnus scrunched his brows when a steady beep sounded in his ears. Cold and soft fur touched his feet as his body found the ground again, much to Magnus’ relief. He knew in his subconscious that Alec was close to him and he just had to hold on while this phase... whatever it was... passed. One side of his body felt warmer than the other as it was pressing against Alec’s chest. The Alpha’s arms were circled around Magnus’ waist and his nose and lips were sticking against the side of the Omega’s head. Magnus lifted his palm and slapped his earlobe to stop that loud noise in his ears that was just ruining his attempt to stabilize his breathing.

“Magnus you know I cannot skate to save my life... and ice-skating... please, don’t make me do this...”, Alec threw his head back and laughed. They were standing by the railing in the Rink at Brookfield Place a day after the New Years.

Magnus gasped for a deep breath. He recalled that memory. It was one of their first outings when they had gotten to New York and Magnus had only started working. He wanted to take Alec out for something that he had done, and Alec never had. It was some sort of a bet that they had to go on at the time. Magnus swallowed the lump in his throat, not knowing how this memory had suddenly cropped up in his mind when all he could think about had been his father... and mother, and that gruesome ritual.

“Which is why I said I would help you... don’t you trust me, Alexander?”, Magnus clutched the flaps of Alec’s jacket and hauled him closer to stabilize the man. Alec was terrified seeing those ice-skates. It was written all over his face.

Alec lifted his hands and enveloped Magnus’ arms in his embrace, pushing him closer to himself. The Omega’s eyes were wide open, and his pupils were dilated. They were oscillating left-right with a rapid speed and tears were spilling out of his fiancé’s eyes. Alec was scared. He was also blaming himself for heading out to take that delivery even though he knew what state Magnus had been in. He should have been wiser. A low grunt of dissatisfaction came out of Magnus’ mouth and Alec shuddered. They were sitting on the floor next to the bed with their backs against the bedside. Alec’s legs were folded in a squeezed kneeling position while Magnus’ were spread in front of him.

Magnus knelt on the ground in front of Alec on the bench and lifted his leg to his lap to put his skates on. Alec wasn’t sure about any of this and that had Magnus amused. “Do you know how many people die from skating on thin ice, and then eventually drowning. Magnus, I do not want to die here...”, Alec raised his hand and waved dramatically. Magnus chuckled and stood up adjusting his own balance on the ice.

Magnus blinked his eyes after a while and sank his head in the warmth of Alec’s shoulder. He could feel comforting strokes on his arm by Alec but his body and mind were still too far gone in the memory of that horrible incident to pull himself out and calm down. “Steady... easy... steady, my love...”, Alec’s voice echoed in Magnus’ mind. Magnus heaved another sigh and let himself drown completely in that beautiful memory that was flashing in his mind.
Alec clutched onto Magnus’ hands as if his life depended on it. Magnus skated them a little further into the rink. Alec’s legs and body were frozen with fear and anxiety and it was Magnus doing most of the work for them. “Keep yourself steady, Alexander”, Magnus explained. His legs moved with ultimate perfection. “People say that you balance yourself with your legs and hands... spread out. But the key to being a good skater is... control over your mind!”, he explained, pulling one hand away from Alec to tap his temple and emphasize.

“Don’t let go my hand, Magnus!”, Alec squealed, grabbing Magnus’ hand back. Magnus rolled his eyes and scoffed. “This was a mistake”, he grumbled looking around himself. They were almost in the center of the white ocean of ice. Young boys and girls, children even were skating all around them with such perfection. It was the middle of the winter and Alec was sweating with fear. Magnus shook his head and glided closer to Alec, wrapping a strong arm around his waist to steady the man. He used his gloved hand and wiped off the sweat from Alec’s forehead.

“It is not difficult. Trust me. Ice-skating is like...”, he paused to think of an appropriate metaphor. “It is like running in the forest on four feet. How do you do that? How do you make sure your wolf form don’t run into a tree or a bush...?”

“I have been doing it since I was four, Magnus”, Alec deadpanned.

“Of course, you’re right. Practice is important... but so is focus... and an innate trust in yourself that you can do it. Your mind is a powerful tool, Alexander. As soon as you can learn to control it... rather than have it control you, you’ll be able to do things you never thought you could”, he explained, sliding a foot away from Alec. Alec took a deep breath and looked around himself. “Think about how you achieve that focus when you’re in your wolf form... and try to inculcate that in yourself... right now”, he added.

Alec licked his lips and pushed one of his legs forward. It was slippery and unbalanced... but it felt good. He tangled his gloved hands in Magnus’ and glided forward, sliding his other leg ahead of the first one. Magnus was so natural and good at this. He was skating in the reverse direction, complementing Alec’s moves. “You will not fall. I will not let you”, Magnus reminded him. “But I know for a fact that you are strong enough to do this on your own, Alexander”, Alec looked up from the ice and fixed his gaze on Magnus. There was a satisfying smile on the guy’s face.

He let go off one of Alec’s hands and skated next to him. Alec was slow and awkward at this... but he was trying. He took small steps on the ice and mostly skated in a single direction. Whenever they wanted to turn, Alec would wrap both his hands around Magnus’ wrist and let him maneuver in the right direction. By the time they took one-half circle in the rink, Alec was panting with exhaustion and anxiety. They grabbed the railings to catch their breaths – well, for Alec to catch his. “I told you you could do it... that your mind is capable of this”, he tapped Alec’s shoulder.

Magnus closed his eyes and lifted his hand to place it over Alec’s arm that was encircled around his chest. His breathing was normal and the vibrating noise in his head had disappeared too. Magnus could feel that if he opened his eyes, he’ll be able to see the world as it was, without that panic gripping him. “Alexander”, he whispered softly. His lips were grazing the nape of Alec’s neck. Alec hummed in response, pressing his cheek closer to Magnus’ forehead.

“If I leave you for a minute and get you a glass of water... will you be alright?”, Alec rubbed his shoulder and tipped Magnus’ chin up with his other hand. Magnus gently opened his eyes and looked at Alec. The man was trying to read him with concerned eyes. He stared in Alec’s eyes for a few minutes and then nodded. Alec grabbed Magnus by his waist again and pulled them both up to sit on the bed instead of the ground. He gave him a small smile and then pecked his lips before heading towards the kitchen. “Be right back, Magnus”. Magnus pressed his fingertips on the edge of
the bed and took a deep breath.

“Here”, Alec muttered, resuming his seat next to Magnus. Magnus took the glass of water from Alec’s hand and emptied it down his throat. “Are we okay now?”, he asked. Magnus gave the empty glass of water to Alec and nodded.

“It was a panic attack wasn’t it...?”, he turned to Alec. Alec scanned Magnus’ face for signs of anxiety or fear and then nodded. Alec nudged him closer and ushered Magnus’ head in the crook of his neck, making gentle strokes on his arms.

“But it is gone now. There is nothing to worry about.”, he assured.

“I hate myself, Alexander.”, Magnus dropped his head on his palms and huffed out a breath. Alec could feel the tension in the man’s body.

“Magnus...”, Alec shifted closer.

“No, Alexander... I just... I hate myself because even after everything that he did to me... I can’t shake him off of my mind. When I saw how you crushed him to death, a very small part of me wanted to grieve him. Grieve the man who raped his own son... and I just... how can I feel like that.”, he gritted his teeth and grunted softly.

“He was your father... and he was very good at making everyone believe how much he loved you... and I mean, he did love you for 18 years of your life before everything went against his expectation, but... he was still your father and even if his love wasn’t real... yours was? You respected him... and it’s going to take some time Magnus... but you’ll be able to let that man go. From your memories as well...okay? It will happen... don’t worry about that. But none of this makes you weak... okay?”, he rubbed Magnus’ shoulder with his thumb. “Remember the time you told me that you could do a lot of things if you learned how to control your mind...?”, he dropped his lips on Magnus’ shoulder and planted a kiss.

“It was you, wasn’t it?”, Magnus sighed and looked to his side where Alec was sitting. Alec shrugged and smiled. “You showed us that memory of the Brookfield Rink?”, he bit his lower lip and straightened his back.

“I mean... I wanted you to know... remember... that you had the strength in you to conquer anything you wanted. Just like you taught me how to skate on that dreadful ice!”, Alec rolled his eyes. Magnus snorted and recalled the memory.

“Are we not going to address the elephant in the room though? The fact that you let out the part where you fell on the ice... on your butt... legs straddled apart and we weren’t even skating then...”, Magnus wiggled his brows, his smile returning to his face. Alec placed his palms over his eyes to hide his embarrassment.

“I can’t believe you made me learn ice-skating. I mean it isn’t as easy as you make it look like... but yeah... it’s fun. At least now, I won’t die!”, Alec rolled his eyes and clutched the railing tightly. Magnus was a little away into the rink now... skating and showing off his skills but never moving too far from Alec. “I think I can manage myself for some time, why don’t you go and take a round with the other people who move better than I do... show off your perfect ice-skating skills in front of them.”, Alec waved his hand and taunted. Magnus snorted and turned his back to the Alpha. He wasn’t going to go away from his childlike fiancé.

Alec turned around, with his back towards the railings. There was no way he could observe Magnus skating around if he was busy clinging to those bars for life. He was steady on his feet now, looking
at Magnus twirling on the ice. His movements were so flawless and so calculated. He moved on ice like it was a second nature to him. So effortlessly. Leaning back, Alec reached out for his hand to catch the bar and settle his back on it, but it was further back than he had anticipated. He leaned back in an angle where he couldn’t balance himself anymore. His legs slid ahead on the ice and he fell down, hitting his ice with his butt.

When Magnus turned around to look at Alec, he found the man on the ground with his legs spread apart and his palms pressed on the ice, trying to get back up on his feet. He broke into a chuckle as he skated towards his fiancé and couldn’t control his laughter when he reached the man. Alec scrunched his nose and looked up at Magnus helplessly. Magnus’ shoulders were shaking with laughter when he held his hand out to help Alec up.

When Alec stood up on his feet again, his face was puffed with annoyance and anger. Magnus cupped his pale and pink face and shook his jaw lovingly. “Baby steps, Alexander”, he chuckled. Alec noticed the way crinkles formed next to his eyes.

“That’s because I am me”, Alec groaned and threw his head back. “…that has nothing to do with the way you taught me…”, he raised his hand to cup Magnus’ jaw and stroke his cheekbone with his thumb. Magnus turned his head around and pressed a kiss on Alec’s palm. “…and it brought that huge grin on your face... and back then I didn’t realize it, but I will trip and fall on the ice just to make you laugh like that”, he shrugged.

“Yeah?”, Magnus’ eyes lit up.

“Yeah…”, Alec shrugged. “Come on... get up now... okay?”, he stood up and walked over to the couch to grab the delivery he had gone out for. Magnus walked over to his wardrobe and picked out his clothes for the day. “I got you a new phone…”, Alec handed over the box to Magnus. “The number is still the same... and I managed to get most of the data restored... but some photos were lost…”, he scratched the back of his neck. Magnus dropped his satin shirt over his head and smiled. “You’re just the best”, Magnus tugged Alec closer by his waist and hauled him in for a kiss.

...It was evening by the time Clary and Isabelle returned to Magnus and Alec’s apartment after the day out in NYC. The apartment was empty because Magnus and Alec had gone to do some grocery shopping for the dinner, but they had left the keycard behind the flower pot and instructed Isabelle and Clary to pick it up and make themselves at home while they waited for him and Magnus. The girls dropped their bags on the couch and settled together, waiting for the boys to come in. It wasn’t a very long wait, as the boys walked in right after them, setting huge bags of groceries on the kitchen counter. Alec had bottles of beer and wine in his hand while Magnus had the vegetables and chicken. They were making pasta and spaghetti for dinner.

“How was the sight-seeing?”, Alec asked, bending forward to kiss both the girls on their cheek. Clary raised her thumb in the air while Isabelle started fishing out something from the huge packet lying on the coffee table. Alec dropped his elbows on the backrest. It was filled with bottles of paint and there were huge brushes too. “What is that?”

“Face paints. Clary suggested that we should do something really stupid and mundane for one night... and then one group chat and a couple of texts later, it was decided that these should do it.”, Izzy rolled her eyes.

“Group chat... consisting of?”
“Clary, me and Magnus... of course!”, Izzy shrugged. Alec rolled his eyes and looked over his shoulder back at the kitchen counter.

“Of course”, he muttered. He heard Magnus scoff a little and facepalmed himself. “But... don’t you think it is a little early for Halloween?”

“It’s a slumber party, Alec and the theme is face-painting. Halloween is way different. Puhleez!”

Clary clapped, jumping up on her feet. Alec widened his eyes and turned to look at Magnus – this time fully. The Omega merely shrugged his shoulders, but his smirk revealed that he knew something about what was going on. “You know what the best part is, Alec?”

she crossed her hands over her chest. “You don’t get to say no”, she winked. Izzy chuckled as she looked back and forth between her brother and girlfriend.

“Magnus, did you agree to this?”, Alec gasped.

“Why else did I insist that you shave before we went grocery shopping, darling? Isabelle had a point... we need mundane and stupid in our lives...”, Magnus arched his brows, scoffing a little. He was unpacking the chicken breasts they had brought for dinner tonight, making the marinade and other dressings. “Come on... you go first and then come back here to help me finish this dressing... go!”, he nudged his fiancé’s shoulder.

“This is more high-schoolish than mundane and stupid but by all means... go right ahead!”, he raised his hands in the air.

“Alec... frankly, when did you ever paint your face when you were in high-school? It will be fun! Now sit on the table and stop complaining, Alec”, Izzy poked her brother and pushed him towards the coffee table in front of the couch.

“Of course, and it has to be me first... all of these party tricks are made to embarrass one Alec Lightwood. Now, what are you going to make me?”, Alec grumbled. He unbuttoned his shirt and sat on the coffee table in front of the two girls in nothing but the black vest that he was wearing underneath.

“You’ll see...”, Izzy fished out a sponge and started removing the seal on the paints. Clary found a nude colored bald cap and adjusted all of Alec’s fluffy hair inside it. Alec’s hazel orbs observed everything around him and as much as he hated being baited into trouble every time, he could see the happiness in the girl’s eyes while they worked. And maybe he could see what they meant when they said that this was needed. “Close your eyes, Alec”, Isabelle instructed. Alec took a deep breath and closed his eyes. A few seconds later, his skin shuddered when cold pain covered sponge touched his eyelids. Isabelle held Alec’s head by his chin and continued to dab whatever paint she had on that sponge all around his face and neck... and on his shoulders. He felt chilly and cold until the wet paint dried up but he couldn’t open his eyes as per his sister’s instructions. Once Alec's face was covered in white paint which he couldn’t see, Clary blew air over his face to dry the paint out.

“Hand me that shade. Yeah... that one”, she pointed at the cherry red color. Taking a thinner brush in her hand, she spoke up. “Alec, smile for me...without the teeth please”, he wanted to roll his eyes but alas, they were closed.

“This is tyranny”, Alec mumbled, stretching his cheeks out for a close-lipped grin, as per his sister’s instruction. “Magnus... I’ll have you know that I don’t condone you keeping secrets from me”, he called out, raising his index finger in the air. Magnus watched his fiancé getting manhandled by his little sister and chuckled. It wasn’t like Alec was the only one that was going to transform tonight. They were all going to have some crazy fun with those paints. Isabelle drew careful red lines around Alec’s mouth to make sure the clown’s lips were big and smiling – no grinning. She filled the area
under the outline with the dark red color and then made a boundary using black paint to enhance the
depth of the edges and extend the lip slit to give an illusion of Alec having huge lips covering half his
cheek. She made creases on the white area right outside the boundaries of the lips to give an
impression of Alec’s face smiling.

She made larger and fake eyebrows on Alec with black paint and eyeshadow, and made them taper
towards the side of Alec’s forehead to give him a sad and grumpy look to his version of the clown.
And if Alec was gonna be made into a clown, he obviously needed to have a yellow eyeshadow
above and around his eyes. After that was done she bordered the yellow paint with a black marker,
Clary added fake black tears below his eyes and then Isabelle put on his hat that had a brown wig
attached to it that fell over his ears and half of his head. Once they were done, she sprayed his face
with a setting spray and then asked him to wear his shirt and open his eyes.

“You made into a clown didn’t you, Isabelle?”, Alec arched his now invisible brow. Isabelle
chuckled and nodded. He shook his head and rolled his eyes, although no one could really see his
expressions anymore. But, if this is how this evening was going to go... he might as well be a sport
and endure it. When he looked up at Clary, she was almost done painting her own face as an Avatar
character and she did look stunning. The blue color suiting her face. Isabelle turned to her girlfriend
and started helping her enhance her cheekbones and forehead and adding those white dots all over
his eyes. They had a picture opened on the laptop in front for reference. Alec knew how weird and
funny he looked, but he honestly didn’t care. When he looked back up at Magnus, the man was busy
mixing the marinade and chicken with his hands. But he was trying to avoid looking at Alec because
the man looked insanely funny to be honest. Magnus was biting his lower lip and trying to control
his smile when he saw Alec approaching him from the corner of his eyes. He turned away from the
man and continued working on the chicken.

“So...?”, Alec tapped the kitchen counter. Magnus’ eyes crinkled, and he turned his back to the
Alpha. Alec carefully watched Magnus avoiding him and plucked the back of Magnus’ shirt, finally
pulling him closer to his chest. “I can’t kiss you without ruining Izzy’s work”, Alec whispered in
Magnus’ ear and made him shiver.

“You need to turn around so that you can give me a better explanation as to why I shouldn’t kiss my
lovely fiancé.”, Alec trailed his fingers on Magnus’ waist, making him gasp. Magnus took a deep
breath and obliged. He quickly washed his hands under the tap and dried them on his apron so that
the marinade didn’t ruin Alec’s shirt. He turned out and gently lifted his gaze to look at Alec
properly. Alec looked like a work of art. His fake brown hair poking out of his hat and that grumpy
clown face. Isabelle had outdone herself. Alec’s lips and the area around his mouth were colored a
very delicious shade of cherry red. The spray had made his makeup shine and dazzle against the
light. Magnus bit his lower lip and sucked it inside, finding it hard to not break into a chuckle
because Alec looked so adorable. Alec huffed out a breath and lifted his hands to his hips. “You
know... you can laugh if you want to. I know how silly I look and it’s fine. Whatever... it is not as if I
don’t look like a joker?”, he gasped. Magnus closed his eyes to control his expressions for a moment
but then he just couldn’t and broke into a chuckle.

He stared at Alec’s face, trying to read his expression which was hard because of all the paint hiding
“Wow... I really want to squish your cheeks with my fingers...”, Magnus placed his hands on Alec’s
shoulder. He was still shaking with laughter. Alec’s heart filled with joy when he saw Magnus’
unrestrained smile after so long.

“You could kiss me if you want to... I will ask Isabelle to touch up my very sexy red lips. Trust me,
Mr Bane”, Alec wiggled his clown brows imitating some random clown voice, eliciting another laughter from Magnus. Even though Alec was probably joking, Magnus couldn’t resist planting a kiss on those overly red lips of Alec. He upped himself on his toes and planted a quick one before he smudged Alec’s paint.

“I love you. Thank you for agreeing to do this. The two of them really deserved a night out where they could just be themselves...”, he gestured to his face and his eyes got filled with tears. Alec wiped them off and shook his head.

“I am the one with tears tonight. You are only going to smile, alright?”, Alec tightened his grasp around Magnus’ waist and cupped Magnus’ jaws. Magnus nodded and kissed Alec again, just to remind himself that he was here... with him. And everything was alright. They were snapped out of their moment when Clary called out Magnus’ name. They turned their heads together to look at the redhead. She looked stunning with her makeup and hair on.

“You look gorgeous, biscuit”, Magnus commented. The girl smiled and settled in front of Isabelle to continue with whatever she was doing with her face. Alec and Magnus let go off each other and started preparing dinner. Magnus blanched the vegetables and sautéed whatever he needed for the pasta while Alec used the pasta machine to weave out the spaghetti. When Clary was done helping Izzy, she asked Magnus to switch places with her so that she can help Alec.

Magnus wiped his hands and paused to take a quick selfie with his fiancé. He asked Alec to make a sad face while Magnus squished his lips against Alec’s cheek. He uploaded it to his Facebook and Instagram with the caption – this handsome clown! Clary took his place next to Magnus while the man walked over to start his own face-paint. He put on the special lenses he had asked Clary to get and then painted his face for a cat makeup but using his own makeup items instead of the paint. The cat eye lens complemented his look and he looked absolutely stunning with those cute whiskers and freckles on his perfect caramel skin. He had a Siamese cat face paint on.

“You know what, I am just going to ignore how each one of you look stunning, and I don’t”, Alec mumbled when Magnus momentarily joined him in the kitchen to show his own makeup off. Magnus chuckled and scrunched his nose to display his cute cat whiskers.

“Say what you want, Alexander. I think yours is my favorite look for the night”, Magnus shrugging, bringing a bowl of nachos back to the living room. He turned on his heels and crouched in front of Isabelle to get her black lip color right when the doorbell rang. He looked up to persuade Alec to open the door, but the man lifted his hands in surrender saying he wouldn’t show that face to the world. It is a tad bit too much.

Magnus sighed and answered the door himself. He was surprised to see Luke standing with his reports. The Alpha wolf looked at Magnus and then at Clary and Isabelle and was taken aback by the situation in the house, and the bottles of paint lying on the coffee table. When he looked back at Magnus, this time rather carefully, stunning cat-eyes looked back at him. “Face paint Slumber Party. It’s just something thoughtless and mundane. What brings you by?”, Magnus explained by air-quoting, waving his hands in the air. Luke chuckled and handed out the bloodtest report. Magnus asked if he wanted to come in and join them for dinner and their little party, but he said he wouldn’t want to disturb the family time. Magnus shook his hand and muttered a thank you for all his help.

“Guys... now that we’re doing this thing...”, Alec yelled from the room where he was standing in front of the mirror, scanning his makeup. He was talking about his clown face. “Don’t you think my look is incomplete without that red nose? Isabelle, do you have it somewhere?”, he bent backward and peered out of the mirror. Luke gasped when he saw that face and all color, metaphorically, disappeared from Alec’s face.
“Is that... Alec?”, he gasped.

Magnus sucked his lips back inside and nodded, holding his laughter. Clary and Isabelle chuckled as well, and Alec wanted to facepalm himself. “By all means... please laugh, Luke. You’ll not be the first one... might I inform you. Frankly, I am getting used to this...”, he chastised. Luke barked out a laughter.

“Don’t worry Alec. I won’t laugh at you. You look nice. I am gonna go... have fun you all”, he waved his hand and turned around holding his chest. Isabelle stood up from the couch and gave Alec his sponge nose. Alec fitted it over his nose and twirled around showing off his complete look to Isabelle and Magnus.

“Tada!”, he chastised. Magnus shut the door and threw his back on it, choking in a laughter.

He tore open the reports and pulled the sheets out, walking inside the house. Alec sprinted across the room and reached Magnus’ side as he read through it. “Are we...?”, he whispered, wrapping an arm around Magnus’ waist and ushering him close.

Magnus looked up at him with tearful eyes. “No. We’re not pregnant!”, Andre said he wants to meet us tomorrow morning to explain all this. But we’re clear.”, he smiled. Alec’s heart leaped in his chest and he launched himself on Magnus, hugging him tightly and momentarily throwing him off balance. He pressed his lips against Alec’s shoulder and smiled. Isabelle and Clary squealed and hugged each other before running towards Alec and Magnus to wrap their arms around the boys. Magnus crashed their lips together a quick kiss before they parted and resumed their little party.

... 

Alec and Magnus brought the last of the dishes to the kitchen island where Clary and Isabelle were already seated. After the whole face-painting session, they were starving. Isabelle had finally settled for a Batwoman face paint look. They had clicked a lot of selfies together and flooded each other’s social media sites with cute caption and in short, mundane things. Clary had ordered potstickers to complement the meal. Magnus poured wine in his and Alec’s glasses and gave the girls the lime soda he had made.

Clary took one bite of the white sauce pasta and hummed. “This is amazing. Too good, Magnus.”, she fanned her mouth because the pasta was still too hot when she ate it. Magnus sipped his wine and muttered a thank you.

He got the bag of potstickers from Izzy and took out two pieces onto his plate. He handed over the packet to Alec but the main refused saying he’d just taste one. Magnus fished out one piece with his chopsticks and held it in front of Alec’s mouth. Alec gave him a soft smile, or so Magnus assumed. It was very difficult to analyze the boy’s expression behind those large painted red lips of his. He opened his mouth and swallowed the potsticker in.

Magnus broke into a chuckle. “It is so hard to picture you looking at me like that because of your face, Alexander! I know you have those loving heart-eyes babe but... I am so sorry I shouldn’t be laughing. I shouldn’t be laughing...”, Magnus pressed his hand on Alec’s shoulder and gave it a squeeze, unable to control his laughter.

“I love you too, honey”, Alec deadpanned. Magnus held his fist to his mouth, still finding it hard to stop chuckling.

“Since when did our brothers get better and cuter than us? We are supposed to be cuddly and adorable... you know... cos we’re us... Isabelle and Clary!”, Isabelle arched her brow, turning her
attention to her girlfriend.

“I know right? They are sickening cute. I think we should do more of the romantic stuff...”, Clary grimaced.

“You’re hilarious Iz!”, Alec glared at her.

“Alec... you know you always look scary because of that face you make when you are irritated... but with that clown makeup on, you look downright horrifying. Stop glaring at me like that!”, Izzy widened her eyes at the boy, genuinely mortified by how scary Alec looked when he stared at her, all covered in makeup.

“And whose fault is that?”, Alec squinted his eyes.

“Easy, Lightwoods”, Magnus extended his hands holding his palms in front of Izzy and Alec’s chest. Izzy rolled her eyes at her brother. “Anyone up for more wine and lime soda...”, he eased the situation between his fiancé and sister-in-law and refilled both Izzy and Alec’s glasses. He groped for Alec’s thigh below the table and then rubbed it to calm him down.

“Anyway, let’s get serious for a minute... I spoke to Dad today”, Alec cleared his throat, getting back into the serious mode. “He told me that the situation in Alicante is getting stabilized... as we speak obviously and there’s no risk for Clary and Magnus anymore... should they choose to come out of their hiding.”, he added. Magnus cleared his throat and downed his entire glass of wine in one go, wondering if there ever will come a time when he would be able to listen to people talk about Idris without flinching or feeling scared to his bones. Alec dropped his hand below the table and entangled it with Magnus’ hand that was resting on his thigh.

“Way to kill the mood, Alec”, Izzy whined.

“I also spoke to Dad about transferring Clary’s records to some other University if she chooses to not return to town... hypothetically of course. I just wanted to know if that would be possible to do if she chose to come out of hiding. He said he could try and talk to the University and...”, he looked at Clary whose head was turned in his direction. “He says in theory, it is possible. With a little paperwork. I haven’t disclosed that you are here with us... but I think it is manageable according to Dad. Mr Herondale will also help in any way he can... so whenever you are ready to show up... he’ll be here for you...”, he huffed out a breath.

“That is great!”, Magnus cleared his throat. “If we can get her transferred to some College here in Brooklyn... or even Manhattan for that matter... it would be easier for me to keep an eye on her as well.”, he added.

“Yeah... I have informed Luke about it... and we can manage the situation from here”, Alec continued. “And... Isabelle. Mom wants you back in Town... soon. She says that you need to get back to College and finish off your degree. Then... you can join me here if you like”, he added.

Isabelle’s smile dropped but she nodded because she knew it was expected. She couldn’t stay in New York forever while her life was still pending in Idris. “I will talk to Mom and tell her that I’ll return next week”, she added. Magnus looked around the kitchen counter. Everything had become so quiet and sad all of a sudden.

“Anyone up for dessert?” he stood up, pushing his chair back.

...
ushered into the guest bathroom to remove their face paint and change into pajama shorts and tank tops. They were staying the night at Alec and Magnus’ studio apartment. The two men pulled out the extra mattresses from the storage area and spread it on the living room carpet to make beds for Isabelle and Clary to sleep on since their apartment was just a very large studio apartment. Magnus excused himself to clean his face while Alec spread a new bedsheet and placed pillows and blanket for the girls.

“Alexander... come on, go and remove your paint before it dries your skin any further.”, Magnus called out. He had a bag of cotton balls in one hand and a few mysterious looking tubes in the other. He had himself removed his makeup and his skin looked clean and flawless, like always. Alec narrowed his brows quizzically, and looked at Magnus without responding to him. The expression on his face was priceless.

“I can’t see your brows, Alec. You need to say what you’re trying to express, babe”, Magnus rolled his eyes. He could understand what Izzy meant when she said that Alec looked scary. He did. With those drooping eyebrows and cheeky smile.

“Uh... I don’t know what to do with those tubes and cotton balls... I have never...”, he scratched the back of his head, removing his wig and discarding the bald cap. Magnus curved his lips in an o and then entered the bathroom, gesturing him to follow him inside. He pulled a stool from their bedroom and placed it right below the shower. Alec sat on it as Magnus folded his shirt to his elbows. He unbuttoned Alec’s shirt and discarded it off. Alec looked really strange wearing a black vest and face, neck and shoulders covered in the white paint just until the collarbone.

“You looked so adorable tonight! And it made Isabelle and Clary so happy... so thank you for doing it for them!”, Magnus scoffed, lovingly. He placed a series of overlapping face wipes over Alec’s face and pressed them with his fingers. Alec hummed in response and Magnus could see his lips curving into a smile. Magnus gently used his fingers to massage the skin with facewipes so that the extra paint got imprinted on it. He kept dabbing it for some more time and then pulled off the wipes, discarding them in the dustbin. Most of the paint came off after adsorbing to those wipes. “Ok now... wash off the rest of the paint with this facewash”, he poured a little soup gel onto Alec’s palm and stepped aside. The man rinsed his face with the soap and the rest of the paint flowed out with the lather. Once he was done, Magnus gestured for him to take his seat on the stool. He used another baby wipe and poked a finger making a pointed end. There was face paint stuck to the curves and crevices next to the nose, eyes and earlobes.

“Look up”, he tipped his fiancé’s chin and started cleaning off the small crevices and edges like his nostrils, his earlobe and then the corners of his eyes and his hairline. Once Alec was clean and devoid of any paint, Magnus used a larger towel to clean Alec’s neck and shoulder and then discarded everything in the laundry basket. Alec stood up and looked at himself. Every last speck of makeup was gone but his face looked unusually pink and dry.

“What aren’t you good at?”, he gasped.

“Being a good son, apparently...”, Magnus rolled his eyes. Alec slumped his shoulders and turned towards the man. “I was joking, Alexander...”, he added. Alec stepped forward and captured Magnus’ lips in his.

“You are a very good son... of really shitty parents”, the Alpha reminded. Magnus’ lips tipped into a smile and he nodded. He turned his head towards the mirror and cleaned his own face with a baby wipe. Then, he took out a white moisturizing face mask and placed it over his face, before doing the same with his fiancé.

“We need to moisturize our skin now... because those paints dry out our pores and the skin will star
chipping off if we don’t do anything...”, he explained. Alec nodded, understanding the small details. He sat back on the stool and leaned back on the tile to relax himself. The face mask was imbued with a cooling freshness and his skin felt so rejuvenated and fresh as the contents of the mask seeped into his body. After 20 minutes, they discarded the masks and changed into their night clothes. Magnus had already applied a coat of face cream and he handed it over to his fiancé when they stepped out of the room. Isabelle and Clary had already settled in the living room and were engrossed in some life-changing discussions.

Once they settled under the covers, Alec found his way on Magnus’ pillow and snuggled next to him. He pulled Magnus to his chest and spooned him around his waist. Magnus dug his head in his pillow and took deep breaths.

“You know... when I read those reports... I was happy I am not pregnant, and the insemination wasn’t successful... but I didn’t mean that I didn’t want to have your kids? If at all I want to get pregnant again, I want it to be our kids, Alec. I want it to be our little pack...”, Magnus spoke up after a few minutes of silence. In all the fun and celebration, he had harbored a fear that maybe Alec would have gotten upset by Magnus not being pregnant.

“Yeah... I know... why would you think that?”, Alec mumbled.

“I just...”

“Magnus”, Alec nudged and pulled him closer. “I know you’re not ready... and frankly speaking... I am not either. I can’t imagine being a father at 22... and this has nothing to do with the kids being yours. I just know that I wouldn’t justify myself as a father if I had become one at this age... but yeah... whenever we are both ready... I want it to be our little family”, he added.

“I know. I just... I am not opposed to having kids... Alexander. I need you to know that!”, he turned around to face his fiancé. “But I want it to be our decision. Our consent... and our choice... whenever we make that decision. It just has to be something we are ready for... yeah?”, he added, groping for Alec’s face in the dark. When he found his cheek, he stroked it gently and pressed his lips on Alec’s, snuggling closer.

“It will be, Magnus. I promise you that. The next time we are standing on the brink of a pregnancy, it will be when the both of us are ready...”, Alec assured. Magnus hummed and snuggled his head in Alec’s neck, pulling the duvet above them. They entangled their legs in each other and pressed their bodies together. “Do you trust me on that?”, he asked.

“I do, Alexander. Frankly, you and Clary are the only people in the world that I trust right now... but these last few days have been horrible”, he breathed out against Alec’s neck and felt his own throat bobbing.

“It will be, Magnus. I promise you that. The next time we are standing on the brink of a pregnancy, it will be when the both of us are ready...”, Alec assured. Magnus hummed and snuggled his head in Alec’s neck, pulling the duvet above them. They entangled their legs in each other and pressed their bodies together. “Do you trust me on that?”, he asked.

“I do, Alexander. Frankly, you and Clary are the only people in the world that I trust right now... but these last few days have been horrible”, he breathed out against Alec’s neck and felt his own throat bobbing.

“I know...”

“I just... I am so scared...”

“You have every right to be”, Alec rubbed Magnus’ back.

“I don’t think that I am capable of coming out of the other end, by myself. I know I am strong... and resilient but this is just...”

“I am here, Magnus. This is what a marriage is... right? This is what a relationship is...? I am here for you... every step of the way. Not to help you... but just to tell you that you can fall back on me and I will catch you...”, he pressed his lips on Magnus’ forehead. Magnus felt Alec’s hand on his face and
he curled his wrist around it, gently trailing it upward to meet his fingers. When they finally met, Magnus entangled them together.

“Oh”, he whispered, feeling Alec’s empty ring finger. “Alexander”, he gasped. Turning around to turn on the night lamp, he raised himself on his elbow and gazed at Alec. The Alpha’s hands were trailing patterns on Magnus’ arms. Magnus pulled out his chain and revealed Alec’s engagement ring. “I should have given this back to you…”

“You didn’t… sell it off?”, Alec’s eyes beamed when he noticed his ring.

“No. Clary gave it for safe-keeping the second we reached Brooklyn. She knew I would never want to sell it off for money. She sold off Asmodeus’ gift to her instead. It was this big diamond pendant but yeah she couldn’t care less. This ring is far too valuable for me and she knew that…”, he unhooked the chain and took the ring out of it. Holding Alec’s left hand in between his, he licked his lips and fixed his gaze in Alec’s eyes.

“Alexander Gideon Lightwood. You are an incredible man”, his eyes twinkled. Alec pulled Magnus closer with his other hand until the man was almost on his chest. “From the first time we slept on this bed here, you showed me that people could be kind and respectful. That I was worthy of that kindness and respect just like every other person. You helped me bring my dream to reality and you continue to do so… every time. You amaze me Alexander. And you terrify me too. I am unsure about a lot of things about my life right now… but the one thing that is crystal clear is that I want to spend the rest of my life being in love with you. I want you to hold me when I cry and cheer for me when I win, and I want you to let me do the same for you. I want to remove your makeup every time Isabelle paints your face as a clown”

“…every time?”, Alec arched a brow. “There’s gonna be another time?”

“Oh God yes, Alexander. Of course. Sooo many other times, if I may!”, he deadpanned. “But hush… let me finish…”

“Yeah… sorry”

“I want to see your gorgeous hazel eyes look at nothing but me… and for you to be in love with nothing else but me… because I love you so much. And only you, Alec. No one else. Ever. I know I sound selfish but yeah… for you, I want to be! So… will you accept your engagement ring back… and one day we can get married if you like?”, he finished. His heart was thrumming in his chest because of the way Alec was staring at him.

“Yes!”, Alec nodded, excitedly and pulled Magnus in for a kiss. Magnus laughed between their kisses and slipped Alec’s ring on his ring finger quite meticulously, without even looking down to their fingers. Their story had begun with an unwanted engagement between two people who hardly knew each other. And now, they were engaged again but this time, it was something that they both wanted… and to people who they knew and were in love with.

Chapter End Notes

The epilogue is at 33K words right now, and I think I have to write 4-5 more scenes… let's hope this gets done before Friday when I finally fly to London to start my Masters' degree. If not, I'll try my best to finish it as soon as my life stabilizes in London. Until then, you'll find me on Twitter @aliaawrites and ofcourse here!
Epilogue Tease??

“Magnus, honey...? Isabelle says that I am quite drunk!””, Alec called out to his fiancé, almost yelling in his sister’s ear and raised his whiskey glass in the air. Clary scoffed, rolling her eyes to get rid of her tears and started stacking plates over each other to put them in the dishwasher. This was going to be an epic after-party night.
Epilogue - take my hand, take my whole life too

Chapter Summary

"all they asked for was a life full of love, and a love full of life" - J. Bird

Chapter Notes

wow, we're here. finally here. I cannot, cannot believe that AYHD ends with this epilogue. I have loved this story with every bit of my heart and I was lucky enough that you all loved it just as much. I won't stop writing to fill the void that Malec will leave in my heart after the 3B finale, but AYHD will be special... it's the first time i tried ABO Universe with an aim to break stereotypes, and I knew that it would be difficult but the appreciation and comments you all made, gave me the strength I needed to see this story through.

this epilogue is a 39k word long letter of apology and thanks to AYHD!Malec from me because of all the shit I put them through, and i hope they will stay as special in my heart for the rest of my life as they are now.

I hope you enjoy reading it.
No trigger warnings here (except for light smut).
You can find the Elvis Presley song I used in one of the scenes here
Just fluff, happiness and love.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

>>> 3 months later >>>

“Alexander, did you pick up the blankets from the dry-cleaning? I specifically added a reminder on your phone!” Magnus almost yelled into the phone as soon as his fiancé picked up the call. He was sitting in his office at the Plaza hotel and trying to finish up his shift so that he could go back home. Catarina was studying the recruitment sheet that Raphael had given them for choosing the people they thought were perfect for recruitment at the hotel. Luke had pitched the Hotel Management and the Board of Directors for Magnus and Cat’s promotion after they lost a few senior employees to retirement. Catarina lifted her gaze and smirked at how flustered Magnus was looking. “Okay, fine... no... I am not panicking. I just know how you forget to do things...”, he added. Catarina scoffed and continued flipping through the candidate’s profiles. “Yes, okay, fine...”, the man’s lips curved into a soft smile. “I love you too”, he blushed and cut the call. When he looked back at Catarina and Raphael, they were grinning mischievously.

“You are in so deep, Magnus”, Raphael rolled his eyes. Catarina chuckled and fist-bumped her boss. “Anyway, I think these two people have the experience required to run one of our bars... what do you think?”, the man placed two profiles on the desk for Catarina and Magnus to see. The two junior employees looked at the resume and then turned to Raphael, giving him their consent. “I'll ask my assistant to set up interviews with them... but it is your responsibility to make sure that they are up for
this job. I want you to conduct the interviews”, he said. Magnus and Cat nodded in response.

“Of course. We’ll do it!”, Catarina collected the details and stood up as they were closing up. Magnus grabbed his coat and the files he was carrying and proceeded to the door, turning off all the lights in the room.

“I will see you in the office on Monday morning now. Have a good weekend Bane and Loss!”, Raphael raised his file in the air and waved, exiting the office adjusting his coat back on his shoulders. Catarina and Magnus also walked out of the bullpen and pressed the elevator button to the parking lot.

“So, what are your plans for Saturday night? Hitting the club with that gorgeous fiancé of yours...?”, the girl asked as they stepped into the lift. Magnus pressed the B1 button and leaned back on the metal wall.

“My sister is throwing a housewarming party of sorts... Alexander and I are supposed to be there by 8 pm, if Alec is not late because he forgot to pick up the blankets...”, he checked the time on his wristwatch.

“Oh? Did she finally find a good place to live in?”, Catarina jumped with joy. They stepped out into the parking lot and headed straight to Magnus’ car – Alec’s shiny Volvo that they thought they had lost when Magnus was kidnapped on the way to his office 4 months ago. But Luke pulled in some favors with the NYPD and the detectives returned Alec’s car to them. He threw his jacket in the backseat and unlocked the passenger door. Catarina settled inside and strapped herself. She was getting a ride to the tube station as always.

“Oh yes, she did. It’s a very cozy brownstone apartment and it really suits her.”, Magnus described. He turned on the air conditioning and pulled out of the parking spot. Swiping his ID card at the door, he unlocked the security gates and drove onto the main road. “And it is close to her University which is a very big plus”

“Hell yeah! Wow, it feels like I haven’t caught up with you since forever”, Catarina gasped. “The last time we went out for drinks, Alec was still working on the Vogue project... wasn’t he? What’s up with him?”

“Aah, that was indeed a long time ago, my dear. He is finishing that up now, with the editors. I don’t know what they call it, but he keeps working on which shots to keep and which ones to discard based on the interviews... and he is due to start work on this new project that he would tell me nothing about until the contracts are signed apparently”, Magnus rolled his eyes. “We should plan a night-out soon. You, me, Raphael and probably Luke... it’s long overdue!”

“Why don’t you and Alec come over to my house for dinner? You’ll finally meet Ragnor and it will be a hush-hush affair”, Catarina pitched in.

“That’s a wonderful idea... let me talk to Alec and we can figure out a date or something? I am sure he is dying to meet you as well...”, Magnus replied.

“We could also try and make permanent plans... like annual Halloween parties, Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas dinners. It just will keep us on our toes and we’ll stay in touch as well, without making a lot of effort. I mean you and I, we definitely work together... but I hardly meet Alec... apart from when he comes to pick you up and you’ve never met my other best friend... which is quite a bummer if you ask me”, she suggested.

“Now you’re putting ideas in my head... ideas that I really like... and if I pester Alexander enough,
even he would agree to them.”, Magnus chuckled. He rolled the car towards the pavement and Catarina opened the door to get out.

“Then ask Alec and let me know... okay? You know it will be fun!” , Catarina screeched. “See you on Monday, buddy”, she turned around to place a kiss on his cheek before leaving. “Text me what you and Alec say about the house party thing on the next weekend? I want you to meet Ragnor!”, Magnus kissed her back and then waved after she got out. He changed the gears and headed home.

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Magnus swiped his keycard and pushed the door open with his shoulder. Alec must have been somewhere in the bedroom area because although he couldn’t see him, he could feel his presence in the house. He dropped the car keys and his files on the table next to the door and toed his boots off. The freshly dry-cleaned blankets were lying on the couch, neatly packed in a plastic bag that the dry-cleaners must have given. The Omega’s lips curved into a smile because Alec had done what Magnus had asked him without forgetting. It was just a little bit sweet and romantic in his opinion.

“Alec?”, Magnus loosened his tie around his collar and unbuttoned the collar button. Alec bent backwards from the mirror and waved his hand. He was getting ready for the party.

Magnus walked over and slid his arms around Alec’s waist, hugging him from the back. He pressed his lips onto Alec’s shoulder and heaved out an exhausting breath. Alec was radiating comfort and warmth and Magnus was just so tired and so wanting of all that warmth and comfort. He turned around in Magnus’ arms and pulled him in for a kiss. “Everything alright with you?”, he asked, cupping one side of his face. Magnus closed his eyes and hummed, pressing his lips onto Alec’s again.

“It was a long and exhausting day and I just needed to kiss you.”, he breathed out, letting Alec’s comforting warmth grip him. Alec smiled at that response and kissed him once more before letting the man go. Magnus’ fingers found their way to Alec’s buttons and started doing them for him while Alec let his hands fall to his sides. “Raphael asked me, actually more like gave me and Cat the chance to interview the potential recruits for the management team...”, he informed, without looking up from Alec’s chest.

“That’s good news, right?”, Alec furrowed his brows, confused because he couldn’t read Magnus’ expression at that time. It seemed like good news to him, but Magnus sounded so unsure and not happy about it? He lifted his gaze up from Alec’s shirt and nodded – an unsure smile settling on his lips. “What is it?”, Alec asked, shifting closer and placing his hands on Magnus’ shoulders. Magnus did the last Alec’s buttons and then lifted his hands to Alec’s collar to dust it and adjust it upright.

“Yeah, it is. In fact, it is a big thing for someone who has been working in the hotel for only 7 months...”, Magnus shrugged. “But what if I am not able to deliver what Raphael and the Hotel Management ask of me?”, he explained the reason for his anxiety. “Besides, I have barely begun feeling like myself... and I don’t know if my experience is enough for the responsibility that has been given to me...”. Alec watched Magnus shift his weight between his legs and gently nudged him closer, sliding his hand around his waist. This wasn’t the first time Magnus had doubted himself in the last three months. That incident with his father had broken Magnus’ self-confidence in a way that no one had anticipated, not even Magnus himself. Alec had tried suggesting therapy, but he did not want to talk to anyone else about what he was going through. Somehow, his heart had only ever allowed Alec in the darkest corners. So, Alec and they were making amends, trying and healing each other and it was taking time.

“Self-doubt is good, Magnus... because in a way it keeps you on your toes. You are careful about what you are offering to the world. But, underestimation leads you nowhere. Raphael and the other
members of staff see something in you – a raw and unbiased mind – an eye for talent. And maybe I am biased, but you are a thorough professional whose excellent at what he does, and inquisitive about things he can’t do. You are someone who is willing to learn and grow. So, just go with what you’ve been asked to do... think about nothing else. This is just another assignment that you will do to the best of your abilities, right?” he tipped the man’s chin up and pressed his lips onto his. Magnus let out the breath he was holding and nodded.

“Yeah, yeah... I can do that”, Magnus bit his lower lip and pressed his palms flat on Alec’s chest, pushing him off so that he could get ready for Clary’s party.

“Good... because I know you can!”, Alec tapped his man’s shoulders and turned around to pick up his perfume. Magnus proceeded to his own wardrobe and picked out a change of clothes to head over to Clary’s house. Alec was wearing a dark purple dress shirt over black corduroy pants and black leather shoes. His shirt was rolled up to his elbows and a very expensive Titan wrist-watch adorned his wrist. It was a gift from Magnus – a very carefully chosen second engagement gift.

When Magnus came out of the bathroom to finish his makeup, Alec was ready and pacing up and down the room, talking to someone. It sounded like it was work related, so Magnus just busied himself in front of the mirror. He did thick wings extending out of his eyes with liquid eyeliner and then smudged the outer edges, merging it with nude accents sprayed on with glitter. He bronzed his cheekbones and the tip of his nose and then applied a nude shade matt finish lipgloss to complete his look.

“Yes, no... of course, I will think about it Jem. Yes”, Alec finished his call and joined Magnus back in their bedroom area. He flashed the man a smile when he saw that Magnus was ready. “You ready?”, he asked.

“I am. But... I had an epiphany of sorts”, he wiggled his brows.

“Okay?”

“I have never seen you in a guyliner”, he wiggled his brows.

“Yup”, Alec popped the p, pushing his hands in his pant pockets and shifting his weight between his weight. He knew what was coming. After a moment of contemplation and figuring out ways to run away from Magnus, he lifted his chin up. “Where do you want me?”, he sighed. Magnus gestured to the stool in front of him. Alec shrugged and obliged, adjusting himself on the stool. Magnus lifted his face up with his fingers.

“Close your eyes”, Magnus scoffed. Alec’s eyes fluttered when the tip of the pencil touched his eyelid. Magnus did a thick layer above the lashes and winged it only slightly – just to give it edges a proper shape. He dipped his thumb in black eyeshadow and smudged it lightly above the eyeline to give him slightly smoky eyes. “Open your eyes and look right up”, he patted his cheek. Alec quietly obeyed. Magnus lined his lower lid with a thick line and joined it with the wings from the top – sharpening the edges. “Perfect!”

Alec blinked his eyes and then looked in the mirror, his eyes looked dense and very attention-grabbing. “You didn’t...”, he waved his index finger, turning to face Magnus. “...wing it?”, he asked. Magnus smiled, bemused by his gesture.

“I figured your eyes looked better this way”, he added with scoff later.

“Okay... let’s go now, otherwise your sister will murder us”, he moved quickly, grabbing his jacket on the way.
Magnus hit send and kept his phone on the holder between his and Alec’s seats. They were stuck in a really bad traffic jam. Charlie Puth’s *Attention* was blaring on the stereo system and it was slightly drizzling, the rain drops glistening and shining against the lights from the vehicles around. Magnus sighed, leaning back on his seat.

“Catarina was wondering if we could plan a dinner together at her place sometime?”, he stretched his hands in front and cracked his fingers. Alec was biting the skin around his thumb-nail and he hummed.

“Sure, it’s been a while since we met her?”, he muttered.

“So, should I ask her to pick a weekend or do we have a preference? I mean... is there a weekend you’ll be working?”, Magnus unlocked his phone and started looking the calendar. Alec pressed the accelerator and the car moved forward, albeit slightly.

“I think... I am free the weekend after next”, Alec licked his lips and shrugged. Magnus frowned because he could feel something going on in his fiancé’s mind. Anyway, he typed out a quick text to Catarina, asking her if she was free the weekend after next for that dinner that they were planning on.

“Is something the matter, Alec?”, he kept his phone away again and turned his neck.

Alec shook his head, without looking at Magnus.

“We are stuck in this traffic for at least 20 more minutes. You better start explaining. We can make use of this time”, he shrugged.

“Jem offered me a job. Chief Magazine Photographer for Vogue. It’s full-time and paid rather generously”, he muttered.

“That’s a wonderful news, Alexander!”, Magnus beamed. And then he realized that Alec didn’t do permanent jobs. He liked doing freelance projects. “But, you obviously don’t think so?”, he added, controlling his excited expression when he noticed that Alec didn’t share his enthusiasm over this information.

“I used to think that I wasn’t made to do these full-time jobs”, Alec breathed out. “...and then I realized that earlier, a part of me was always so unsettled that I didn’t want to be chained to one kind of life”, he added. “But now... now, I don’t know if I feel the same. You are here, and I just don’t know why I shouldn’t take this job”, he explained his dilemma and the car moved slightly forward.

“But you are unsure, Alexander. It should be coming from somewhere?”, Magnus turned his shoulders to face Alec completely.

“I haven’t had an anchor before I met you, Magnus”, Alec mumbled. Magnus’ heart skipped a beat when he heard that. “I never had someone I wanted to settle for before I met you...”, he emphasized. Magnus reached out his hand and rubbed Alec’s knuckles that were holding the gear shaft.

“But?”

“Jace still works for Vogue... and that means that I will have to endure meeting Sebastian and Jace more than I would like to”, he shrugged. Magnus shifted uncomfortably on his seat and cleared his throat.
“Do you... do you still have unresolved feelings for Sebastian?”, he asked, afraid of Alec’s response.

“No...?”, Alec frowned and turned to Magnus for the first time since they had sat in the car. “NO”, he almost yelled. “That’s not it... but I just don’t want to know them... because with time, I will start seeing through all their stupid mistakes and even forgive them. And I don’t want to do that. Nope”, he shrugged.

“Alexander, from what I have learnt so far in my life, you cannot make decisions based on your fears. If this job is good for you, you should take it. Fuck Sebastian, and Jace. They shouldn’t be the ones guiding your mind. I know that it’s easy to let this job go because of them, but you can decide to take it up for Tessa and Jem. Don’t make you hesitation for Jace and Sebastian win over your friendship with the other two people, and your right to take up a job that your credentials deserve”, he shrugged. The traffic light turned green and Alec nearly raced them off the street before they got stuck in another red light.

“You want me to take up that job?”, Alec asked, not moving his gaze from the road.

“Nope. It is not my decision to make. I can help you with the process, listen to your thoughts and correct you where you are going wrong. And then, whatever you choose, will be your call... but I will support you, 200%”, he replied. Alec’s lips tipped into a smile and he swallowed, humming a soft “Mm”.

They reached Clary’s apartment complex in the next 15 minutes and parked the car in the guest parking space. Clary had moved into the second floor of the building and the owner was a couple who had just moved to DC for work. The two men picked up their gift for her housewarming party, carefully wrapped by Magnus, and headed straight to the staircase because there were no elevators in the complex. Alec knocked on the door and waited. They could hear the chatter and thumping of music from Clary’s speakers inside. The door opened a minute later and revealed a very smiling redhead girl. Magnus moved first and scooped her in her arms, twirling her around. They stepped inside the house and Alec shut the door for them. It was very warm and cozy inside the apartment. “Hi...!”, she breathed out with a grin on her face. Magnus put her back on her feet and kissed her cheek.

“Hey, biscuit”, he mumbled. The house was lovely. With the help of Isabelle and Maryse, she had had a few items shipped to New York from her room in Idris which included her tufted loveseat sofa, a very pink rug and her queen-sized poster bed along with some of her clothes. There was a stack of mattress against one end of the wall, decorated with multicolored cushions in every size. Yellow fairy lights overhung that sitting space and the nodes and bulbs were decorated by photographs pasted directly on the wall. Magnus walked inside, inspecting the house while Clary moved to greet Alec.

The brother-in-law handed over a wrapped package and kissed her cheek. “Happy housewarming, Clary”, he added with a smile. Clary grinned and hugged him, almost losing her place on the ground as Alec lifted her up because of his height. Magnus looked over his shoulder and his heart melted because the two most important people of his life had gotten so close in the last three months, and he couldn’t be happier.

“Thank you, Alec. By the way, you look really nice today... Magnus finally made you wear guyliner, I am impressed...”, she replied, pointing towards his lined eyes. Alec scratched his stubbled and nodded.

“Thank you”, he faked tipping his hat.

“Have you spoken to Isabelle today? Her phone seems busy. I don’t remember her having an exam
or anything today?”

Alec thought for a moment. “Yeah... I don’t know either. She was there when I called mum but that’s about it. Don’t worry, she’ll call you. I am sure everything is perfectly fine!”, he said. The answer was cryptic, but Clary really didn’t read too much into it because Alec was incapable of playing around with the truth. In short, he couldn’t lie. Plus, it wasn’t like she and Isabelle didn’t talk every other day, and that too for hours. They had been officially dating for 3 months and were over the honeymoon phase of it rather soon, especially after Izzy went back to Idris to complete her studies.

“Well, alright. I hope so! Come on in. Luke and Maia are in the balcony”, she pointed.

Alec joined them outside and Luke poured some wine for Alec. His friendship with Luke had really strengthened after the man helped Magnus and almost saved his and Clary’s life. Now, their Alpha natures clashed lesser than they used to. Magnus joined them with Clary a few minutes later when they were engrossed in politics. Alec flashed a smile when Magnus neared him and gently slid a hand around his waist. Alec lifted his hand and wrapped it around Magnus’ shoulder, pulling him closer.

“You do seem to have a point, Luke... but I still stand by my opinion...”, Alec clicked his tongue and raised the glass of wine to his mouth. Magnus had no idea what the two men were going on about.

“Well, we can agree to disagree on this, Lightwood”, Luke quirked.

“Agree to disagree on how Magnus Bane is the better fiancé among the two of us? Coz we been knew that’s the truth.”, Magnus chirped, trying to change the conversation to something lighter. Alec snorted and took another sip of the wine.

“Well, we can agree to disagree on this, Lightwood”, Luke quirked.

“Sure, my love. Whatever you say!”, Alec chastised, dropping a wine stained kiss on his fiancé’s cheek. “That’s exactly something Luke and I would be discussing in Clary’s balcony in her housewarming party...”, he rolled his eyes.

“Are you jealous that Luke would pick me over you?”, Magnus turned around and wiggled his brows.

“I would pick you over me...!!”, Alec gasped and uttered immediately, gulping the rest of the wine in his glass and pressing another wine-stained kiss, but this time on Magnus’ lips. The other man giggled against their lips and hummed.

“Housewarming party rule #1 – Magnus and Alec cannot drown us in their PDA anymore. Hands off each other please guys!”, Clary raised her index finger and squeaked in the air all of a sudden. “Some of us here are single...”, she gestured at Maia who just slumped her shoulder’s dramatically. “...old”, she winked at Luke who just glared back at her. “...and moping because they haven’t spoken to their girlfriend in 18 hours”, Clary widened her eyes and emphasized on the number, while gesturing to herself. Magnus chuckled loudly and dropped his forehead on Alec’s chest.

“This housewarming is officially cancelled, Clary Morgenstern.”, Alec whined, stepping forward to refill his glass.

“Not fair, Lightwood!”, Maia crossed her hands over her chest and pointed out. “Some of us are really, eternally single...”, she complained.

“That is cause mundanes like us can’t handle queens like Maia Roberts”, Magnus waved his hand and emphasized. Maia dramatically placed one hand over her chest and wrapped another around
Magnus’ shoulder.

“Have I ever mentioned how much I adore you, Magnus?”

“Once or twice, darling?”, Magnus quipped. “I wouldn’t certainly mind if you wanted to do that again... flattery is always welcome... especially because my Alexander doesn’t believe in flirting with me anymore, at least not the way he used to!”, he chuckled.

Alec snorted when he heard that and before he could make up a fitting reply for that accusation by his fiancé, his cell-phone pinged with a text message alert. It was from someone very important and he couldn’t let others know about it. Not yet. Alec stepped aside for a minute and replied to a quick text to someone.

“I am so glad I took that job offer, Maia”, Clary tapped her beer glass with her nails and added. She had started working at Jade Wolf to pool in some money for her daily expenses. It wasn’t a lot but certainly better than relying entirely on Magnus and Luke’s funds for her education. Speaking of funds, Magnus and Clary had inherited a fortune from Asmodeus and Kaya, as well as from auctioning off their collections to the Idris Cultural Society. But, they had mutually decided to let go off all the money to Lightwood Foundation charity run by Maryse Lightwood, for the benefit of young and orphaned wolves.

Clary also had some money and things left to her by the Morgensterns which Robert and Maryse helped her get back from wherever Asmodeus had hidden them, and she kept some of the things that she felt like and donated the rest to the Lightwood charity again. It was a clean slate for the two siblings and they did not want the shadow of their past to fall on their present and future anymore.

There was another knock on the door and Clary frowned. She wasn’t expecting anyone else. Alec asked her to take it, and he followed her out. He and Isabelle had been planning this for over a week. The girl opened the door and found her girlfriend standing with a big stack of gifts in her hand. Clary squealed loudly, almost deafening Alec and toppled Isabelle down, making the gifts fall on the ground.

“LIGHTWOOD!”, she yelled, throwing herself on her girlfriend. Isabelle chuckled and snuggled in Clary’s hug. She pulled away and kissed her on her lips, and then again... and again, and again until Alec couldn’t look anymore. He turned around to give the girls their privacy and saw Magnus smirking at him.

“Have I ever told you how wonderful you are as a brother?”, he arched his brows and stepped closer. Alec smiled and waved it off like this was nothing. He walked past Magnus to move out into the balcony again when Magnus grabbed his arm and pulled him back. “I love you”, he whispered, pressing his lips onto Alec’s cheek.

“I love you too!”

The guests gathered around in the living room once Clary was done kissing the shit out of Isabelle and giving her bone-crashing hugs. It turned out that Alec and Isabelle had planned this surprise as a part of Izzy’s gift to Clary. Ever since the Lightwood girl had gone back to Idris, both of them were miserable without each other but they had no choice. Both of them had to finish their studies before Maryse and Robert would have ever allowed Izzy to move. In the span of 3 months, they had only met twice resorting to videocalls and texts. But now, Isabelle was finally here for her girlfriend’s big party in her new house. Luke held a bottle of champagne that he had brought in his hand. He shook it and then let the cork pop out. “To Clary!”, he yelled. Alec, and Magnus lifted their wine glasses
and so did Isabelle and Maia, repeating the same in chorus. Clary clapped and hugged her girlfriend tight. This was perfect.

“Thank you, all of you!”, she said, teary-eyed. “I don’t think any of this would have been possible without each one of you who is present here.”, she raised her glass of champagne to toast her family. “All I ever wished for was a family who loved me... and I am just glad that the wish was fulfilled”

“Alec... thank you for making sure I still had a dream to pursue”, she began with her personal thank-yous. “You’ve been a wonderful brother-in-law... making all the legalities of the transfer work without letting me know how much of an effort it was... and I mean, Uncle Robert is awesome but thank you for coordinating with him in New York”. A week after Alec revealed to his parents that Magnus and Clary were in New York, he started working out on the details for transferring Clary’s seat in Idris University to a College in New York. After speaking to a whole lot of Colleges and Institutes, they finally found the one that was willing to make it happen. A few letters of recommendation from Robert and the Council, and the task became pretty easy. But, Alec definitely did all the legwork, talking to Colleges in New York on the council’s behalf, vouching for his sister-in-law’s talent and hard work where it was required. “I am not someone who approves of everyone Magnus has been with... but you’re certainly the best one. I am glad we both have you in our lives”, she raised her glass of champagne towards Alec. The man raised his glass back and nodded. Magnus beamed with pride and slid his hand around Alec’s waist, dropping his head on his chest.

“Luke... thank you for all the things about my parents that you’ve shared with me these past 4 months. I know them better, and I understand them better because of you... so thank you so much!”, she toasted to him with tearful eyes. Alec wrapped the little girl in his arm and pressed a kiss on her forehead.

“Anytime, kiddo. Anytime”, he nodded.

“Maia, thank you for giving me the job. I promise you, I will earn every dollar you are going to pay me”, she turned to the owner of Jade Wolf diner in China Town.

“That, and you have to promise me to make me a different dish every Sunday”, she clicked her tongue.

“You got it, Maia. Here’s to new beginnings and awesome food!”, Clary raised her glass and the guests cheered.

... 

Clary had outdone herself with dinner. Almost everything had been licked out of the main dish and Magnus was now helping her clean the table. Alec and Isabelle were sitting on the couch, trying to select a movie for the four of them, and Magnus’ fiancé was rather drunk. He was holding his sixth glass of whiskey after having downed half a bottle of red wine. Isabelle wasn’t as hammered as he was, but she was also quite tipsy because it was her first time drinking something other than beer.

Clary looked over her shoulder towards the wall next to the main door. There were housewarming gifts stacked almost up to half the height of the wall. She thought she had clearly mentioned no gifts. She threw the leftover food in a trash bag and turned to Magnus. “You got me that knife set I was ogling in that mall last week, didn’t you?”, she pointed towards Magnus’ meticulously wrapped gift. Magnus took a deep breath and smiled.

“You would have needed it in College”, he reasoned, realizing that there was no way he could get away now.
“But it was so expensive, Magnus. Why would you buy such an expensive gift for me?”, she tilted her head.

“It is fine, Clary. It’s a gift. From Alec and me... we pooled in...”, he made an excuse.

“You know that is not supposed to make me feel any better and, it is not even a good excuse for that matter, right?”

“Is it working?”

“You know how much I love you... but do expect a sizeable gift for Christmas, okay?”, she pointed her index finger at him. Magnus smiled and leaned forward to press a kiss on her cheek, before pulling away.

“I would expect nothing else”, he added.

“You ever wonder how lucky we are that Alec and Isabelle are in our lives”, she sighed and gazed at her lovely girlfriend.

“All the time, biscuit!”, Magnus replied, teary-eyed. “I cannot imagine how I managed to hate him so much when we first met. He is nothing like the man I thought he would turn out to be, and I am truly, a very lucky man!”

“So is he, by the way!!”, Clary whispered.

“Magnus, honey...? Isabelle says that I am quite drunk!”, Alec called out to his fiancé, almost yelling in his sister’s ear and raised his whiskey glass in the air. Clary scoffed, rolling her eyes to get rid of her tears and started stacking plates over each other to put them in the dishwasher. This was going to be an epic after-party night.

“Isabelle is very right!”, Izzy chuckled, referring to herself in the third person and pulled Alec’s raised arm down. “Isn’t she, Magnus? Alec... put the glass down you’ll pour that liquid on my dress or yours... or worse, Clary’s couch”, Izzy widened her eyes and shot a glare at her brother. Magnus washed his hands under the tap and dried it on his apron to come to the Lightwoods’ rescue. Alec and Isabelle were fighting over a glass of whiskey and it was time for him to intervene and pull them away before something terrible happened. When he reached the couch, Izzy was holding Alec’s wrists within her grasp and trying to take the glass away from him. And like the older brother he was, he was fighting her back with all his strength. His face was scrunched up with struggle.

“Alec, let it go. You are drunk. You deadass cannot deal with this much whiskey in your system. Give the glass to me!!”, Izzy growled, digging her long nails in his skin. Alec gasped when the nails stung him.

“That’s foul play, Iz. I don’t have long nails to fight you back... it is not a fair fight.”, he whined. “Magnus tell her it is not a fair fight. And I don’t fight people who cheat and are untruthful”, drunk Alec was a politician!Alec, Magnus supposed. Amidst their struggle, Alec pulled the glass towards himself to free it from Isabelle’s grasp and then she just let it go without much effort. The force of the jerk caused the drink to spill on Alec’s face and trickle down his skin below his shirt. He parted his lips and closed his eyes as the drink dried and got stuck to every part of his face. Isabelle widened her eyes and gaped when she saw Alec drenched in whiskey and then she broke into a laughter.

Magnus crouched in front of Alec, holding his mouth with his palm to avoid laughing on Alec’s face and realized that his liner wasn’t whiskey-proof. Alec snuffed his nose and then tried to wipe off the liquid from his face using his palm. Bad idea. When he pulled his hand away, his face was
completely smudged black with his eyeliner.

“I did not know that whiskey was black in color? Woah!”’, Alec inspected his hands and gasped. Magnus curled his palms around Alec’s knees and gave in to his urge to laugh. The man looked like a military soldier with black stripes on his face. Clary joined her girlfriend as they continued to giggle at Alec’s face.

“Is there something on my face? Magnus, why are these girls laughing at me? I swear whiskey is black... this is brand new information to me!”, Alec frowned, turning to Magnus. The man sucked in the rest of his laughter and shook his head.

“Nope, nothing. Your face is spot on!”, he stood up and offered both his hands to his fiancé. Alec frowned and took Magnus’ hands, tumbling on his way to stand up. “Come, let us go to the washroom... hold my hand?”

“Magnus”, Alec stood up and leaned closer. “I don’t think Clary’s washroom is the right place to have sex... let’s go back home and then...”, he burped. Magnus’ eyes widened beyond his eyelids could stretch and Clary choked on her saliva because what Alec thought was whispering was actually yelling near Magnus’ mouth, not even his ear. But thank the Moon. Magnus would have lost his hearing if Alec had reached for his ear. Magnus’ parted lips and blinking eyelids didn’t really give Alec the hint that he had said something inappropriate.

“Alexander, we’re not going to have sex in my sister’s bathroom don’t worry”, he regained his control over his voice and gasped.

“Oh, good. That’s good”, Alec scratched the back of his neck and nodded. Once. Twice. Thrice. Before Magnus realized, Alec had been nodding his head for half a minute now. Magnus let go off Alec’s hand and cupped his jaw.

“Stop nodding, Alexander”, he widened his eyes in shock. “Your head will fall off your body”, he chuckled. Alec’s gaze froze on Magnus’ lips. The nude lip gloss had disappeared a long time ago. Magnus’ upper lip was dry pink the lower lip was glistening and a little plump because he had a habit of biting on it. He scanned the lip, realizing that he hadn’t kissed Magnus in so long. Like really long. And so, Alec launched himself forward and crashed his lips onto Magnus’. The Omega moaned and stumbled back a few steps, grabbing the small of Alec’s back to hold himself on the ground.

When they pulled away from each other, Alec had a very drunk smile on his lips while Magnus was trying to recover from this adorable attack. “I hadn’t kissed you in sooo long”, he waved his and. Magnus shook his head, wiping the sticky whiskey from his cheeks and grabbed Alec’s wrist again, pulling them inside the washroom.

“Alec, remember don’t have sex in Magnus’ sister’s bathroom!”’, Clary chastised and yelled behind them. Magnus groaned and cursed himself for being the only sober one in the whole apartment right now. He made his fiancé sit on the edge of the bathtub and grabbed a tissue box. He tipped his chin with his index finger and started wiping off the smudged eyeliner with water and cream.

“I love you”, Alec closed his eyes and relaxed in Magnus’ touch. His lips curved into a wet grin and he surrendered himself to Magnus completely. The older man smiled, his heart filling up with love and emotions. Alec threw one of his hand back and turned on the tap over the bathtub. Magnus tried to stop him, but the man just lifted his hand and placed it underneath the open tap, feeling lukewarm water fall on his fingers and splatter around.

“It’s a bummer we don’t have a bathtub in our place”, he whined. Magnus had almost cleaned him
up and now exhaustion was gripping him.

“Yeah... but we have a wonderful shower panel, don’t we darling?”, Magnus whispered, crouching in front of Alec to dry his neck clean.

“True. Makes for a good sex spot!!”, Alec grinned.

“Alexander...”, Magnus gasped, still trying to recover from this version of Alec which was surely new to him. His drunk fiancé was a raging, hormonal and sex-thirsty version of himself. Not that Magnus was complaining. But he had a faint idea on what was going to happen in the morning when Alec woke up from a hangover.

“I am not flirting, Magnus”, Alec raised his index finger. “or trying to lure you into having sex with me... nope.”, he burped and closed his eyes. The bathtub was nearly full now and Alec floated his palm on it, soaking the relaxation warm water was bringing his skin. He dipped his hand further inside until the edges of his folded sleeve started soaking water.

“Alec, you’ll fall in the water. Pull your hand out.”, Magnus warned, moving forward to pull Alec’s hand out when the Alpha just let his butt slip back. The very next moment, Alec was inside the tub with his thighs and upper body completely submerged in the water. His shirt and pants stuck to his skin and Magnus jumped back to avoid getting wet by the water that splashed out of the tub, wetting the bathroom floor. Alec was neck deep and soaked in water. “Clary!”, he called out for his sister, slapping his forehead with his palm. The girl rushed to the bathroom a few minutes later and broke into a chuckle at the sight of her brother-in-law drenched in her bathtub. “Do you have towels?”, he sighed.

Alec raised his hands in the air and made grabby gestures. “Come inside. The water is so warm, so nice. I feel like I can fall asleep here... so relaxing. I am so tired. Good night, Magnus!”, he closed his eyes and relaxed further. Magnus shook his head and folded his shirt sleeves to his elbows to avoid getting his clothes wet as well. He stepped next to the edge of the tub and bent down in a crouching position. Hooking his hands beneath Alec’s arms, he pulled the man out of the tub and large streams of water trickled down his clothes and body, splattering in the bathtub. Alec was much heavier in this condition. Clary returned with 3 sets of towels and placed them on the top of the counter.

“I turned on the dryer in the laundry room”, she informed. Magnus hummed and set Alec back on his feet.

“Now you’re going to stay put. No moving anywhere Alexander. Alright?”, Magnus scolded his fiancé and unbuttoned his shirt, discarding it on the top of the sink, in a separate pile. Alec placed his finger on his lips as if that is what would make his Magnus less pissed at him. The Omega unzipped his jeans and pushed them down with difficulty because they had gotten stuck to his skin. Even Alec’s boxers were drenched in water. Magnus held back a chuckle and shut the door of the bathroom, before pulling his boxers down. That was a very naked Alec for a fully clothed Magnus, but this was not the place for this. He wrapped a towel around his waist and tucked it tightly and then grabbed another one.

He picked up Alec’s drenched clothes and dry towels and dragged him out to the guest room. The laundry room was a common area shared that opened into the living room and the guest room, which was a fortunate surprise.

“Sit here”, Magnus instructed, pointing towards the bed. “And do not move. I’ll be back after putting your clothes in the dryer. I swear Alexander, do not move okay? You are wearing nothing, and you’ll curse yourself in the morning if you do something embarrassing.”, he informed and turned on his heels. There was nothing stopping Alec from parading into the living room, fully naked and so he
had to be quick. He dumped the clothes in the dryer and adjusted the settings and ran back into the living room. His heart melted at what he saw. Alec was seated right where Magnus had asked him to, and he was softly plucking at the towel that was wrapped around his waist. Magnus picked up the other towel and crouched in front of Alec. He pulled one hand towards him and started dabbing the towel to dry the water drops.

Alec sniffed a little and the noise made Magnus look up from the Alpha’s lap. The beautiful hazel eyes were slightly and there were maybe tears running out of them. “Alexander?”, Magnus called out and sat on the bed next to him. “Are those... are you crying?”, he asked, pulling the man’s chin towards himself.

“I made a mess for you, didn’t I?”, he sniffed, shutting his eyelids. “You are embarrassed in front of your sister because of me”. Tears squeezed out. Magnus’ lips tipped into a smile and wiped them off with his thumb.

“You didn’t embarrass me. Open your eyes”, Magnus whispered, his heart melting at how much he loved his chaotic fiancé.

“I can’t. You are angry with me”, he sniffed again.

“I am not”, Magnus scoffed, pressing his lips softly onto Alec’s. “Open your eyes”, he insisted again. Alec fluttered his wet lids and opened his eyes after a few seconds. Magnus was smiling at him.

“You’re not upset?”

“Nope”, Magnus popped the p, looking rather smitten and proud of his drunk fiancé.

“Ok, that’s a relief”, Alec sighed, slumping his body and wiping off his tears. Magnus laughed and continued to dry his fiancé’s torso while he inspected himself curiously. He stood up and enveloped Alec’s head between his hands covered in towel to rub his wet hair dry. Alec hummed with the rhythm with which Magnus rubbed his head and a smitten smile was spread across his lips.

He heard the machine beeping in the other room. “I am going to go and get your clothes back... okay?”, he tapped his shoulder and ran out to the common room. Alec’s clothes were nice and dry now. He helped him wear his clothes and then put the towels for washing in the laundry bin. Alec looked like a full snack with his damp hair falling all over his forehead.

When they walked out the room, Clary and Isabelle were sitting on the couch and watching the movie that was running on Netflix. The two men settled on the carpet and pulled a blanket over themselves. Alec was uncharacteristically quiet even though he was more than drunk. Magnus wrapped an arm around his shoulder and pulled him closer. Alec bit his lower lip and dropped his head on Magnus’ chest.

“Everything okay?”, Magnus whispered.

“You didn’t say it back...”, Alec kept his gaze fixed on the TV screen.

“What?”, Magnus pressed his lips on Alec’s hair.

“I told you I loved you back in the bathroom... and you didn’t say it back to me”, he explained. Magnus could feel his chest heaving up and down. “You always say it back... do you not love me, Magnus?”

“I...”, Magnus gasped. He hadn’t even realized that he didn’t say I love you back... maybe because he was too engrossed in taking care of him. “I am sorry”, Magnus pulled him closer and slid his hand
around Alec’s waist. “I love you so much, Alexander”

“You promise?”, Alec straightened up and turned to face his fiancé.

“I do. I promise”, Magnus stroked his cheekbone.

“Good... because I will not survive the day you stop loving me, Magnus”, Alec shrugged, settling back on Magnus’ chest. The Omega’s jaw clenched when he heard that, and he may have shed a singular tear because Alec Lightwood, the man he loved so deeply loved him back with just as much intensity.

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A week later...

Alec was seated on one end of the conference table in the Vogue Magazine headquarters, going through the final photographs for the special edition magazine that was due to come out next month on the magazine’s anniversary. They were on tight schedule to get the final shots approved by today so that the editors could start putting it all together. To his right, Jace Herondale, the DOP for this project, and a permanent employee of Vogue was noting something down with his pencil. It was the last day of work on the project for Alec, and the man couldn’t wait go back home to his fiancé. They were stuck between two shots of their model, unable to decide which one to put for the final draft.

“This shot goes with the interview quote that we’re going to highlight on the left side of the column but this one captures Marcus’ ethnicity in a richer way....”, Alec groaned, almost giving up on the decision.

“I know, Alec. I don’t think I can look at his abs anymore. It has been far too long.”, Jace threw his pencil on the table and leaned back on the chair.

They had been doing this for an hour now.

“We clearly cannot come to a decision. Why can’t Jem or Tessa be here to help us out? They were there for the shoots.”, Alec arched a brow and looked at the DOP.

“He said that he has no point being here. No eye for talent or creativity like the two of us and that this isn’t his job.”, Jace groaned.

“Yes, but we clearly cannot come to a conclusion. So, there has to be someone who can come to our rescue?”, Alec tapped the table with his fingers and stood up to take a walk and relax his eyes. It was so difficult to make a decision, especially now, because they had been staring at shots, which varied only minutely, for over 4 hours. He was about to leave for a walk in the Vogue office when Jem Carstairs entered the room and stopped the photographer.

“Where are you off to?”, he placed a palm on his shoulder and sighed.

“Well, Mr Herondale and I cannot come to a conclusion on Marcus’ final shot so I thought I would take a walk. I can’t look at that right now...”, Alec scratched his stubble and looked back and forth between the projection screen and Jace who was just as exhausted, if not more. Jem looked at the screen for a moment and then smiled.

“Go with the first one!” , he shrugged.

“Why?”, the boys replied in unison
“Because you guys are clearly stuck with the decision and I can make it for you if you want.”, Jem shrugged.

“Yeah, but the second shot, the one on the right is closer to Marcus and the kind of person he is”, Jace licked his lips.

“I have to agree with him”, Alec shook his head.

“Then, you have your answer! Both of you came up with why we shouldn’t go with the first one and that settles it. Alright?”

“Uh”, Alec and Jace muttered in unison and realized that maybe Jem was right. They may have gotten more exhausted than they realized. Jace put down the name of the shot against Marcus’ name and signed off on the final checklist.

“Anyway, I am here for something else!”, Jem chirped. “Alec Lightwood, welcome to Vogue magazine! We are delighted to have you on-board.”, he grinned and offered an envelope to the Lightwood Alpha. Alec widened his eyes and grabbed the envelope. He had just given his consent for the job offer 24 hours ago. “You will find your signing amount and your appointment details in there along with a personal letter from our CEO who is very impressed by your work in the project. Vogue is very fortunate to have you lead our principle photography team!”, he added. Alec’s gaze went over to Jace as he tore the envelope and pulled his letter out. There was a strange smile on his face.

“Congratulations, Alec. Welcome to the Team.”, he stepped forward and offered his hand. Alec stared at the hand for a few seconds and then gave his own in Jace’s.

“You can start working with us from Monday, if you like?”, the man informed.

“Yeah, sure?”, Alec replied, still confused with the whole thing.

“Also, speaking as a friend and not your boss?”, Jem leaned closer and whispered behind his palm that he placed over his mouth for the dramatic effect. “You, Magnus, Tessa and I need to do a double date thingy soon okay? She has been pestering me for quite some time and now even you have recovered from your shoulder thing. Tessa and I, we both miss Magnus, okay?”, he winked. Alec’s lips curved into a smile (more like a grin) and he nodded. Magnus. His beautiful Magnus.

Jem, Jace and Alec walked out of the conference room together, holding empty coffee cups in their hand. They discarded them in the nearest trash-can and Jem gave Alec small instructions on how and when he was supposed to report and start working at. When they reached the far end of the office, right in front of the elevator next to Jace’s office, Jem excused himself to take an urgent official call. Alec shared an awkward silence with Jace for a few seconds and then pressed the elevator button.

“I’ll see you at work on Monday, then?”, Jace cleared his throat. Alec sucked his lips inside and hummed, looking at his sneakers. This was the most amount of words they had shared in the entire day and that was saying something because they had sorted out final shots for almost all the models.

“Congratulations by the way!”, the Herondale Alpha cleared his throat.

“Yeah, you mentioned...”, Alec deadpanned. “Thanks” 

“No, seriously. You deserve it, Alec. You are a really talented photographer”, Jace scratched his jaw and shifted his weight between his feet. Alec narrowed his brows and glanced at Jace for a second. What the hell? Why was this man trying to make a conversation... now when their project had finally ended?
Fortunately, the door of the elevator slid open and Alec stepped forward to go inside and not be bothered by Jace anymore. But, that relief was short-lived because the man bumped into – fuck – Sebastian. Splendid. Nothing could have been worse than bumping into both those men in the same day. Alec cursed in his mind. His ex-boyfriend gave him a soft smile and proceeded to plant a kiss on Jace’s lips. “Hello, Alec”, he turned around to face the photographer again.

“Hi”, Alec cleared his throat.

Jace slid a hand around Sebastian’s waist and pulled him closer. Not that Alec wanted to do anything with him but Jace was born to be petty and make everything about himself and his boyfriend. There was an awkward silence between the three of them. “We were heading out for drinks... do you want to join us?”, his Irish ex-boyfriend spoke as soon as Alec put one foot inside the elevator. The man turned around, dumbfounded. Really now? Drinks? “You can text Magnus and ask him to join us... right, Jonathan?”, he turned to Jace for encouragement. Jace gave him a tightlipped smile and nodded.

“No. Thank you for offering. I would prefer going back home. I am really very exhausted.”, Alec swallowed.

“Alec?”, Sebastian sighed.

“No. Sebastian. Magnus and I have a date tonight... and you guys go ahead. Have a good time.”, Alec waved his hand and pressed the ground floor button on the elevator. As the door slid shut, Alec leaned back on the wall and realized how easy it had become to deal with these two after he had confronted his own feelings for Magnus.

Everything had become so simple after Magnus.

Alec smiled and closed his eyes and his fiancé’s gorgeous smile flashed in his mind.

He reached their apartment later in the evening with a bouquet of fresh red roses and found Magnus preparing dinner for them both. He was still in his office clothes and the bowtie was loosened around the collar where the top two buttons had also been undone. What a view to come back home to! The Omega’s face lit up when Alec walked in and held out the bouquet from across the kitchen counter. “Hello to you too”, Magnus took the flowers from Alec’s hand and sniffed them. He then leaned forward and captured Alec’s lips for quick kiss. Alec smiled against the Omega’s lips and pecked him again before they pulled away.

Magnus set them flowers aside in a water jug to finish cooking first. Alec walked around the counter and enwrapped his arms around Magnus’ waist, peeking over Magnus’ shoulder to see what he was making. “Nothing different really. Just lasagna.”, Magnus shrugged. It wasn’t that simple. Lasagna was one of Alec’s all-time favorite dishes, especially when Magnus cooked because it tasted even better then. Alec nodded and pressed his nose against the nape of Magnus’ neck, kissing at a small patch of skin peeking out of Magnus’ shirt collar. Magnus’ cologne mixed with his Omega scent entered Alec’s lungs and short-circuited his mind for a little bit.

“I got the job at Vogue. I am staring this Monday!”, he whispered. Magnus froze and dropped his spatula on the pan. He turned around with protruding eyes and laughed, pulling Alec in for a suffocating hug.

“Oh my God, Alexander!”, he cried on the man’s shoulder, overwhelmed by the news. “I am so proud of you!”

“You wanted me to take the job, didn’t you”, Alec pulled away and arched a brow. Magnus blushed
and looked away.

“It had to be your choice, love”, Magnus shrugged. “Doesn’t matter what I wanted! But if you ask me if I am glad you took it... I am! I am so glad because you deserve to have your talent and worth appreciated”, he added and cupped Alec’s jaws, planting a kiss on both his cheeks.

“I love you”, Alec gasped, recovering from Magnus’ lips on his cheeks. It was funny how he still felt as giddy and heavenly every time he kissed Magnus as he did when he had tasted Magnus’ lips for the first time.

“I love you too!”, Magnus affirmed, stepping closer to Alec and pressing their chests together. He wrapped one around Alec’s neck and hauled the Alpha’s head in for a sloppy kiss.

Alec hooked his hand below Magnus’ butt to adjust their bodies and tugged him off the ground. Magnus wrapped his other arm around Alec’s neck as well and his legs around his waist. Alec turned them around and pushed Magnus against a series of kitchen cabinets, pushing his hands through Magnus’ collar and below his shirt. He planted his open mouth on Magnus’ neck and sucked at it. The mating mark was right below Alec’s teeth were biting Magnus’ skin to leave little bruises. Magnus could feel the tingling sensation as Alec’s teeth lingered around the edge of his mark. For someone who wasn’t a werewolf, it was a simple scar but only Magnus knew the energy that flowed through, the link it established with Alec. He felt grounded because of it and linked to someone emotionally more than physically. It was a mark of their undying dedication to each other and the promise they had.

The mark was an independent entity in their bond.

Alec curled his lips around the mark and sucked softly without hurting Magnus anymore. He retracted his teeth so that Magnus wouldn’t get sensitive in that area. Magnus grabbed Alec’s hairs between his fist and threw his head back against the cabinet giving Alec access to himself. He flattened his palms at the back of Alec’s neck and rubbed them down, pulling Alec’s body closer to him.

Alec raised himself slightly off the ground so that their hips aligned against each other after Magnus gently nudged Alec’s butt. Shiver ran down both of their spines as their hardened cocks brushed and aligned against each other, increasing tension in their pants. Alec raised his chin up and captured Magnus’ mouth again, launching his tongue right in. Magnus crumpled Alec’s shirt between his fingers and moaned. Alec pulled Magnus’ lips between his lips, grazing them plump and pink on his way out.

The simmering noise on the induction cooktop was followed by a soft beep. Magnus slammed his eyes open and realized that they were in the kitchen and he couldn’t ruin their dinner. The lasagna sheets must be done. He placed his hands on Alec’s shoulder and stopped them. Jumping off Alec’s hips, he straightened his shirt and reached the cooktop to check the pasta. Alec’s hairs were spiked up in all directions and his shirt was plucking out of his pants. “I will go and change”, Alec whispered.

“Yes. You do that”, Magnus cleared his throat, trying to stop the smile from appearing on his face as his fiancé walked away.

... 

*One full platter of lasagna,*

*Three glasses of wine,*
Magnus and Alec had fallen asleep that night... in fact, almost early in the morning. Magnus had the weekend off from the Plaza because he had volunteered to do Raphael’s shift on his off-day last week, making it a 15-day week for him. Luke had forcibly kicked Magnus out of the hotel the previous night and warned him to not show his face until Monday morning next week.

Magnus fluttered his eyelids and opened them slowly. The sun was shining outside, and a single ray of light was coming in through the slit in their curtains. He shifted on his pillow and the muscle pain that accompanied his body reminded him of the very adventurous night that they had. Four rounds. That had been a new record in itself for the two of them. Days following the massacre, Alec and Magnus had begun to explore this side of their relationship, going slow and steady at first. Magnus made sure he was mentally ready to give himself completely to Alec and the Alpha never put any unrequired pressure on his fiancé. Contrary to both their expectations, it had been very easy for them to accept each other’s needs and desires without making it awkward for any of them.

The key angle in all this was trust. Through everything that Magnus and Alec had been through, their trust in each other hadn’t wavered and that drove their relationship in such a steady manner. Magnus clutched the white sheet closer to his chest and turned his head around. Alec was sleeping with him back to Magnus and only his butt was covered by the sheet that they were sharing. His head was dug deep below a layer of pillows. Magnus pulled his torso up to just look at Alec when his gaze went to the state of their room. There were clothes thrown everywhere – on the top of his dresser, over the nightlamp, hell his underwear was hanging by the bathroom’s doorknob. Magnus rubbed his eyes and scoffed. *Fun night.* He thought. He turned his head to Alec and saw the man’s back covered in purple and pink marks. He had done a good job. Leaning forward, Magnus pressed his lips on one of Alec’s hickeys and then proceeded to do the same to all the marks that graced his lover’s body. Alec rustled his head against the pillow covers and stretched his hand below it, almost knocking the vase on the side table to the ground. Magnus gasped when the vase tumbled and then steadied itself back. He commended the non-living thing for surviving through that night without breaking into pieces. And then his attention went to Alec’s knuckles that had just hit the vase. He was rubbing them with his thumb, trying to soothe the painful sensation. Magnus dropped his body on Alec and wrapped his arms around his waist, nuzzling his chin on Alec’s shoulder. “Good morning, Alexander”, he whispered.

“Morning, Magn’s”, Alec mumbled.

“Did you sleep alright?”, Magnus took Alec’s earlobe in his mouth and bit on it.

“Mn”, Alec nodded sleepily.

“Do you want to sleep for some more time?”, he teased.

“Yeah”, Alec mumbled. “I do” Magnus huffed a disappointed breath and pulled away from Alec. He dropped his legs on his side of the bed and glanced over his shoulder. He was only pretending to be disappointed and he knew that Alec knew that too – quite clearly. He got up from the bed and the sheet slipped off of him. It was the middle of summer and New York and their apartment was sufficiently warm if all the curtains were drawn and doors and windows shut. Once he was in the bathroom, he padded to the washbasin and picked out his toothbrush.

His body was a work of art. There were shades of purple and pink all over his chest and thighs. Magnus gasped as he felt them. Some of them were tender but the others were mostly just superficial
marks. He brushed his teeth and washed his face with cold water to drive off his sleep and exhaustion. There was a calendar hanging on the tile next to the mirror. Magnus uncapped the marker and struck out another date. His heat had been delayed this cycle. Andre Abbott, his doctor had asked him to keep a check on his cycle so that he could corroborate his theory of them being mated.

Mated Omegas had fewer cycles than non-mated ones and the last natural cycle that Magnus had was about 5 months ago when he collapsed in a bar while drinking with Raphael and Catarina. Therefore, it was due for a long time now.

He dabbed his face with a towel and stepped out to get a change of clothes and shower. As expected, Alec was still snoring on his side of the bed. Magnus opened his closet and picked out his clothes for the day. They were mostly going to stay in, so there was no point in trying to hide his marks on his thighs. His shower was quick and relaxing. Warm water released his muscular tension and soothed the ache. He turned the faucet off and dropped his forehead on the cold tiles of the shower panel.

For the first time in forever, he had woken up without the horrifying memory of the massacre – the gruesome images of his father and mother. Maybe it was a little progress?

...  

>>> 5 Months later >>>

In the weeks that followed, Catarina and Magnus had managed to divide holiday dinners among themselves. They had Halloween party at Raphael and Simon’s apartment and Thanksgiving at Catarina and Ragnor’s pad. Magnus and Alec took charge of Christmas dinner so that they could have a little family reunion at their place. For their first dinner this year, the Lightwoods were visiting from Idris. It was like merging of two worlds because Magnus’ mundane friends would be there as well. And so would the New York clan. It could be a huge success... or just a very big disaster.

“Drinks done... Christmas lights are all in place... well most of it at least.”, Alec placed his hand on the hip and read out a checklist on a sticky note. Their apartment was lit up with tealights and Christmas decorations. In one corner of the room, there was a beautiful Christmas tree decorated with everything Magnus could manage in half a day of work since he had been working double shifts for the last few weeks.

“I had Trevor pick up Consul and Mrs Lightwood.”, Magnus got off the phone with someone and added. Alec glanced up at his fiancé and then checked off another item from the list of things they had to do before the guests arrived. “You need to get started on those eggnogs Alexander. There’s a lot of it to be made.”, Magnus scratched his goatee and looked towards the kitchen. Their roasted chicken was in the oven with Salmon and the cake was sitting on the stand, ready for icing. “Alexander, you need to get ready!””, Magnus straightened the cushions on their couch looked up at the Alec.

The man was still wearing his old t-shirt that he used when he had to work on repairs in the house. He was now adjusting the lights when Magnus grabbed him by his shoulders and pushed him towards the washroom.

“You need to change!!”, Magnus reiterated. Alec stopped at the door of the bathroom and grabbed the frame to stop from being pushed inside.

“It would be so much better if you come with me”, he turned around and grabbed Magnus’ waist. The man rolled his eyes.
“Alexander! GO. The guests will be here any second now”, Magnus shook his head, trying to pull out of Alec’s grasp around his waist.

“Just one shower, Magnus”, Alec wiggled his brows and bent forward to kiss Magnus’ neck.

“Oh darling, go and clean yourself and you’ll get many more showers with me”, Magnus bobbed Alec’s nose and gave him an eskimo kiss. The man lifted his lips up to make a disappointed face and Magnus locked their lips together. “Please?”, he whispered.

“You know I can never resist that”, Alec blushed and let Magnus go. The Omega scoffed and threw a towel inside before the door shut on his face. He returned to the kitchen and put on his apron to finish off the icing on his walnut cake. It was 7pm and the guests were due to arrive very soon. He also checked on Alec’s special Roasted Chicken and adjusted the oven temperatures to ensure that the dish was ready in time.

Alec joined him half an hour later wearing a slim fit black dress shirt and dark blue jeans. Magnus was almost finishing the cake when Alec pressed his lips against the temple and then turned around to grab his apron and check on the chicken. He was about to tie the apron around him when the doorbell rang.

“I’ll get it”, Alec discarded his apron and walked out of the kitchen.

He opened the door and in walked Catarina and Raphael. “We carpooled.”, the Spanish guy shrugged. Alec scoffed and bent forward to greet Catarina with a kiss on her cheeks and fistbumped Magnus and Catarina’s boss. “Ragnar couldn’t make it because his own sister finally showed up for one Christmas and they are having a night-in!”, Cat rolled her eyes. Ragnar was Catarina’s roommate and they shared an apartment in Brooklyn. She had introduced him to Alec and Magnus in one of their weekend dinner parties and soon enough, all of them had become close friends.

“Oh well, he’ll be missed... especially when I finally take those eggnogs out. They’re strong... really strong.”, Alec winked, exchanging a look with Catarina. “Magnus, my love?”, he teased his fiancé. Magnus huffed from the kitchen because he realized that they were taking a dig at him and Ragnar. Sometime last month, Ragnar and Magnus had gotten so ridiculously drunk at a restaurant called “Peru” that they were later kicked out and barred from coming back, ever again. Back then, both Alec and Catarina had stood up for them and fought with the restaurant staff but now, it was just a memory that they used to chastise Magnus and Ragnar ever chance they got. To make matters worse, there was tons of video-d proof of the night and Ragnar and Magnus being the worst drunkards ever!

“Ha ha, Alexander”, Magnus yelled from the kitchen. “I am reconsidering the shower promise I made not so long ago”, Alec looked up at him and Magnus gave him a big and irritating smile as his own face fell.

“That is too much information, Bane. Come on, please! We. Don’t. Need. To. Know!”, Raphael groaned from the couch where he had just settled with Catarina. “Some of us are here without our better halves... and very disappointingly so”, he added, thinking about Simon who was with his family for Hanukkah.

“And some of us are still single”, Catarina raised her hand.

“That’s because you are too scared to ask the dear little Cabbage out”, Magnus arched a brow. He knew how Ragnar and Catarina both had a massive crush on each other but were too afraid to say it out loud. Both of them had separately confessed to Magnus and Raphael and the only thing remained was to confess to each other, but they wouldn’t do it. It was a very weird and messed up situation.
“Magnus... shut up!”, Catarina squinted her eyes.

“Whatever. I just want you happy, my dear”, Magnus shrugged. Alec joined him in the kitchen and put on his apron again. He caged Magnus on the counter, placing his hands on either side of Magnus and dropping his chin over his shoulder.

“You were joking about the shower promise, weren’t you!”

“Bring Peru up again, and I’ll tell you if I was joking or not?”, Magnus lifted up his icing knife and exclaimed. Alec grasped Magnus by his waist again and pressed his back to his chest. “Alexander...”, he hissed, looking at Catarina and Raphael in horror. They were busy surfing Netflix but if either of them looked up, it wouldn’t be a pleasant view. Alec pulled Magnus’ shirt down to reveal the back of his neck and pecked on the spine. He knew how sensitive Magnus was in that spot. The man squeaked softly and placed his palm on the edge of the kitchen counter to contain his growing excitement. “Stop it!”, he whispered.

“Guys, you are perfectly audible from here”, Raphael yelled without turning his head back towards the kitchen. Magnus bit his lip and blushed after Alec pulled away and returned to check on his dishes.

“You guys need help with something there?”, Catarina looked over her shoulders and offered.

“I think they got it all covered, Cat. At least for now.”, Raphael chided.

“Shut up, Santiago!”, Magnus grumbled.

“You and Lightwood stop making those annoying kissy noises behind my back and I will, Bane”, Raphael retorted.

“How does Simon put up with you?”, Magnus shook his head.

“Better than the staff at Peru puts up with you!”, Raphael deadpanned. Alec was crouched down in front of the oven when he heard that, and he collapsed on the floor, laughing. Magnus picked up an empty icing cone and threw it at Alec, after shooting him a death stare. Catarina slapped Raphael’s shoulder as she held her palm against her mouth to control her own laughter.

“Go ahead. All of you!”, Magnus whined again.

“I am so sorry, but I just had a memory flash from the night. Remember when Ragnor walked into a three-tier wedding cake for someone and then Magnus literally made cake icing angel on the floor?”, she pointed her finger at Alec. Alec threw his head back, barking out a laughter because he had a video recording of the same. When Ragnor had walked into the table carrying the cake that ominous night, the topmost tier had fallen on the ground and all the icing splattered. That is when a rather drunk Magnus Bane fell to the ground on his back and started swinging his hand as if he were making a snow angel.

Alec held his hips as the laughter ended up with him having a muscle ache while Magnus just stood there, with his hands crossed on his chest... waiting for the moment to die down and for them to continue their conversation about something. It is true. The memory of that restaurant was funny and hilarious, and Raphael, Cat and Alec didn’t mean anything when they pulled his leg, but his meddled-up mind somehow linked that moment to something he thought he had buried deep down weeks ago. This memory wasn’t supposed to remind of that event, but it did, and Magnus couldn’t function for a second. He felt air leaving his lungs and his mind getting fuzzy for a second. The fading color on Magnus’ skin was caught immediately by Alec and he was by Magnus’ side the very
second. You’re a joke. He recalled Kaya telling him sometime when he was tied to that log.

“I am fine... I am fine”, Magnus raised his hands in the air. “I am fine”, he breathed out. Alec closed his eyes feeling guilty about triggering Magnus like that and he encircled his arms around Magnus’ shoulder, pushing his temple to his shoulder. He should have been better with all this especially after Asmodeus.

“I know you’re ok. I am... sorry. I am sorry. Please just let me be there for you...”, Alec breathed out. He placed his palm on Magnus’ cheek and just held him to his chest. “I am just going to keep hugging you... for a bit... if that is okay?”, he added, whispering in Magnus’ ear. The Omega nodded and closed his eyes, letting go of his clenched muscles. Raphael and Cat noticed the silence in the kitchen and looked over their shoulders. They saw Alec standing behind the counter, holding Magnus to his chest and making comforting strokes on his arm. The women tipped her chin, asking if everything was okay and Alec just gestured her to change the topic to something else.

“I am so sorry”, the Alpha planted a kiss in Magnus’ hair and stroked his arm.

“It is not your fault, Alexander”, Magnus breathed out. He maneuvered himself in Alec’s embrace and wrapped his arms around his shoulder, pulling Alec in for a tight hug. “I just need a moment. I am going to be okay...”, he closed his eyes and nestled in his fiancé’s neck. “Will you breathe with me?”, he asked. Alec lifted Magnus’ chin with his finger and nodded. He pressed his lips on Magnus’ forehead and the Omega closed his eyes to focus on his and Alec’s breathing. He dropped his head back in Alec’s neck and the Alpha pulled him closer.

The doorbell sounded again, and Catarina got up to open the door for the guests after she saw Magnus looking a little flustered and out of his senses, and Alec trying to comfort him. Magnus and Alec separated from each other and Magnus excused himself to attend to his smudged eyeliner and eyeshadow.

Maryse and Robert walked inside the house, eyeing Catarina up and down because they couldn’t recognize her at all except for the fact that she was a mundane and probably didn’t know anything about their second identities. The girl laced her hands together and took a deep breath as Alec stepped out of the kitchen to greet his parents. “Maa!”, he breathed out, embracing her tightly. She smiled and kissed Alec’s cheek. Robert followed her inside and settled their bags of gifts by the Christmas tree.

“Merry Christmas, Alexander”, she cupped his jaw and her eyes twinkled.

“Merry Christmas, Maa”, he replied.

“Where’s Magnus?”, she looked around for her son-in-law.

“He needed to use the bathroom for a second”, Alec shrugged. “Maa, Dad... this is Catarina Loss!”, he pointed towards the dark-skinned girl. “She is Magnus’ colleague at the Plaza and a very close friend. And that is Raphael Santiago, Magnus and Catarina’s boss...”, he introduced his parents to Magnus’ friends. “They’re Magnus’ best friends!”, he added. “Cat, Raphael... that is my Mum and Dad!”.

Catarina stepped forward and greeted the Lightwoods and then paused when she was next to Alec. Nudging him by his elbow, she muttered. “I am not at all offended that you said we’re Magnus’ best friends”.

“Oh Cat! Come on. You, me and Raphael wouldn’t know each other if it wasn’t for Magnus... he’s the special link. I can’t take that credit from my fiancé, now can I?”, Alec lifted his hand and placed
his arm around Cat’s neck.

“That’s true I guess!”’, Cat shrugged. “Also, you two don’t need a ceremony or priest. You’re so beyond married already... I feel sick”, she groaned. Alec chuckled and slapped her arm softly before he walked away to greet his father. Magnus came out of the bathroom and saw Alec greeting his father with a formal side hug. Before he could realize, he was pulled into a hug by his mother-in-law.

“Maryse!”, he gasped, his lips curving into a smile. “Merry Christmas”, he breathed out against her shoulder.

“Merry Christmas, Magnus!”, she cupped his jaw and smiled.

“I hope your flight was comfortable?”, he asked, hooking his arm in hers.

“Yes, it was. And Trevor was on-time as well. He got us checked in and everything”, she informed. Trevor was one of Magnus’ trusted drivers and he had tasked the man to pick up his in-laws and drop them at their hotel. Magnus took Maryse to the kitchen and then uncorked the wine bottle she had gotten for the two of them.

“I am glad. Although, Trevor never disappoints me...”, he added. “Wine everyone? Cat... Robert?”, he called out.

“Thank you for asking Magnus. I would love to have some wine too!”, Raphael deadpanned after Magnus missed calling out his name to offer wine. Robert and Alec scoffed at Raphael’s comment which had Magnus scowling. Maryse watched this casual conversation between Magnus and his mundane friends and her heart fluttered with joy because of how they had built up their lives here. He put the bottle on the kitchen counter when he saw Robert coming to the kitchen.

“Merry Christmas, Magnus!”, he greeted his son-in-law, holding out his arms open. Magnus looked back and forth between the inviting arms and Alec and then walked into the hug. This was all very pleasingly comforting for the Omega.

“Merry Christmas, Consul”, he added.

“I must say, Alec... Magnus, you guys have totally changed the look of this apartment. When my sister showed me the first photographs of when she bought this house, I remember it used to look so dull and gloomy. I could never picture anyone used to the openness of Idris living here but I am really taken aback. This place is beautiful. The view is outstanding.”, Maryse looked around and heaved a sigh. Magnus and Robert stepped away from each other and Alec joined him to help him pour the wine.

“That was all Magnus, Maa”, Alec waved his hand.

“It was the both of us, darling!”, Magnus corrected, pecking Alec lightly on his cheek.

Alec picked up the wine glasses Magnus had filled and served it to all the guests one by one. They had now moved to the living room with their wine glasses and the unopened bottles of wine, Magnus and Alec sharing one large and comfy loveseat that they had very recently purchased. Alec extended his arm on the backrest and Magnus settled under Alec’s arm, pushing his body against his chest. Alec curled his arm around Magnus’ shoulder and dug his fingertips in his fiancé’s arm.

“You ok?”, he whispered, leaning closer in Magnus’ ear.

“Fine”, Magnus smiled and kissed him hastily.
“So, Catarina, Raphael... you guys work with Magnus?” Robert cleared his throat and asked. Cat and Raphael straightened themselves on the couch and nodded. “That is great... it is always fun to have people you are friends with to work...”

“Yes, we do sir!”, Raphael added.

“You can call me Robert if you like”, the man laughed. “...and do you guys have partners?” Robert asked.

“My boyfriend is Jewish and is celebrating Hanukkah with his family this time... in Texas! Otherwise, he would have been here with me... but I guess holidays are for family time and he deserves some too!”, Raphael groaned.

“That is nice. Maybe one day you can host a Jewish dinner with your boyfriend and invite us all. I have never had a full-course traditional Jewish meal, but I have heard a lot about it from some of my colleagues”, Robert rolled his eyes. Maryse gasped as she realized that Robert was getting tipsy with the wine. Alec, however, was just surprised. He had never seen his father so open and talkative.

“I haven’t seen the Consul like this... ever!”, Magnus leaned closer and whispered, his gaze fixed on his father-in-law.

“I know. I feel like I don’t know my father at all”, Alec gasped.

“That makes two of us”, Magnus joked.

Alec tilted his head and rolled his eyes because... nope. Talking about Asmodeus was strictly prohibited in casa Lightwood y Bane. His jaw clenched at the thought of Magnus having another panic attack. “I am joking. Chill, Alexander. I am fine. Stop walking on eggshells around me, Alexander. I am fine”, Magnus reiterated, cupping his cheek and placed his thumb on his cheekbone.

Alec downed his wine and placed his empty glass on the side-table. He wrapped both his arms around Magnus’ waist and then snuggled into him as if the Omega was a giant soft toy. The other people noticed it... and their heart melted but they chose to not disturb their little moment and instead, focused on other discussions happening around.

The doorbell rang again, and Catarina jumped up to the open it. It was Clary, Isabelle and Luke this time. The final guests for the night. Clary and Catarina had met already each other before and so had Luke and Maryse when they shifted Alec to the infirmary in New York. So, it was just a brief introduction between Robert and Luke, and Isabelle and Magnus’ friends and they all settled on the table for dinner.

Magnus plugged in his phone to the Bluetooth speaker and put on soft romantic Christmas songs to complement the tone of the atmosphere in his and Alec’s apartment. The girls had taken over his kitchen and cleaning the dining table and putting the leftovers away in small boxes after everyone was done with dinner, while his fiancé was helping them. Luke and Robert were talking in one corner with a glass of wine, probably discussing wolves and clans since they couldn’t do it openly in front of Cat and Raphael. Maryse was talking to Raphael and Catarina, probably sharing her thoughts about Wuthering Heights that happened to be their common favorite novel. They had realized the same on the dinner table and conversations hadn’t stopped ever since. Magnus scrolled through his playlist and then put on “All I want for Christmas is You” by Mariah Carey to help the evening pick up it’s much needed pace. Alec looked right across the apartment when he recognized the song and grinned because Magnus was getting drunk with every glass of wine he drank.
Well, they were all slightly drunk and intoxicated from Alec’s special eggnogs and now hogging Luke’s special Merlot that he brought a crate full of. Snow was beginning to fall in New York. Everything felt perfect and nice, and very romantic. Magnus thought. They were yet to open presents but they had the whole night to themselves, so it was fine. Catarina stood up from the couch, rocking herself on her feet as she started dancing to the Mariah Carey classic. Her glass of wine was high up in the air in her other hand and she was enjoying the beats of the music. She pulled Raphael up next and then grabbed Izzy from the kitchen. They pushed the armchairs and couch back against the walls to make more space for themselves – a very personalized dance floor.

Clary dropped her work and rushed to Luke to drag him to the dance floor and he obliged the girl. They took to the faux stage and the old man twirled the redhead around as she laughed and danced on her feet. Magnus downed the wine he was holding in his glass and rushed to Maryse, holding out his hand. Maryse obliged him and they joined the rest of the guests on the dance floor as well. Alec leaned his butt on the kitchen counter and crossed his hands on his chest. Magnus was happy and smiling. And so was Alec. After everything they had been through this year, this was what the both of them deserved.

The dancing crew changed their partners in the middle of the song, twirling and dancing around and the only two people on the side were Robert and Alec who stood close to each other, watching their family members enjoy this moment. None of them could dance that well. And Alec only ever tried when Magnus was with him.

“Magnus looks much better than the last time we saw him!”, the Consul turned to Alec and noted, with a genuine happiness on his face.

“He is... he is getting there”, Alec replied. “I couldn’t have done that... if I were him. Pull my life back together the way he has done. It is impressive. He is a very strong man, if you ask me!”, he took a sip of his wine and commented. Robert hummed an agreement and poured himself more wine.

“Alec?”, Robert turned his body towards his son, shaking his body to let go off his intoxication a little. “I know this is probably not the right time, but I won’t see you in person after this. And I need to talk to you about this.”

“Tell me?”, Alec narrowed his brows.

“I have to name a successor for myself... as the Consul I mean. I am almost getting to the end of my tenure as the head of the Clave. And... though I already know what your answer will be, I needed to run this by you once before I send in my nomination”, he added, downing the wine in his glass.

“I don’t want the position”, Alec shrugged.

“Yeah... I know! And, I was thinking about proposing Underhill’s name for the same. He is young and open-minded. I am sure he’ll be able to handle the Clave and the rules and implement better policies for our community”, he suggested.

“Underhill’s a good choice. He helped us during that... massacre as well. I agree with you.”, Alec cleared his throat again at the mention of that incident, closing his eyes briefly. “I am sure he’ll be a good successor”

“Yes, me too... but I just... are you sure you don’t want to think about taking up the Consulate for yourself? You’ll be a good leader, Alec. I know it, I have seen it with my own ideas. Your ideas represent the newer generation of the Clave and the community would benefit from your policies”, Robert arched his brows.
“I see your point. But, I don’t see my future there, Dad. My future is here... with Magnus and my job. And I don’t think that running the Clave is something I want to do. Idris is a wonderful city, it is where I belong. But it isn’t where my heart lies. You are a wonderful Consul. Some of the best the Clave has ever had, and I just don’t want the position because I am your son... and I should succeed you or whatever. I wouldn’t be the right choice for the post. I am a much better photographer than a politician.”

“I know, son. I just had to ask!”, Robert sighed.

“I know. You can go ahead with Underhill’s name. I am sure he’ll not disappoint you! I will be there with you... whatever you need. You have my support... undying support!”, Alec’s lips curved into a smile.

“ALEXANDER!”, Magnus called out to him from the living room. He had a white flower tucked over one of his ears and the top buttons of his shirt had been undone. His shirt was plucked out of his pants and his droopy eyes revealed that he was drunk. Quite drunk, if you asked his fiancé. Alec looked up from the kitchen and smiled at the sight of his beautiful fiancé. “Come on here... dance with me... it is Christmas... the most romantic time of the year...”, the Omega called him. Alec focused his attention to the song and realized it was *Can’t help falling in Love* by Elvis Presley. The other people had settled on the couch by now and Isabelle and Clary were the only other ones dancing now.

“Go, your man is calling you”, Robert pushed him towards the living room with a smile on his face. Magnus downed another glass of wine and extended his hand towards Alec who was walking towards him. When his fingers found Alec’s shirt, the man curled it around the fabric and pulled him closer, wrapping the other hand around the neck.

“Hey”, he leaned closer and pressed his wine stained lips onto Alec’s.

“Hi, babe”, Alec smiled, sliding his hand around Magnus’ waist and resting their foreheads together for a second. Magnus placed his hands on either side of Alec’s hips and twirled him around. Alec gasped as he landed in Magnus’ arms once again and regained his balance. “Woah”, he whispered.

*Like a river flows surely to the sea*

*Darling so it goes*

*Some things are meant to be*

*Take my hand, take my whole life too*

*For I can’t help falling in love with you*

“Merry Christmas Alexander”, Magnus bobbed Alec’s nose with his own and then crashed their lips together again. Magnus was reeking of wine and his forehead was marred with sweat that brushed onto Alec’s skin when they kissed each other. He nestled in the man’s arms after they pulled away. Alec hauled Magnus closer to his chest and pressed their foreheads together, breathing each other in. They could feel the other guests’ eyes on them, and Catarina mumbling something about how adorable they were and how single she is but soon, they zoned out from their surroundings and the only sound they could hear was the sound of air escaping their nose and their hearts beating.
“Merry Christmas Magnus”, he whispered back with a sigh of relief and love. Magnus hiccupped softly and hummed, eyes slightly closed. “Are you drunk?”, the Alpha’s lips curved into a lopsided grin.

“A little…”, Magnus nodded.

“Of course, just a little”, the Alpha scoffed.

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Like a river flows surely to the sea} \\
&\text{Darling so it goes} \\
&\text{Some things are meant to be} \\
&\text{Take my hand, take my whole life too} \\
&\text{For I can't help falling in love with you} \\
&\text{For I can't help falling in love with you}
\end{align*}
\]

The swayed to the soft beats of the music and Magnus finally buried his head in the crook of Alec’s neck, and sliding his hands tightly around the Alpha’s back. Alec could feel his shoulder moistening with warm water, but he didn’t mention it. Magnus was obviously crying, and Alec tightened his grip around the man and held him close to him so that Magnus could hear his heart... their heart. “Thank you for giving me a family after I lost mine…”, he whispered very softly so that only Alec could only.

“Thank you for giving me your companionship, Magnus... and making me the luckiest man in the whole world!”, Alec replied.

“I love you…”, Magnus sniffed and whispered.

“I love you too, honey!”, Alec tipped his chin up and closed their lips together again. Magnus thought that he had been wrong about everything being perfect a while ago.

Now, everything was perfect.

...

>>> Two Year later >>>

Another two years flew by and it was time for the holidays season again with the Annual Staff Christmas Party at the Plaza Hotel. This time, the Hotel Management had coupled the party with their Annual Awards Ball as well and Magnus was being felicitated with the Certificate of Excellence for Plaza Staff Member of the Year. Magnus sat on the table in second row from the front of the stage as the CEO of the Star Parivaar Group announced the grand opening of the Ball and Christmas Party. The Hall was decorated with Christmas lights and decorations merged with the silver stars that characterized the annual Ball event. Luke, Raphael and Catarina were sitting on the same round table as Magnus alongside Clary, but Alec was nowhere to be seen.

Where are you???
Magnus sent another text to his fiancé and threw his phone on the table. He was going to pass out with nervousness and the most important man of his life was not present for one of the most important moments of his life.

“Magnus calm down!”, Luke leaned forward and placed a hand on Magnus’ shoulder. The man took a deep breath and sighed. “Alec will be here. He promised you... right? Don’t worry.”, he assured the man.

“What if I trip on the way up? Everyone in the audience will start laughing at me!”, Magnus widened his eyes and placed his hand over his mouth. Kudos to his mind for coming up with such great situations.

“None of that shit would happen”, Raphael groaned and hissed at his best friend. “You deserve this recognition for all the work you have done this year. Stop panicking alright? Where the hell is Alec??”, he added knowing that Magnus would calm down only after Alec arrived. The Alpha was working on an assignment, all the way in downtown Brooklyn and he was running late. He had promised that no matter what happened, he would make it to the event but now, as every second passed – Magnus’ thought that worst nightmare of Alec missing out on this party might actually come true.

Luke excused himself and went on the stage when his name was called to do the introduction for all the winners and the other formalities as the HR manager of the hotel. He buttoned his coat and proceeded to the podium. Magnus closed his eyes briefly and took a deep breath. Alec will be here!

He told himself.

“Hello ladies and gentlemen hope everyone’s enjoying the Ball”, Luke placed his arms on the podium and leaned into the mic. “Of course, cannot drink too much because oh well, the bosses are here”, he tipped his chin and laughed. Magnus relaxed a little and checked his phone. Alec hadn’t replied.

“I am just kidding”, the Alpha grinned. “This year was a special one for the Plaza. We regained our position as the Best Hotel in the New York Times ranking for this year... and our crew won the Best Hospitality Experience at a Hotel. I am still overwhelmed whenever I see that certificate hanging in the gallery. It is all because of how hardworking my crew at this hotel is. So, a round of applause for my Team!”, he raised his hands and started clapping. Soon, the entire hall was thundering with claps.

When Alec reached the main entrance of the hall, he was dying to catch a breath. It had been a very close call. He had wrapped up his shoot in Brooklyn an hour ago, finished getting ready in his trailer and then almost ran three red-lights to reach the Plaza on time. He pulled out his ID and pass from his coat pocking hanging on his arm and showed it to the entrance security. The man swiped his card and let the man in. Alec craned his neck and looked around to find Magnus. And then he found him at a round table in the second row. The table had bottles of water and glasses of wine, but no award. So thankfully, he hadn’t mixed Magnus’ important moment. He quickly sprinted across the hall without making much noise and dropped on the chair behind Magnus, startling everyone on the table.

“Alexander”, Magnus breathed out in relief.

“And the Staff Member of the Year award goes to Magnus Bane. He in the manager-in-charge”, Luke announced on the mic before Alec could lean forward and kiss his man. The hall echoed with a round of claps as Magnus stood up and buttoned his coat. He turned back and placed his hand on Alec’s jaw, pulling him in for a kiss. Alec was burning with heat because of running so much.

“I love you”, Alec breathed out. “Go get up there and shine”, he smiled.
“I love you too!”, Magnus closed his eyes, taking in Alec’s presence. He could feel his body shaking with fear and anxiety.

“You’ll be fine, Magnus. I know!”, Alec assured him and stood up to embrace his man. “Now, go”, he whispered and pushed Magnus to the stage.

Magnus smiled as went up the stairs and was greeted by Luke who was waiting for him with a trophy and a certificate, alongside a check for his excellent contribution to the hotel. In his daze of anxiety, he hadn’t properly listened to Luke’s introduction for him, but he hoped that what he did had made him deserve this title.

“Congratulations, Magnus”, Luke smiled, handing him over the trophy and the certificate. Magnus’ heart skipped a beat as the round of applauses grew louder. When he looked back in the audience, almost everyone was standing and cheering for him, but the loudest round of claps was coming from Alec whose eyes were glistening with tears. His applause could be well-recognized and separated from the rest of the claps. *When the entire world is cheering for you... I'll cheer for you the loudest.* Alec had promised him a few Christmases ago. Magnus walked over to the podium and placed his trophy on it. Everyone settled back into the chair and Magnus took a deep breath.

“Thank you, everyone!”, he cleared his throat. “I am going to keep this short so that you guys don’t get bored... but I just have a few people to thank and then I’ll be out of your hairs!”, he chuckled nervously. “Thank you, Luke, for this opportunity and whatever you have done to support me in the last three years. I wouldn’t be a part of this amazing team at Plaza if it weren’t for you. So, thanks a lot. I hope I haven’t disappointed you at all!”, he looked at Luke and the man just winked. “I come from a place where kids like me are not allowed to have dreams let alone pursue them, for whatever reasons. We are supposed to be stable life partners and I had dared to dream for a life like this... not knowing if that would ever be possible. But then, I was engaged to this wonderful man who helped me chase all my dreams... and promised me to have my back whenever I needed it. He was not obliged to do any of it... and we barely knew each other back then but he did it... and now I am here. So, thank you Alexander. I couldn’t have asked for a better life-partner than you... and I am holding this trophy because of you. I cannot wait for all the adventures life awaits us both.”, Magnus picked up the trophy and held it out in Alec’s direction. The man smiled and flicked off the tears from his eyes and folded his hands together on his chest, listening to Magnus. “And finally, my sister Clary who saved me in ways that no one has... so thank you for giving me a second life, biscuit. I owe you!”, he smiled. Clary cheered softly and clapped. Magnus stepped back from the podium as the claps erupted again and walked out of the stage.

Luke continued with the other awards of the night, including Raphael winning Best Team Leader for the Hotel Management Group. They danced briefly, had dinner and then they dropped Clary back home in Brooklyn and decided to walk a little along the harbor before reaching home. Magnus’ trophy was safely settled in the backseat of Alec’s Volvo and they had their coats on because it was snowing outside.

Clary came back to her apartment after celebrating Magnus’ big win and sighed. She was exhausted and tired, and ready to crash on the bed. But more than that, she was a tad bit sad because of the fact that this was the first holidays in three years that she was going to celebrate without Isabelle by her side. The girl was on the final stretch of her College degree and therefore she had to focus on her studies. Clary removed her heels and stepped inside. She hadn’t spoken to Isabelle in over two days and what exhausting two days it had been. Luke had taken her out to shop for a Christmas tree and then they had visited Luke’s school to reminisce his memories of Valentine and Jocelyn.
Changing into a pair of pajamas and a cute top, Clary dropped on her bed and took out her phone. Her wallpaper was a selfie of herself and Isabelle from Idris and how she missed that town. She wished somedays that things would be different, and she would not that be this disturbed to go back to her hometown.

Isabelle had commented on her photograph with Magnus where she had congratulated him for the big win. She hastily opened her Instagram app and clicked on the notifications panel on the bottom of the app.

isabellelightwood – @magnus.bane Congratulations brother-in-law <3 Everyone in Idris sends you tons of love and luck. Mum says she is so lucky to have such bright kids in the family. I cannot wait to meet you and Alec. I miss you guys :( You look so handsome by the way. PS: Ask Alec to reply to my text. It’s urgent. @clarymorgenstern my precious lady. I love you <3 Congratulations to you too! PS: I miss you too babe!

Clary’s lips curved into a smile and she opened her message thread with Isabelle.

Hey, you up?

She pressed send and relaxed in her blanket. Her phone vibrated with a phone call a minute later and the redhead didn’t have to check the callerID to see who it was.

“Hey!”, she smiled.

“Hi”, Isabelle’s voice sounded tired but beautiful.

“What’s up!”, Clary turned to her side and pulled her blanket close.

“Just wrapped up my studies for the day... heading to the bed now”, Izzy sighed.

“Hey... stop worrying about the exams. You’ll be fine, alright?”, Clary insisted.

“I know, C... I just miss you so much!”

“I miss you too!!”

“So, how was the annual staff member’s party?”

“Oh, so much fun!! I was so happy for Magnus... he was almost on the verge of breaking into tears!”, Clary sniffed.

“I wish I could be there with you all”, Izzy mumbled.

“I know... we all missed you here... but don’t worry. Once you’re done with your exams... we can tell the boys about that job offer you got!!”

“Yes... I haven’t even started looking for apartments yet... oh God!”, Izzy whined. “I am soo behind schedule”, she cursed herself. Clary swallowed and took a deep breath.

“Iz...?”, she spoke up a few seconds later.

“Yes?”

“I was just thinking... you know, you can totally say no... but uhm... instead of looking for apartments elsewhere, why don’t you move in with me?”, Clary pitched.
“Oh?”, Izzy gasped and then there was silence for a couple of seconds.

“You know it’s fine... it’s alright. You don’t have to answer!”, she freaked out. “Izzy? You still there with me?”, she asked.

“Yeah... yeah, I am here”, Izzy sighed.

“Did I weird you out?”

“No... no, far from it!”, Izzy squeaked.

“Please tell me you’re not angry with me?”

“I am not... Clary... I am not... I was... just, uh... are you sure?”

“Yeah... yeah!! Why wouldn’t I be?”

“No... I mean you don’t think it is too early right...?”, Isabelle bit her lip.

“I love you, Isabelle. And I cannot wait for you to come here so that we can start our lives together”, Clary assured.

“I love you too, babe!”, Izzy smiled.

“So?”

“So?”

“Are you going to move in with me?”

“Yes. YES!”, Izzy exclaimed. She heard Clary shout on the other side and rolled on her bed, blushing with joy.

“Did you tell Luke about this promotion and job offer at Four Seasons?”, Alec tugged his fiancé closer. Magnus had received a job offer from the prestigious Four Seasons hotel earlier this week and they were offering him the post of General Manager after six months of probational training period. It was a big deal, but Magnus didn’t know if he could leave Luke and his friends behind at the Plaza just for the sake of a better opportunity.

“I haven’t... it just feels like I am betraying him... and the hotel. I want to get promoted and Four Seasons is like one of the best hotels in the whole city, but I don’t know if leaving Plaza would be the right way?”, Magnus dropped his head on Alec’s shoulder and sniffed, the tip of his nose getting numb.

“I think you should talk to Luke about it... he can give you the best advice, you know? And I don’t think Luke or anyone would think that you betrayed them.”, Alec slid his arm around Magnus’ back and pulled him closer.

“I know... I will talk to him soon...”, Magnus mumbled, sliding his hand up Alec’s chest.

They were about to turn around when a muffled cry stopped them in their tracks. “Alexander is that a baby...?”, he whispered. Alec hummed response and put his index finger to his mouth. He tipped his chin up to take in the scent of human flesh and sniff out the baby. It was definitely the sound of a baby crying. A very small baby. They looked around, trying to find the source of the sound and then
spotted a small bundle wrapped in front of Luke’s warehouse. That is where the sound seemed to be coming from. A light bulb was flickering right over it and that’s it – there was no other protection.

Magnus and Alec ran to the main door and saw a little baby, barely a year old if not less, wrapped in a thick blanket and crying its heart out. Its cheeks were pink and flushed with cold and her eyes were swollen red from crying. Alec bent down and scooped the baby in his arms and covered it with his coat.

“The baby is cold, Alexander. I am calling Luke’s infirmary to see if there’s someone who can help.”, Magnus panicked, covering its little hands with his warm gloves. It was snowing in New York at the time and he couldn’t even imagine how long the baby had been here already. The baby’s big brown eyes were red with tears. Alec cradled it softly, cooing it to stop crying while Magnus called the attendant at Luke’s infirmary.

“Magnus... she is a wolf...”, Alec gasped after her blanket fell off of her body. Magnus came closer and saw the baby’s eyes shining with a golden-yellow hue, the characteristic wolf trait that was used to recognize their kind. Magnus stroke the baby’s forehead softly and saw a nametag on the back of her blanket.

Inaya.

>>> Three years later >>>

Alec stood on the door of the preschool alongside other parents. The bell had rung, and the kids had started walking out of their classes – the teachers escorting them out. He stuffed his hands in his pocket and craned his neck up to look after someone special. A minute later, his lips curved into a smile. A very young four-year hopped down the gallery, with a tiny black and white panda backpack jumping on her shoulder. She wore a pink frill frock and grey coat over it. Alec knelt on the ground and extended his hands in the air after the girl noticed him and screeched out a laughter. She stumbled on her tiny feet and ran into Alec’s arms. Alec grinned and scooped her arm, planting a kiss in her hair.

“Where’s Papa??”, she squealed in her father’s years.

“Papa is working... and he asked me to pick you up from school instead”, Alec mumbled, pulling her backpack out and then holding out his index finger towards the little girl. The girl curled her fingers around this finger and Alec squeezed her bag and bottle in his other hand as they walked out of the school compound.

“Mrs Wilson taught us how to work with clay... and Toby...”, the girl began. “Oh, he is so stupid that he mixed all the clays together and it became a dirty mutt colored thing...”, she spoke in a broken tongue. “I had to give him some of my clay to work... I made a flower. A red flower... it is in my bag”

“Let’s go back home and we will put it next to our bed?”, Alec offered as they stepped out in the blazing sun. Alec’s Volvo was parked in the end of the lot. They waved to the other kids and parents on their way there.

“Up, Daddy... up!!”, the girl yelled when they were half-way on the pavement. Alec rolled her eyes and looked down. She was pulling his hand and raising her arm, asking Alec to pick her up. So, who was he to refuse her. He scooped her up with one hand and she wrapped her hand around his neck, feeling proud at how high she was in the air, thanks to her very tall Dad.
“Inaya… Aunt Clary wanted to know if you wanted to go to that movie with her on Sunday… she has got tickets?”, Alec asked, strapping her on the passenger seat of his car. He shut her door and walked around towards the driver’s seat.

“Moana?”, Inaya gasped.

“Yes, that one!”, Alec strapped his own belt and adjusted her seat so that she wouldn’t feel the shock when brakes are applied.

“Yes!”, she clapped. Alec had brought her a glass of smoothie from the apartment and he lifted the cup, giving it to her. “Are you and Papa going out for dinner?”, she sipped her smoothies and spoke with mouth full of the drink.

“We are”, Alec smiled. Magnus and Alec had decided to spend the weekend celebrating Magnus’ birthday even though it had technically been two days ago, but Magnus had had no time off from work, so the duo had scheduled everything for the weekend. They had a couple’s dinner on Saturday and then they were all going for a road trip the next day.

“Don’t worry, daddy… you can kiss Papa all you want. I wouldn’t be around to disturb you…”, she singsang the line and Alec snorted.

Inaya was their four-year old daughter who they had adopted on a fateful night three years ago. She was an orphaned wolf child abandoned in front of a warehouse that Luke owned, and her birth parents were later found dead in an accident, leaving her unattended by anyone. Magnus and Alec had rescued her and taken her to Luke’s infirmary because she was cold and a little dehydrated. Luke had tried to find her relatives or just anyone, but no one tried to claim either her parents or the girl. Magnus and Alec had gotten so attached to her all the while she was undergoing treatment at the infirmary that they had mutually come to an agreement to adopt her as their own. Luke forwarded the adoption formalities and the men took her home a few months later.

Now three full years after that, they lived in a very luxurious Manager’s suite on the top floor of Four Seasons because Magnus had been promoted to post of the General Manager after a training period. They had let go of Maryse’s sister’s apartment in Upper East Side and also bought a loft in Brooklyn from their own money. The loft stood on the top floor of an apartment building and it was under construction and renovation. Alec was still working for Vogue and Jace and Sebastian had shifted to Los Angeles after Jace got another job. During the last months of them being in New York, Jace and Alec had stopped spewing hatred at each other and Alec had almost forgiven his former best-friend for all the hurt the man he caused him. Mostly because he had been so happy in his life with Magnus and Inaya that he didn’t want to harbor ill-feelings towards anyone. Not anymore. He had moved on from that version of himself.

Alec pulled his car into the GM’s reserved parking spot and took Inaya’s hand as they walked into their private elevator that took them straight to their suite. A bellboy was waiting to greet them with a tray of food for Inaya and a note from Papa. The bellboy crouched in front of Inaya and handed the card to her. “Your Papa is very sorry that he couldn’t pick you up from pre-school. He sent you this!”

Inaya screeched in happiness and took the card from him. She opened it and read aloud. “I am sorry, my princess. I love you. Papa!”, she yelled. Alec snorted at how much Magnus liked to pamper their little girl. He was in the kitchen now, preparing something for the girl and himself. She ran around the living room and then grabbed a roll of tape. Alec knew that Magnus’ tape was going to stuck with the other cards in the door of her closet. The bellboy took leave and left the father and daughter alone. Inaya was a special child. She had taken to Alec and Magnus’ likes and dislikes as if she had inherited them. Like her Papa, she enjoyed the heat of the sun on her skin and overthought
Alec was mixing the dressing for a sandwich when Inaya came back and pulled the strings of the curtain. They were pulled open, revealing the glass wall on the other side that looked over the Manhattan skyline. Alec looked up and saw the girl standing with her palms pressed on the glass wall. She looked so beautiful. Her thick black hair fell over her caramel skin that was closer to Magnus’ skin color than his pale one.

“Daddy... there’s a plane there!” her eyes widened, and she pointed at something outside in the sky.

“Come here now, lunch is ready!” he called, licking the tip of the spatula for the extra bit to dress to check the taste and seasoning. She ran back to the counter and climbed onto her high-chair. Alec placed a small plate of food in front of her and then made one more sandwich for himself.

“Ketchup!!”, Inaya smiled.

Alec rolled his eyes and grabbed the squirt bottle of ketchup and mustard. He settled next to his girl and applied a little ketchup to her sandwich. “Open your mouth.”, he mumbled. She opened her mouth and Alec pushed the sandwich in softly. Inaya took a small bit and pulled her lips out. “Chew properly, okay? Don’t just swallow it!”, Alec instructed, keeping her sandwich on her plate and picked the one he had made for himself. He took a bite of his own sandwich and grabbed the TV remote to turn on to the music channel.

“Can we watch Frozen please, daddy??”, Inaya clapped. Alec groaned softly. They had seen the movie a dozen times, but his daughter was so smitten by Ana and Christoff that she made him, and Magnus watch the movie almost every other weekend. And it was really them watching because she fell asleep right after the snow monster attacks Ana. He obliged her and logged into his Netflix and put on the movie.

Lifting Inaya’s sandwich again, he asked her to open her mouth and take another bite. Her eyes were twinkling as she watched the movie and Elsa wave her hands and summon that castle on the hill.

“I want Elsa’s dress!”, she mentioned without turning her eyes towards her father. Alec looked up at her and smiled because her lips were curved into a pout because she was so focused into the movie. She looked so adorable that Alec just fell a little bit more in love with her. He picked up his phone and took a snap. Captioning it – we been watching Frozen!, he sent it to Magnus and received a reply a few minutes later.

“Awh, enjoy the movie Alexander. It’s a shame we haven’t watched it yet!”, Alec snorted because he could hear his fiancé’s sarcasm dripping from a simple text. He lifted Inaya’s sandwich again and finished feeding her another bite. He was done with his food but Inaya was going to take another half an hour to finish her food. “Can you and Papa dress up as Frozen characters for Halloween this year? We could be all Frozen people!!”, she suggested. Alec rolled his eyes imagining how his daughter and fiancé would either dress him up as Olaf or Christoff’s troll Grand Pabbie. He knew his family and that was all he could picture himself as.

“You could be Grand Pabbie!!”, Inaya added. “We should totally do that, daddy! I will ask Papa when he comes back. He will agree with me”, she exclaimed. Alec scoffed, proud of himself for guessing it beforehand and continued feeding her as Elsa took to the castle and sang “Let it Go”. Magnus was going to be late from work tonight and he had promised to help Inaya with her homework.
“DADDY STOP PLEASE STOP!!!”, Inaya screeched, popping her eyes open to an extent that Alec feared that they would come out of their sockets. Alec gasped and dropped the crayon he was coloring on the paper with. His head snapped to his daughter and got scared at how horrified she looked.

“What happened?”, he asked, leaning ahead to check if she was alright. “Did you get hurt somewhere?”

“NO! Look at the painting!!”, she growled, shutting her eyes to calm her anger. That was such a Magnus thing to do. She had watched him control himself whenever him and Alec had a stupid argument and taken onto that habit pretty fast and soon Alec had a Magnus and a mini-Magnus living with him.

“What is wrong with the painting? It looks fine, Inaya... see”, Alec dropped his gaze and scanned the painting they were drawing as a part of Inaya’s art assignment. He really couldn’t understand what was wrong.

“What is color of the sky?”, she crossed her hands on her chest.

“Blue!!”, Alec crossed his hands too, imitating her.

“And what was the color you just dropped?”, she looked back and forth between the crayon and her father. Alec frowned and looked down. Purple.

“Fuck!”, he swore under his breath.

“You chose the wrong color for the sky and you’re swearing in front of a child...”, Inaya facepalmed herself. Alec slapped himself and bit his tongue. If Magnus came to know of this, he would not see the sun rise next day.

“Please don’t tell your Papa. He will skewer me if he knew that I swore in front of you...”, he mumbled, opening the crayon packet to pick the right shade of blue. This was harder than the man had anticipated.

“If you don’t do this assignment properly, I am afraid I might have to Mr Alexander Lightwood!!”, Inaya clicked her tongue, imitating Mrs Wilson’s stern voice. “Maybe it is fine for Mrs Lightwood to come to know that her son is quite mischievous”, she shook her head, adjusting fake spectacles on her nose.

“Oh yeah, Ms Lightwood-Bane?”, Alec lips curved into a lop-sided grin and he reached his hand out to grab her. She pulled away and giggled. Alec stood up as she sprinted across the room, running away from her father and laughing and giggling. Alec played with her, running as slowly as he could until he picked her in his arms and tickled her abdomen. She broke into a shortling laughter, struggling to get out of her father’s grasp. They dropped on the couch together and Inaya continued to make an effort to get away from her father.

“Ok... ok”, Alec panted for his breath and let his daughter go.

“Time please!”, Inaya sighed.

“Yeah... yeah”, Alec pretended to be exhausted.

... 

Magnus walked into the suite a little after 10pm that night and it was plunged in darkness except for
the drawing room that was lit only above the coffee table. Magnus looked towards their glass wall – the curtains were not drawn, and dark blue starry night was gorgeously visible. He discarded his coat on the back of an arm chair and toed his shoes and socks off. Tilting his head on either side, he relaxed his neck muscles and unbuttoned the top buttons of his shirt and his cuffs. He could make out Alec and Inaya sitting on the carpet in front of the table but when he came closer, he saw that they were both fast asleep. Alec was sitting on the floor and his head was thrown back on the couch. Inaya was lying on the same couch with her head nestled close to Alec’s. The Alpha had his hand on the small of the girl’s back, protecting her and keeping her close.

Magnus tiptoed closer and saw that Inaya’s books were open on the table and they must have fallen asleep in the middle of completing their homework. Magnus crouched on the ground and closed the books and stacked them on the table neatly. He put the stationary back in the pouch bag and zipped Inaya’s schoolbag. Both his daughter and fiancé seemed to have had just as tiring a day as he had. He bent over the couch and pulled Inaya up in his arms. She hummed something and cuddled in his arms.

“Papa”, she whispered. Magnus stroked her back and placed a kiss on her forehead.

“Hey there, princess”, he mumbled. Her room was a smaller one, accessible from Alec and Magnus’ room. He turned on the lights and settled her in the small poster bed that was protected from all sides.

“Daddy made dinner! Frozen for Halloween…”, she spoke in her broken and sleepy tongue. Magnus pulled a blanket over her and then kissed her again before he returned to take care of his fiancé. Alec was snoring right where Magnus had left him. He sat on the carpet next to his man and pressed his lips onto Alec’s. Alec smiled softly.

“Hey babe”, Magnus patted his cheek and gently woke the guy up from his slumber. Alec opened one eye and squinted. He raised his arm in the air to yawn and stretch himself and then wrapped the same around Magnus’ shoulder, inserting his head in his neck.

“Hi”, he rasped. “Had a good day at work?”

“Yes, the best!!”, Magnus snorted, rolling his shirt sleeves up to his elbow and removing his ear cuff. “One of the guests even managed to tell me how inefficient Four Seasons has become after I took over”, he sighed. “I had such an amazing time…”, he rolled his eyes sarcastically. Pulling his shirt out of his pants, he slumped back on the couch.

“What?”, Alec pulled away.

“It’s nothing. He was just very rude... some people are! Nothing to worry about.”, Magnus brushed it off.

“I will rip him out!”, Alec widened his sleepy eyes. “He will forget how to speak to someone... let alone mock their hard work”, the man growled. Magnus shook his head and laughed, catching Alec’s lips in for a kiss.

“You cannot protect me from people voicing their opinions!”, he chuckled. “I am fine. He was just complaining about something that is under no one’s control and it’s all okay, alright”, he explained. Alec rubbed his palms over his face and lazily stood up on his feet, pulling Magnus with him. Magnus was right. He couldn’t protect him from everyone. And he didn’t have to. Magnus was more than capable of doing it himself. They made their way into the kitchen and Alec heated the food he had prepared for Magnus and Inaya. The man was starving because he almost snatched the plate from Alec’s hand.
“Did you have a good time watching Elsa and Ana again?”', Magnus chortled, lazily and grabbing a fork for himself and digging it in his food. Alec yawned and snorted, recalling the horror that this movie had become for them.

“Don’t mention the movie, Magnus!”, he groaned. The Omega squirted out his breath.

“This is delicious...”, he hummed.

“Yeah?”, Alec beamed.

“Yes, it is... so delicious that I could marry you right now!”, Magnus closed his eyes and replied hastily. Alec’s breath hitched in his throat. It was a joke. Magnus was joking. That is all it was. He cleared his throat and looked away.

They had been engaged for almost six years and the topic of marriage hadn’t come up. They were just so satisfied by where their relationship was that it wasn’t required. But off-late, Alec was thinking about getting married, and officially becoming Magnus’ husband. He had kept the thoughts to himself. “Really?”, Alec couldn’t stop himself. Magnus was trying to avoid the discussion himself, but he realized that it was either now... or never. “Don’t joke about marriage, Magnus”, the man protested.

“I would never, Alexander. I want to marry you!”, Magnus stated, as a matter-of-factly. “Don’t you?”

“I do”, Alec stated, sincerely. Magnus smiled and then he just went silent for some time. He had an epiphany.

“If I asked you to marry me this weekend, would you say yes to that proposal?”, Magnus took a chance. He really couldn’t understand what had gotten into him and why he was being so crazy about marrying Alec.

“I would marry you right now if you asked me!”, the Alpha replied hastily, as if Magnus would take his offer back if he delayed it any further. Alec was so deep in love with his fiancé. His eyes were dripping of love.

“Are you serious?”, Magnus gasped.

“Dead serious!”, Alec hummed.

“This weekend then?”, Magnus arched his brows.

“This weekend!”, Alec nodded.

Magnus batted his eyelids for a few seconds, scanning Alec’s face for signs of hesitation. But the Alpha was beaming in love. He was so excited, and his eyes were twinkling as he stared in Magnus’ eyes.

“Alexander, please tell me you’re not joking? We are getting married on Sunday?”, Magnus swallowed.

“Yes, we are!”, Alec agreed. Magnus threw his spoon aside and jumped right in Alec’s arms, throwing him off his chair. The Alpha was laughing and crying at the same time. What a beautiful turn of events it had been!

But the proposal was only step one of the whole set of events. They couldn’t have wed on Sunday if
Clary and Isabelle weren’t half as efficient as they had to be. After completing her studies, Isabelle had moved to New York last year, and started working as a choreographer in a studio in Brooklyn. She and Clary now lived together in Clary’s apartment and Maryse and Robert were so proud of how both their kids had made good lives for themselves. As for Clary, the girl had completed her formal education and was now working under a Michelin star chef, undergoing training before she got hired as a chef at some other restaurant. Luke and she had gotten really close in the past few years and he loved her like his own daughter. She was his only memory of his fallen friends.

It was Thursday when Magnus and Alec had randomly decided to get married on Sunday and their sisters were the first people they called to inform. The next day went by arranging their papers and legalities of the wedding. Later in the evening, Magnus and Alec went out to buy their rings while Isabelle took charge of their tuxes. They all had to step up their game if the wedding was supposed to happen flawlessly.

Isabelle had an eye for fashion and chose both Alec and Magnus’ outfits as quickly as she could have while Clary and Luke managed to arrange the venue and the officiator. They opened one of Luke’s beach houses and chose that for the wedding. Raphael and Catarina were the only guests invited for the wedding. When Maryse came to know about it on Saturday, she made Alec promise to have a formal reception once they were in town and that she and Robert were heartbroken that they were going to miss their son’s wedding.

Alec spent Saturday night with Isabelle and Luke as they hosted a very small bachelor party where they got drunk and watched crappy movies, courtesy, Alec’s lovely daughter Inaya who was a huge fan on Elsa and Moana. Alec had a hearty time when he put Luke and Izzy through the same torture that he and Magnus had to endure almost every weekend. Magnus, Clary, Catarina and Raphael, on the other hand, hit the bar and drank celebrating Magnus’ last night as a bachelor, even though, Alec and he had been living the married life for over half a decade now. The couple slept in separate apartments later that night to keep things traditional. They exchanged a few texts before sleeping and didn’t FaceTime so that the tradition of not seeing your groom’s face also remained intact.

“You’re getting married!”, Clary sniffed, adjusting the flower on Magnus’ chest pocket. Magnus loosened his hands and looked in the mirror. He was getting married. Isabelle had chosen a dark maroon tux for him.

“I am getting married!”, Magnus affirmed with small tears in his eyes. Clary adjusted his bow and wiped her nose on a tissue-paper. She was wearing a flowy olive-green floor length gown that was a gift from Izzy. “Don’t make me cry, biscuit. It took me hours to get this wing right!”, Magnus looked away to dry his tears. He had opted for a double-winged eyeliner and a dark red shade of lip gloss.

“I just can’t believe this! You, Magnus Bane... you have a 4-year old girl... a gorgeous four-year old, and a wonderful job... and such an amazing fiancé! How did this happen! I still remember us making those mud hills when we were little. And then watching Princess Diaries wearing those onesies!”, she recalled. It seemed like it was yesterday for Magnus too when he had first met his sister, his little biscuit. “How did we both manage to score the Lightwoods?”, she sighed, adjusting his tux and dusting it.

“Beats me, darling!”, Magnus shrugged.

“I am so happy for you!”, she pressed a kiss on his cheek and then wiped away the lipstick stains rapidly.

“I couldn’t do this without you”, Magnus cupped her jaw.
“Me neither!”, Clary shrugged.

“I have a small request though?”, he licked his lips nervously.

“Would you walk me down the aisle?”, Alec asked Isabelle. She was standing on a foot-stool, adjusting his bowtie for him. He was such a disaster when it came to clothes. She was wearing a satin gown with high heels but for the sake of her brother, she had to climb a stool and do his hair and makeup so that he looked presentable in front of his stunning husband.

“What?”, Izzy gasped.

“Mum and Dad are not here... you’re my only family. I wouldn’t be here today without you... so, please?”, Alec shrugged. Isabelle sniffed, trying to escape her tears.

“I would be honored, big brother”, she smiled.

Alec closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He could do this. It was nothing. They were just officially labeling their relationship even though they had been married for years. Nothing could go wrong.

The band started playing the music when Clary and Magnus entered the hall where he was going to get married to Alec. Ragnor was officiating the wedding for them and he stood in the center of the altar, awaiting the grooms. Magnus arched his hand out and Clary hooked hers in it. They walked ahead on the aisle that was decorated with flowers and wreath along the way. Clary had gone a step ahead with all the decorations and that too, in such a short time. Luke and Catarina were sitting in the front row and so was Raphael. It was a small and intimate wedding, just like Magnus and Alec had wanted. Clary dropped Magnus off in front of Ragnor and pressed a kiss on his cheek. He was shaking a little.

“You got this!”, she whispered in his ear. “I love you!”

“I love you too, biscuit. Just... don’t let me mess this up!”

“I won’t. But you wouldn’t need me! This is Alec we are talking about. You love him, and everything else is just a formality. This all means nothing if you don’t have the love you share between the both of you.”, she smiled and stepped down from the stage, taking a seat next to Catarina while Raphael had disappeared somewhere.

Isabelle and Alec entered next and Magnus was nervously fidgeting with his rings by then. His fingers were painted with a bright red nail paint to complement his tux. He looked up when he saw movements in front of him and his mind blew off when Alec came into focus. The man wore a black fitted tux and silver shirt, along with a silver pocket square peeking out of his chest pocket. Isabelle’s arm was hooked in his as they walked down the aisle. Magnus felt his eyes lose focus because of tears when he held out his hand for Alec. Isabelle kissed him on his cheek and then took her seat next to Luke.

“You look amazing!”, Alec gasped.

“So do you, Alexander. Isabelle did so well while picking out your suit. The silver color really brings out your shape so well!”, Magnus managed to say beneath his choking voice. He noticed a thin eyeliner over Alec’s eyes and his heart fell stronger than ever in love with his fiancé who was going
to become his husband very soon.

“Are my eyes deceiving me or you are wearing makeup for me, Alexander?” he asked softly, scanning the Alpha’s face. Alec scratched the back of his head and blushed, making Magnus fall harder in love with this boy.

“You liked it so much. How could I not! Isabelle did it for me. She even did a little blush thing on the cheek?” Alec shrugged, waving his fingers pointing at the cheek.

“I don’t deserve you at all... how did I ever?” Magnus sniffed.

“You do. You do. Don’t say that please!” Alec swallowed the lump in his throat.

“You are far too good for me, Alexander. How can I not say it!”, Magnus huffed.

“You are perfect for me too... more than perfect!”, Alec rolled his eyes. “Now, shall we get married? I cannot wait to be your husband Magnus. This wait is killing me.”, he shook his shoulders and huffed out a breath.

“I thought you’d never mention that!”, Magnus whispered, teary-eyed.

They turned their attention to Ragnar who started with the ceremony. Their hands were interlaced with each other and that was enough for them to stay focused without collapsing on the floor with emotions. Ragnar announced that it was time for the rings and Alec and Magnus saw Inaya walking in with a basket of rings. She wore a beautiful white gown with gold embroidery and a floral tiara that complemented her perfectly black and long tresses. They grinned tearful smiles as Raphael guided her to the altar and then picked her in his arm so that she could be a part of the ceremony. Ragnar asked Inaya to give the rings to her fathers and then Raphael took her away to the seat.

“With this ring, I thee wed, and with all I am and all I have, I honor you.”, they repeated the vows one by one and then Ragnar announced them married a couple of vows later.

“You can now kiss your husband”, Ragnar smiled. Alec and Magnus looked at each other, taking in the look in each other’s eyes and then leaned forward for their first kiss as a married couple – as husbands. Magnus’ hands slid up Alec’s back and flattened on his shoulder blades as he pulled Alec close to his chest. Alec’s fingers found their way to Magnus’ lapels and he curled them around it, holding Magnus in position. The feeling of kissing each other wasn’t new to them, but the fact that they were now husbands brought a different zing to this moment. Their lips chased each other against their mouths and sucked and licked every bit of each other – savoring the taste and the after-taste the kiss left. Magnus lifted his hands up to Alec’s neck and pulled him even closer if that was possible. Alec smiled against Magnus’ lips and grazed his teeth around Magnus’ lower lip, plucking it out softly.

Luke held Clary to her chest and rubbed her arm while Isabelle was sniffling her tears onto a tissue. Both the girls were a bag of tears and so was Maryse who was on FaceTime call with Isabelle. They all clapped and cheered for the happy couple and the loudest one came from Inaya who was still in Raphael’s arms. She was so happy to see her fathers finally marry each other and for her to take the name Lightwood-Bane.

“Hey, husband!”, Magnus teased, pulling away from Alec.

“Hey, husband!” Alec sniffed, wrapping Magnus in for a hug. ...
“Inaya, my love... could you please take this to the kitchen counter. It’s your Dad on the phone”, Magnus Lightwood-Bane called out to his seven-year old daughter who was drawing something on her sketchbook. She looked up from the table and ran to her father’s help who was struggling with a few grocery bags. “Look who is here!”, he pointed. Inaya looked up and saw her other father’s sister standing on the doorway.

“Aunt Izzy!”, she squeaked and jumped in her place. She hadn’t seen her since the week before and it was an awfully long time, according to little Inaya. Isabelle grinned and walked in with two full grocery bags. Inaya stepped forward and took a little bag that Magnus had given her and followed her aunt to the kitchen counter.

“Yes, Alexander. I am fine. Everything is under control.”, Magnus scratched his goatee and sighed. This had been his fifth time reminding Alec to calm down in the same phone call. “Isabelle brought me the groceries we needed, I did not have to step out of the house. I swear!”, the man gasped in disbelief trying to explain it to his overanxious husband. His husband was being so overprotective.

“I wonder why Dad went to Miami in the first place, if he couldn’t bear to let Papa stay here alone for even a few hours”, Inaya huffed, looking over her shoulder. “There is not single hour when he doesn’t check up on him!”, she added with a sigh. Her Papa was walking up and down the room, trying to convince her Dad that he was absolutely fine and nothing had happened to him in the hour that he had not called him.

“You know your Dad likes to overthink things.”, Izzy chuckled, taking out the items she had bought. “And now... it’s like Magnus isn’t the one carrying the twins inside him”, she rolled her eyes. Inaya laughed as they high-fived in the air. Alec’s habit of overthinking had become a topic of joke and laughter for Inaya and her aunts. Magnus was wearing a very lose silk kurta to adjust his growing belly and a lose pair of pajamas that seemed very comfortable. After four months of no belly growth in pregnancy, Magnus had started growing rather suddenly in the 5th month. Now, as he was just entering his final trimester, his belly was becoming a huge problem for him and his knees.

“You think he’ll be as finicky if I get a boy or a girl home... or worse, I get pregnant or married?”, Inaya asked, climbing on the bar stool to help Izzy arrange groceries based on which cabinets they should be stored in.

“Oh darling, he’ll be worse!”, Izzy rolled her eyes.

“Do you know when Grandma is coming back? She will be able to scold some sense into Dad... otherwise he is not stopping”, the little girl asked, grabbing a spoon for herself as Izzy opened a new jar of Nutella.

“She is Aunt Clary’s place... helping her sort out some stuff. She’ll be back by midnight”, Izzy informed. Maryse had been staying with Magnus and Alec in their loft in Brooklyn to aid with Magnus’ pregnancy. His mother’s presence not only pacified Alec’s anxiety of leaving Magnus alone when he went out for work every day but also was a huge support because the two men knew little to nothing about pregnancy.

“Hello, ladies... what are we discussing here? Inaya, are you done with your homework sweetie? Mrs Wilson said that she needed to see the complete thing tomorrow?”, Magnus reached the kitchen counter and placed his hands on it to catch his breath.

“Yes, I am almost done, Papa”, Inaya smiled.
“We were talking about how your husband is not at all anxious about leaving you alone here in this condition and how he doesn’t call every hour.”, Isabelle rolled her eyes and passed on a glass of water to Magnus and asked him to sit down on the stool. Magnus drank it thirstily and then scoffed.

“Don’t make fun of my husband. He is just worried about me and the babies...”, he added, arching a brow.

“I hate how sappy you are for each other!!”, Isabelle scrunched her nose and continued to put the items in their locations. “Are you hungry though? I could make you guys some soup while we wait for Mom to come!”, she offered, upping herself on her toes to slide the flour packet on the top shelf of the cabinet.

“NO!”, Magnus and Inaya squeaked in unison. Isabelle’s cooked food usually did more bad than good.

“Fine”, Isabelle huffed. “By the way, how long as Alec been in Miami? I don’t remember but he seems to have left ages ago”

“Twenty-two days”, Magnus mumbled, clearly annoyed by how much he missed him. “Two more days, Izzy... two more days and my daughter and I can finally see him.”, he whined, digging his own spoon in the Nutella.

“Papa, I’ll go and continue my assignment. See you later, okay?”, Inaya leaned forward on the kitchen counter and dropped a kiss on Magnus’ cheek before jumping down from her stool. She ran back to the living room and engrossed herself in the sketchbook that she was supposed to submit to Mrs Wilson tomorrow.

“Clary and I found this amazing box sale right outside Queens. They sell like really good stuff at half the price. Once you’ve popped out my little nephews or nieces or both, we should totally raid that shop one day and buy everything!!”, Isabelle continued, tapping the kitchen counter with her nails.

“I haven’t been outside in a month, Isabelle. And I don’t know if my life will ever be the same again.”, Magnus scrunched his nose, rubbing his free palm over his protruding belly. “I mean, I am not complaining... but it would have been so nice if I could just roam around in fresh air. Feel like a normal person”

“You are a normal person”, Izzy deadpanned. “But... the mundanes might not share this opinion... plus, it is very cold outside Magnus. It is not safe”

“You sound like your brother”

“I take offence in that because I am not that stern and boring”, she widened her eyes. “But both of us love you... and want what’s best for you... so yeah, we might sound similar”, she smiled. Magnus rolled his eyes and continued eating the Nutella. Izzy noticed his sadness and walked over to wrap her arms around his shoulder. “Let your husband come back. We’ll figure something out together, alright?”, she whispered.

Magnus patted Izzy’s fingers that rested on his shoulder and smiled.

“I have to go now... but Mom will be here soon. Will you and Inaya be alright?”

“Yes, darling. Give my love to biscuit okay? Tell her she needs to come and visit me soon. It’s been really long”, he stood up and walked Izzy to the door. “Inaya, Aunt Izzy is leaving. Come say bye to her...”, Magnus called. Inaya looked up from her book and smiled.
“Bye Aunt Izzy”, she waved. 

“Bye bye sweetheart. Bye Magnus. Please take care of yourself, alright? Keep me or Clary updated!” Isabelle returned the wave and then kissed Magnus on the cheek before she left. “It will all be okay very soon” 

Magnus shut the door and took a deep breath. It was one of those moments when he realized just his pregnancy meant. Rubbing his hand over his belly, he threw his head back on the door and closed his eyes. Their year had begun with Magnus and Alec visiting an infant ward at the hospital for distributing Christmas gifts. Their eyes fell on the newborns crying in the ward and both of them realized just how much they were ready for this. It had been three years since their wedding and almost seven years since Magnus had been forced into artificial insemination. The scar of being wronged by his own father was always gonna stay with Magnus but he had moved on, emotionally and physically. He had put all those bad memories behind him and especially not let it affect his relationship with Alec. 

The days following the hospital visit saw Alec and Magnus discussing the technicalities of this thought they had. If Magnus were to get pregnant, he would have to take a break from Four Seasons and leave the loft they had so generously given to Magnus. There was a strong chance that the Hotel might not give him the sabbatical and he would have to resign. But that also meant that Alec couldn’t take up outstation projects for at least five months of the pregnancy and then the year following it so that he could help raise the baby with Magnus. Going over all of that and figuring it out took another few months or so but one night, they just decided to let it go. It was a date night for them and Izzy and Clary had agreed to watch Inaya over at their place in Queens. Magnus and Alec decorated their entire loft with candles and had three-course meal, courtesy of the Four Seasons. 

As the evening dissolved into the night and their blood diluted with alcohol, they decided that whatever it would become... everything would be worth it. They’ll make sure of it. 

Alec and Magnus stumbled into their bedroom, lips not leaving each other’s face. Magnus’ hands trailed up the collar of Alec’s shirt and he started unbuttoning it. It was hasty and messy, and he giggled when his hands slipped off from the button because Alec almost ate his lips up within his own. He pulled the flaps of the shirt up and then pushed it off Alec’s shoulder. Alec’s hands pulled away from Magnus’ blouse as he got rid of his shirt that fell on the wooden flooring of their loft. When he looked back up from the floor, Magnus was gazing at him with slightly drunk eyes and a very pink and swollen lips. He felt giddy when he stepped back in Magnus’ vicinity and picked him off his feet. Magnus’ legs found their way around his hips and he threw his head back to give Alec access to his neck. This was one of those days when Magnus hated having such a big bedroom in an even bigger loft. 

Alec dug his fingertips in Magnus’ back as he carried the Omega to the bed. Magnus’ fingers were entangled in his messy hair, pulling them via their shafts. Alec gently placed Magnus on the bed and climbed on top of him, placing his hands on either side of the Omega’s body. The entire room was dark and the only light coming in was through the glass of their loft on the top floor of Four Seasons. Magnus’ caramel skin was shining in the shades of silver and blue against the moonlight. The Alpha used his lips to trace the bone structure of Magnus’ face, making a clockwise circle on it. He kissed the side of his chin and then trailed his wet lips to his cheek bones, and then to the temple and forehead, and back to the temple on the other side as he went down in a full-circle. Magnus held Alec’s body close by curling his fingers around his waist. When his lips pulled away from his lover’s face, he sighed at how flawless Magnus was, and how lucky Alec had been.
He lifted one of his hands and placed it on the side of Magnus’ neck, gently brushing his bobbing Adam’s apple with his thumb. Magnus closed his eyes and moaned. He was getting warmer and harder. Alec lowered himself on Magnus and pressed their lips together again. He groped for Magnus’ hands on his sides and then stretched them apart, parallel to the headboard of the bed. He slid his finger through the slits of Magnus’ and dug their entangled hands in the mattress. Magnus swallowed and closed his fingers around Alec’s. The kisses became faster and stronger as their passion grew. Alec bared his teeth and started trailing his way down to Magnus’ chest, and then his beautifully crafted abs, kissing each one of them with care and love. His hand found his way to Magnus’ thigh and he stroked it, getting closer to the Omega’s hardened member.

“Touch me, please Alexander”, Magnus requested and closed his eyes. Alec reached the rim of Magnus’ member and pulled his lips away from the Omega’s skin. Magnus’ eyes were tightly shut, and his head was digging in the pillow. He was waiting for Alec to touch him. Alec spread the Omega’s legs apart and settled between them on his knees. His fingers curled around Magnus’ cock and Alec started to make careful and passionate strokes around it. “Alexander”, Magnus moaned, tipping his chin up slightly. Alec smiled and bent forward to take the cock in his mouth when Magnus stopped him.

“Open me up, Alec”, he gasped... unable to make a coherent statement while Alec’s fingers stroked him so lovingly. The Alpha’s lips curved into a wider grin and he momentarily parted from his lover to grab a condom and lube. He returned to the space between Magnus legs and slid his palms beneath his butt to lift it up. Magnus folded his knees and jerked himself up to give Alec access to his hole. The Alpha lubed his fingers and reached the rim of the hole. Magnus squealed softly when Alec’s fingertips touched him right there. He lubricated and licked the area around before pushing one finger inside. Magnus arched his back and gasped slightly as Alec quickly inserted his second finger inside to widen his hole. He found his breath hitching in the throat and his lungs gasping for air.

Alec’s third finger quickly followed the first two and soon, Magnus’ hole was big and inviting. Alec used the soft pads of his fingertips to gently massage Magnus’ canal and keep him dilated. He pulled the fingers out after a while and then tore the condom packet.

“No...”, Magnus swallowed, holding the condom packet with his hand and throwing it away from Alec’s reach.

“What?” Alec’s eyes widened.

“I need you inside me, Alec...”, Magnus moaned. The Alpha looked up and saw glistening in Magnus’ eyes. They were twinkling in the night light and small drops of tears were forming on the sides.

“Magnus you...”, Alec licked his lips, still unable to process.

“I am ready for you, Alexander...”, Magnus’ lips tried to tip into a smile, but he was too excited for it.

“Are you sure about this?”

“We talked about this... didn’t we Alec? Hush now”, Magnus sighed with a sad smile. Yes, they had. They finally had. “Now... get in before I close up...”, Magnus crumpled the bedshead with his fingers and closed his eyes. Alec was dazed when he stood up on his knees and pulled one of Magnus’ legs up and apart to give his cock better access. He lubed his skin and the tip of Magnus’ hole, just in case.
Aligning their bodies together wasn’t a very hard task. Magnus had given him full access to himself. “I need you to open your eyes Magnus.”, Alec instructed, feeling the burn of his Alpha rage under his skin. He could feel his emotional high coming soon. “Look at me, please” Magnus’ throat bobbed, and he opened his eyes a second later.

Alec fixed his gaze on Magnus’ eyes as he opened up his hole again with a single finger and lubed it slightly. He placed his cock at the entrance of the hole and then curled his fingers around Magnus’ thigh. “I love you”, he whispered.

“I love you too, Alexander”, Magnus smiled.

The cock slid inside Magnus’ hole and the Omega’s body trembled a little. Magnus had felt Alec inside him a million times before now, but this felt ethereal and different. He flattened his palm on the bedsheet and stabled himself. The Alpha’s thighs were straight up from his knees and he was holding Magnus’ leg up in the air, stretching it away from his body. He lowered himself as the cock dug deeper inside Magnus’ hole until it found what it was looking for. When his gaze fell back on Magnus’ he could see the same realization in Magnus’ eyes too. Magnus raised his lower body as Alec started thrusting – slowly first so that they fell into a proper rhythm. With every thrust, his cock adjusted itself inside Magnus and prepared for what was about to happen to them. He used his other free hand to grab Magnus’ member and gently stroked it... increasing the excitement in both the two wolves.

The thrusting that had begun slowly picked up pace and soon, Magnus and Alec’s bodies were in a rapid rhythm as Alec rode his husband. Their eyes never left each other. It was the only thing shining in the moonlight. Magnus closed his eyes as he felt his orgasm building in his body and he expelled it on Alec’s hips soon thereafter. Alec felt Magnus’ warm fluid on himself and he thrusted harder until he felt his eyes losing focus of everything around him. He could see Magnus as if he was looking through a pinhole.

“Magnus”, he gasped, getting deeper inside. His cock got locked in place and started swelling up.

“Alexander...”, Magnus gasped as he felt Alec’s cock swelling inside him. He could feel himself expanding and the feeling ran a shiver down his spine.

“Magnus!”, Alec raised his voice and felt himself losing control to his Alpha instincts. Magnus saw Alec’s eyes change into his Alpha red rage as he grew inside him. Magnus knew this feeling. He had been through this before but now he could feel the exhilaration and excitement that he deserved the first time round. His father had taken away the chance to be able to feel it for the first time with Alec inside him, but he was here now... getting knotted inside by Alec. And this time, it was his choice. It was just as beautiful. It took a couple of minutes for Alec to get there and he kept thrusting, building up his orgasm and soon enough, the Omega felt the lock and knot tightening inside him.

Magnus shut his eyes when he finally felt it happen. Tears streamed down from the side of his head as Alec gave a loud groan muffled into his wolf growl and emptied himself inside. Magnus felt the passion that seeped through his veins when the contents reached him, every part of him. The knot didn’t loosen up. Alec took a deep breath to collect himself and then thrusted again with everything he had. This would leave a terrible sore in the morning. A sane part of Magnus’ mind thought. The next orgasm didn’t take very long, and Alec emptied himself again inside Magnus while the man just relaxed.

When he pulled back this time, he dropped on his knees, slumping his body in exhaustion. His hands reached Magnus’ thighs and he kept stroking them... gently. Magnus relaxed into the mattress when the knot finally loosened half an hour later and Alec pulled himself out, dropping on the side with exhaustion.
Alec landed in New York that evening with a grin on his face. He had returned 2 days before he was supposed to, and he couldn’t wait to surprise his husband and daughter. He booked himself and Uber and texted his mother to stay with Isabelle and Clary at their place so that he and Magnus could spend some time together. He picked up a bouquet of roses on the way and then jumped the stairs reach his loft. He had spare keys to the apartment and when he unlocked the door and opened it, Inaya was drawing something on the table and watching her favorite cartoon on the TV. When she looked up and saw her father coming, she squeaked in joy, but Alec lifted his finger to his mouth and asked her to shut up because he didn’t want her father to know about it yet.

“Hey, my love. How are you? Oh my God you’ve grown taller than the last time I saw you…”, he whispered as she ran into his arms and gave him a kiss on his cheek. Her hands were colored in crayons.

“Hey, dad. I am good… how are you?”, she whispered back. And then she paused, trying to understand why they were whispering in the first place. And her tiny and smart mind realized that a second later. “Are you going to surprise Papa?”, her big brown eyes widened at how exciting the thought was.

“Yes... I even brought him his favorite roses!”, Alec wiggled his brows, showing off the bouquet to his daughter.

“He will love it so much. Hurry and hide behind the wall. He was in the bathroom when I last checked!”, she told him, pulling him against the wall that separated their bedroom from the living room. “Do you want me to go and check on him?”

“No sweetheart, you can do your work. I’ll go and talk to your father myself, okay? And we’ll come and get you…”, Alec winked.

“Goodluck. I am so glad you’re back. Papa misses you so much!”, Inaya exclaimed.

“I missed him too... and even you!”

“I missed you too dad!”, she squeezed his hand and then walked away to her coffee table to resume the work. Alec poked his head out of the wall and saw Magnus standing with his back facing Alec and his head dropped down. He was right outside the bathroom door, standing on the rug to dry his feet out. He was checking his phone that was put on charge in the night-stand. Alec toed his shoes off and tiptoed inside. He held his breath in his chest and stealthily reached behind Magnus.

Magnus scratched his brow because he was surely missing something from the set of prescribed supplements... and Inaya wasn’t responding to his summons either. She must probably be in her room where his voice wouldn’t reach. With an intention to go back to the living room and get the medicine prescription himself, he turned around on his heels and lifted his gaze up to start walking when he registered another presence in his room. He yelped and stumbled back on his heels, momentarily losing his balance. “Alexander!!”, he gasped, widening his eyes as the rug he was standing on slipped below his feet. He couldn’t believe that Alec was here... in front of him, two days before he was supposed to be.

Alec saw Magnus lose his balance and jumped forward to scoop Magnus around his waist and stabilize him on the ground. Magnus shut his eyes and grabbed Alec’s other wrist that was holding
the rose bouquet in his hand. Alec held Magnus firmly, pulling him back on his feet and that is when he saw him for the first time in a month. When Alec had left for Miami over a month ago, Magnus was not showing signs of pregnancy apart from the morning sickness and food cravings. His belly was also perfectly in shape. But now, there was a sizeable protrusion and Magnus had fuller cheeks and chin. He looked slightly plump but adorably so. Alec scanned Magnus’ body and the bump was so huge – he wondered how Magnus managed to walk and move around with that growing out of his body. Magnus opened his eyes and tearfully grabbed Alec’s neck for a tight hug. It was difficult to hug Magnus properly because the bump came in the way, but Alec was so overwhelmed by everything. He caressed the back of Magnus’ hair, moving his palm all the down to his butt.

“You’re here early!”, Magnus sobbed, wiping his tears as he pulled away from his husband. Alec smiled and pressed his lips onto Magnus, humming against his lips. Oh, he had missed kissing Magnus almost so much. Alec wiped off his husband’s tears with his thumbs and cupped his jaw. Magnus was hiccupping with sobs.

“I am here... stop crying”, Alec kissed each of his cheeks and then lifted his lips to Magnus’ eyelids, planting a kiss on both of them. Magnus curled his fingers around his wrist and dropped his gaze to the ground. This pregnancy had made him a bag of emotions, but he was so happy to see his husband back that he really didn’t care about the whole crying thing. He found Alec’s lips once again before the man finally pulled back.

“How?”, Magnus gasped, scanning Alec’s eyes.

“I told Jem I had to go see my husband... and that it couldn’t wait any further. So, he made it happen!”, Alec grinned. He grabbed Magnus’ hands and guided him to the bed so that he could sit down and be comfortable instead of weakening his knees with the weight of the growing babies inside him.

Magnus watched Alec hold him as he ushered the pregnant Omega to the bed. Magnus leaned back instinctively and parted his legs to make himself comfortable where he was sitting. Alec couldn’t believe his eyes. Magnus looked so different from his memory and he couldn’t not stare at him... and that bump where their kids were growing and becoming a reality. Magnus bit his lip when he saw Alec’s lingering gaze on his bump. He grabbed Alec’s hand and flattened it on his belly.

“Do you want to feel them?”, he whispered. Alec looked back and forth between the belly and Magnus’ eyes and nodded.

“Yeah?”, he widened his eyes in shock.

“They have started moving. I can feel them inside, Alexander. They keep moving a little bit... and I think they fight with each other too... typical siblings... I tell you. I am sure we’re going to have a tough time handling them once they’re born”, Magnus grinning, moving Alec’s palms around his belly in careful strokes.

“You look so beautiful, Magnus”, Alec sniffed, trying to hide his tears behind his smile.

“I am gaining weight like anything, Alexander”, Magnus whined.

“I don’t care!”, Alec shook his head and wiped his dripping nose. He leaned forward and pressed a kiss on Magnus’ temple. “I love you and you are beautiful!!”

“I love you too, darling”, Magnus replied, instantly. He kept his gaze on Alec’s face while the man felt the movement of the babies inside Magnus’ womb. “I can’t believe you’re actually here... and it is not a dream!”
“I am...”, Alec assured the man with a quick kiss. “And I am not going anywhere now... ever”, he assured. Magnus felt tears spill out of his eyes and he cursed his hormonal self. Why was he triggered so easily in this state? Alec wiped the tears away and then helped Magnus stand up again because he had to go and get something from the living room. Alec insisted that he would bring it for him, but Magnus said that he liked doing these things on his own so that his body still had movement.

Alec got off the phone with his mother and returned to the dining table where Magnus was helping Inaya serve food for herself. Alec pressed his lips on Magnus’ temple and pulled out the chair next to his daughter. They hadn’t had dinner together in almost a month. Inaya gesture Magnus to stop serving her coz her plate was full and Alec pulled out the chair for Magnus to sit comfortably. The man held on to his belly when he bent down and found the chair.

“We haven’t had dinner together in so long, dad!”, Inaya exclaimed, picking up her fork and knife. Magnus smiled as he looked between his husband and daughter and served the food on his plate after Alec was done.

“Yes, we haven’t...and I am not going anywhere for a long time now, so you we’ll be eating together every day!”, Alec replied. “How is your school?”

“Eeeh... don’t ask about it please!”, Inaya shuddered.

Magnus stuffed a vegetable piece in his mouth and scoffed at the conversation. Off-late, Inaya had taken an extreme dislike to school for some reason and wouldn’t tell him about it – after assuring him that it wasn’t anything serious.

“Why?”

“Because I hate growing up... and the teachers keep giving homework. It is not even fair, dad. How much can my hands write in a day!”, Inaya huffed. Magnus leaned towards his husband and found his ear.

“She has taken after you, my love”, he chastised.

“I never complained about school”, Alec deadpanned.

“You cannot vouch for it... and Izzy tells me otherwise. Actually, both Isabelle and Maryse. So, I am going to take their word over yours”, he winked. Alec rolled his eyes and focused his gaze back to his plate.

“Papa... when the babies are born, can I take them out to play with me? I have told everyone at school that I am going to have new siblings very soon... they are all so excited...”, she popped another question out of nowhere.

“After they get a little older, of course you can! I am sure they will love to play with their older sister...”, Magnus smiled. He served a little more pasta in Inaya’s plate, against her complains and asked her to finish it.

“I cannot wait!”, she wiggled her brows. Alec smiled and looked at Magnus when he saw the man thinking about something as he chewed on his food. Suddenly, he was not a part of this conversation anymore. Alec felt Magnus drifting into his thoughts and made a mental note to talk to his husband.

Once they were all done with their dinner, Inaya helped Alec keep the dishes away for washing,
much to Magnus’ protest and then retreated to her room after kissing her fathers goodnight. Magnus returned to his room after helping Inaya put on her night clothes while Alec stayed to clean up the kitchen for the night so that Magnus wouldn’t have to stress too much. It felt so good to be back home to the familiarity of everything and doing things for his husband and his daughter – the one thing he loved above everything else.

He went on to check on Inaya after he was done sweeping the kitchen counter and found that she had already fallen asleep, snuggled to her favorite polar bear soft toy. Tugging her in her blanket and pressing a kiss on her forehead, Alec gently closed the door and walked back into his room where the sound of the shower running told that Magnus was in the bathroom, clearing his mind with a hot water shower. He knocked on the door and mumbled against the wood, his warm breath brushing against his own face, “Magnus, you alright in there? Do you want some help?”

“I am okay, Alexander. You can come and join me if you want to. I am just taking a hot water shower before we go to sleep...”, he answered back. The Alpha closed his eyes for a second and dropped his forehead onto the wooden frame of the bathroom door. He wasn’t sure if he had done something to change Magnus’ mood... or if he could maybe fix it for his husband. Thinking about all the possible scenarios, Alec turned the doorknob and entered the bathroom that was foggy and warm inside. He could see Magnus’ body frame on the other side of the translucent curtain and the muffled sounds of showers running.

“You sure you’re ok, Magnus? I saw you zone out at dinner-time as well? Care to share your thoughts with me, please...”, Alec cracked his fingers and shifted his weight between his feet, scanning Magnus' body from across the curtain.

“I am just thinking something... or trying to clear my thoughts... I don’t know really! Do you want to come in?”, he asked. Alec sensed the anxiety in Magnus’ voice and pulled his shirt out after Magnus pulled the curtains, inviting him in. He discarded his jeans and undergarments and then pulled the curtain to step inside the panel with his husband. Magnus was fully naked, standing below the hot water shower. Alec could see his protruding belly and how huge it actually was. Magnus’ hands were crossed on his chest and his head was thrown back as he felt the stream of warm water running down his face. Alec stepped closer to the center of the shower panel and continued rubbing his hands up Magnus’ arms, gently comforting him until and after he was ready to share his thoughts with him.

“What is going on in your mind? Would you be okay sharing it with me?”, he whispered, his nuances asking Magnus for his permission. The Omega gently opened his eyes and swallowed the lump down his throat when he felt his husband’s hands rubbing his arms. Alec’s hairs were stuck to his forehead and his lips were parted to breathe under the stream of water. Magnus turned around now facing the tiles instead of Alec and pulled his hands around his abdomen until his back was pressed onto Alec’s hairy chest. The Alpha stepped closer and nestled their heads together and placing his palms on to Magnus’ abdomen.

“I will be a good father to these kids, right?”, Magnus sniffed, leaning back to find comfort in Alec’s arms.

“Yes! Of course, yes!”, Alec gasped. “You’ll be a wonderful father. You already are one, Magnus. Look at Inaya... you’re the best father she could have got? I couldn’t have raised her to become so beautiful and kind without you by my side. Why are you doubting yourself like this?”, he exclaimed hastily, a little taken aback by the sudden doubt on his skills. “Did something happen when I was away? Do you want to talk about it?”

“No... no!”, Magnus choked a little. “I just... this pregnancy brought back some memories it shouldn’t have and I... I don’t want to become Asmodeus. I don’t want to fail Inaya and our unborn
kids like my father did”

“How Magnus, you’ll NEVER be him!!”, Alec almost raised his voice. He turned Magnus around and cupped his jaw. “You can never be him... that is not who you are. You can never fail Inaya... or our kids. That is not you.”, he pressed their lips together for a moment, pressing his lips to his neck. “Trust me!”

“I do... Alexander!”, Magnus held onto Alec’s shoulder after he pulled away from him.

“You and I are going to be fine, Magnus.”, Alec assured again. He dropped his palm to Magnus’ belly and rubbed it, making circles on it. “They will be fine...”, he dropped on his knees and pressed a kiss on the protruding belly, bracketing it between his palms. “The very fact that you questioned yourself makes you different from Asmodeus. You have something he never had. And that is compassion and your power to love someone unconditionally. You are the best father Inaya could have asked for... don’t forget that!”, Alec added. “And of course, we’ll have times when we’ll struggle with fatherhood, but we’ll figure it out together okay! Whatever the problems are, we will face it together” Magnus cupped Alec’s jaw and stroked his cheekbones, a smile beginning to appear on his lips. Alec stood up and kissed Magnus right before the man grabbed his bathrobe and stepped out of the shower to let Alec clean himself after he was done. He came out into their room and changed into a lose pair of pajamas and a night kurta that allowed his body to move comfortably despite the restrictions.

He was standing in front of the mirror, ready to apply anti-stretch marks oil on his belly, when Alec came out after his shower wearing a pair of pajama pants and nothing on his chest. The Alpha grabbed the bottle from him and poured the oil onto his palm instead. Magnus smiled and lifted his t-shirt giving the man access to his body. Alec rubbed the oil and gently massaged Magnus’ skin until the entire oil was seeped through into the skin. Magnus pulled his t-shirt back down and proceeded to the bed with Alec on his heels. He picked up a muscle relaxant oil from the table and asked Magnus to lie down on the bed so that he could massage his knees and thighs. Magnus leaned back on the bed and watched as Alec took his legs on his lap and massaged them, removing the knots and tension until Magnus started drifting off to sleep. His legs and feet had swollen up a little because of the weight that was put on them the whole day long. Magnus patted the empty space next to him and asked Alec to join him after he could barely keep his eyes open. He had been sleeping without his husband for so long and did not want to go another night without having him in his arms.

“I have missed sleeping next to you... and then waking up in your arms”, Magnus sighed, letting out a deep breath.

“I missed you too”, Alec kissed his temple. “You will find me here when you wake up. I swear. Now, go to sleep. You need to rest”

His hand found his way under Magnus’ shirt and Alec started making comforting strokes on Magnus’ belly until the man started snoring in his sleep. Magnus hands were curled around Alec’s arm, keeping it close to his chest protectively. He turned off all the lights in the room except the night lamp next to Magnus because he had started wanting a little light while sleeping after he had gotten pregnant.

The next day, Alec left early to do something that he didn’t tell Magnus saying it was a surprise for the Omega. This was right after Maryse came back to Clary and Izzy’s place and dragged Magnus
into doing some light yoga with her. Magnus hated doing the aasans when he could barely sit with feet folded together. Over the last month, Maryse and Magnus had gotten really close to each other because of their love for Alec and Maryse’s constant support during Magnus’ pregnancy.

“When I was pregnant with Isabelle, I could not stop eating ice-cream. And I used to hate ice-cream before I got pregnant!”, the Lightwood matriarch sighed. They were sitting on the couch, sharing a tub of ice-cream as a part of their brunch. Magnus scoffed, licking the backside of the spoon.

“And Alec... he was just two years old then... and he would make his father take him out for walks in the forests because he loved them so much because I couldn’t do that in my condition... my second pregnancy was much more complicated than the first one”, she sighed, remembering that time.

“I would be disappointed if you don’t have some cute baby pictures of my husband being the adorable two-year old he was...”, Magnus dug his spoon back in the tub and scooped out a little ice-cream, stuffing it into his mouth.

“Oh, I do. So many of them Magnus. And you can tell that that child would grow up to be the grumpiest face ever because Alec never really smiled for photographs. All he did was make annoyed faces at both his parents. I never really thought that he was capable of smiling until Isabelle was born.”, Maryse popped her eyes open and Magnus could understand how precious that memory was for the Lightwood matriarch and he felt a little jealous that he was not there to share it with her and that all his memories of his mother were now tainted with whatever had happened a few years ago when they were very rightfully executed for their actions. “Maybe I will send all the photographs your way when I go back to Idris after my grandchildren are born”, she tapped her thighs, excitedly.

Magnus swallowed, his smile disappearing from his face. “I am really sorry you have to be away from home... and Alec’s father because of me”, he mumbled. Maryse shifted closer to her son-in-law and hugged his shoulder.

“I am so glad I could be here to help you and Alec through this. Even Robert thinks the same. He wouldn’t have let me stay there in Idris anyway. You are as much of my son as Alec is, Magnus. And sons don’t thank their mothers like this, okay?”, she assured. Magnus felt his eyes sting with tears and he looked away.

“Yeah...!”, he replied, mumbling the answer. “Alexander, Isabelle and Max are really fortunate to have you and Consul as his parents”, he bit his lip. “You are wonderful parents, both of you!”, he turned to Maryse and squeezed her hand. Maryse placed her other hand over his and patted it lovingly.

“Now, come on... let me check you”, she stood up and gestured Magnus to lie down on the couch on his back. Magnus lifted his feet up from the ground and spread it where Maryse was previously sitting. He pulled his t-shirt up and Maryse crouched down next to him. She placed her hand on his belly button and closed her eyes. “Have you been applying that oil I gave you?”, she asked, taking a deep breath.

“Yes”, Magnus looked up at the ceiling. Maryse extended her other hand and placed it on Magnus’ forehead.

“The heartbeats are steady and strong... that’s good!”`, she informed. “Have they started kicking, Magnus?”

“Yes, they have”, Magnus found his lips curving into a smile at the thought.

“Everything seems fine”, she opened her eyes and pulled Magnus’ shirt down to cover his belly
again. “You and the kids are both doing really well”, she held on to his hands as Magnus sat up on the couch, dropping his feet back on the carpet. He grabbed the remote and turned the television on while Maryse excused herself to make some porridge and lunch for Magnus and herself.

Magnus was confused about Alec’s surprise for him. Maryse had asked him to get ready by 6:30 because Alec had instructed her so. It was very difficult for Magnus to pick out something to wear in this condition. Especially because they did not really make many maternity clothes for men. So, Maryse and Clary shopped for a lot of lose kurtas and t-shirts that were two-three size larger than what Magnus normally wore in order for him to be able to breathe in his clothes. He opened his wardrobe and picked out a pair of skinny black jeans and a satin maroon embroidered shirt that had exquisite lacework in the neck area. He lifted his hair up in a quiff and sprayed it with gold streaks.

“I don’t remember the last time I got ready like this! Is Alexander taking me out somewhere?”, Magnus scoffed as Maryse walked into his room to help him if he needed. He was applying kohl to his eyes. Maryse licked her lips because she was under strict instructions from Alec to not disclose the surprise. He picked up his lip color and applied a light coat on his lips to complete his look for the night.

“Shall we?”, Maryse asked when she saw Magnus picking up his coat and throwing it over his shoulder. He nodded and followed her out. Clary had taken Inaya for a sleepover at her place and it was going to be just Magnus and Alec tonight. Magnus and Alec had an elevator for themselves because their loft was the most expensive one in the building. The elevator opened into the parking spot where Alec had left their Volvo for Magnus to drive in. There was no way Magnus would run into a mundane and have to explain his growing belly to a mundane who was oblivious to their world. Maryse sat on the passenger’s seat of Alec’s Volvo and Magnus turned on the ignition, putting his seat belt on. She fed the address Alec had given on the GPS, and they drove out of their apartment building. The address was a warehouse on the harbor that Luke owned. It was different from the one that had Silva Haven, but it was a property of the wolf pack in Brooklyn. Maryse ushered Magnus through the door of the warehouse and walked out to go back home and let the two celebrate their time together.

Magnus looked around the dark warehouse, holding his belly out of habit. He could smell mud and grass around and the stars were twinkling above. There was a sweet scent of sea coming from one end and this was unusual because it meant that the warehouse opened into a beach or a dock on the other side. “Hey!”, he heard Alec towards his right. Magnus snapped his neck and saw Alec standing under a tiny flickering bulb. He wore a satin blue shirt over leather pants. Magnus gasped. This had to be Isabelle’s work. He had a thick lining of kohl around his hazel eyes and maybe a tad bit of glitter? Magnus widened his eyes when the flakes of glitter dazzled against the light.

“You are wearing makeup, Alexander!”, Magnus gasped, walking closer to his husband and scanning his face. Alec looked down at the ground and blushed – a grin spreading wide on his face.

“I had to make it special for you...”, he managed to say, biting his lower lip and looking away from the Omega to hide his creeping blush. Magnus reached out to grab the loops of Alec’s pants and pulled him closer.

“You continue to surprise me...”, he looped his hands around Alec’s neck and gently grazed their lips together for a soft kiss.

“In good ways I hope?”, Alec rubbed his hands up Magnus’ back and let their face squish onto each other.
“The best ways...”, Magnus hummed against his lover’s lips. Alec reached out to the lever on the wall with one hand and pulled it down, illuminating the entire warehouse. Magnus wrapped his arms around Alec’s waist turned his shoulder to one side to inspect the place that was now visible to him. “Luke and his warehouses...”, he rolled his eyes and scoffed. Alec bent forward and kissed Magnus on his contoured cheekbone as the man continued to inspect the area and how beautifully it had been decorated.

The warehouse was lit around a sandy pathway with fairy lights. “You haven’t been out in the open in so long... so I thought we could take a walk here... where no one will bother us or ask questions we can’t answer...”, Alec informed. Magnus smiled and pressed a loud and big mouthed kiss on Alec’s chin. “And... then we could have dinner by the sea...”, he scratched the back of his neck nervously.

“You spoil me, Alexander”, Magnus scoffed, dropped his temple on Alec’s shoulder, while reveling on how beautiful this whole setup was and how much of an effort his husband has made for him. ‘I really don’t return these favors or plan these surprises for you... so you have to tone down a little so that my boring ass can keep up with Alexander Lightwood the Great!’”, he added. Alec’s chest was perpendicular to his body and his arms were wrapped around his chest. Magnus slid his other hand around Alec’s waist and kissed him again. He looked up at his husband’s face that was shining and dazzling with all the glitter on it. It had almost been a decade of knowing Alec, but his beautiful face still melted Magnus’ heart as if it were the first time he was laying his eyes on the Alpha.

“This is no competition, honey. You love me so much every day that I can continue to plan these surprises for the rest of my life. You don’t have to keep up with me because there’s nothing to keep up with”, Alec was looking around the warehouse and his eyes twinkled against the fairy lights. Magnus watched him observe everything to see if the preparations were in order. His _overthinking_ husband. He scoffed in his thoughts and lifted his other hand to clear Alec’s hairs of his forehead and brush them back.

Alec swallowed and dropped his gaze on Magnus who was already staring at him. His cheeks flushed when he realized that his husband had been observing him and his nervous anxiety for a few moments now. He closed the distance between them with a kiss and then bobbed their noses together for an eskimo kiss. They laced their hands together and Alec ushered Magnus towards the pavement. They removed their shows and placed it on a stand that was very strategically placed right outside the path.

“I still can’t believe you did all this for me. This place is beautiful.”, Magnus shook his head in astonishment, sliding an arm around Alec’s waist. The Alpha smiled and dropped another kiss on the side of Magnus’ head. Their walk was slow and comfortable to accommodate Magnus’ reduced pace.

“Inaya helped with the decorations. She was very excited when I told her I was going to take her Papa out for a dinner date.”, Alec pointed towards the fairy lights and pressed his lips to Magnus’ head.

“How did we get so lucky with our little girl!”, Magnus smiled, thinking about their daughter who had been nothing short of a blessing in their lives ever since they had adopted her a little over three years ago.

“Both of us owe you our happiness, Magnus. We are the ones who got lucky, Mr Lightwood-Bane”, Alec whispered. He could feel the cool sea breeze hitting his face and the sounds of waves crashing on the shore. “Whatever we are today, whatever our daughter is growing up to become... it is all because we have you to look up to... your values, your experience... everything”, he added. Magnus
sniffed off his emotions and dropped his head on Alec’s shoulder.

“I owe you my life... so it is only fair”, Magnus shrugged.

Alec pulled the man closer. They hadn’t thought about Asmodeus in years but like the remnant scars on Alec’s body, the dead man had incurred some scars in both Magnus and his mind and no matter how hard they tried to put it behind them, it was going to come and haunt them, every time they got a little too happy with something! He wished for a time when Magnus’ dead father would stop bothering them, and maybe... one day that time would come. One day in the future, they would look back at their happiness and the thought of Asmodeus wouldn’t cross their mind. “Alexander?”, Magnus shook his husband slightly when he saw him drifting into thoughts.

Alec blinked and plastered a smile on his face. “I am fine”, he whispered.

“I love this place”, Magnus took a deep breath and disentangled their hands. He stepped ahead into the sand and tipped his chin up to look at the sky that was twinkling with stars. Taking a deep whiff of fresh air, Magnus curved his lips into a smile. “The kids and I would like to say thank you dad!”, he turned and quirked at his husband. Alec scratched the back of his neck and chuckled.

Magnus lifted his hands and made grabby gestures towards him. Alec stuffed one hand in his pocket and reached out with his other to hold Magnus. They laced their hands together and walked ahead on the lighted path until Magnus could see the waves crashing on the shore. The warehouse opened into a small beach where a patio was set up with dinner table under it.

“I love it!”, Magnus hummed. “And... I love you”, he turned and captured Alec’s lips in for a kiss before they could proceed to dinner. Alec escorted Magnus to his chair and helped the man settle down before he went to his own seat.

... 

>>> 3 months later >>>

Alec rushed to the infirmary after he received a text about Magnus going into labor from his mother who was with him at the time. He had left for work that day as per his usual schedule and it was almost lunch when the text from his mother came in the middle of a meeting about the winter editions of the magazine and Alec left everything to Jem before rushing out to the infirmary in Chinatown where Andre Abbott was going to take care of Magnus’ delivery and the safety of his unborn kids. Maryse was standing in front of the O.R and she rushed into her son’s arms as soon as she saw Alec in the lobby. She pushed him inside the room and Andre asked the nurses to scrub Alec in. Magnus was lying on a stretcher in the center of the room, with his legs pulled up and spread apart. A sterile cloth covered his lower part of the body and the legs and there were doctors around him, coaxing him to push. He was wearing his clothes that Alec had last seen Magnus in but they were sticking to his body because of the sweat.

Alec put on his cap and stepped inside and Magnus instantly relaxed as soon as he laid his eyes on Alec. Andre’s hand was carefully placed on Magnus’ forehead and he was requesting him to push. Magnus’ chest was heaving up and down and his face was scrunched up due to the pain he was in. Alec quietly reached out and laced their hands together. He bent forward and rubbed Magnus’ sweaty forehead.

“Hey... it’s okay. You can do this! We can do this... together.”, he whispered, clearing the strands of hair sticking to his husband’s forehead and placing a quick kiss on his sweaty skin. He could feel his
husband shivering under his touch and it broke Alec’s heart like nothing else. If Alec could take Magnus’ pain away in this very moment, he would... but this was something he had to do himself, no matter how much Alec tried to comfort him. “It is going to be okay!”, he assured, brushing Magnus’ hair back and lacing their hands together when Magnus registered the statement and nodded, attempting to smile to Alec to assure him that he was fine even though Alec knew better. The Omega was going cold on touch every minute.

Magnus bit his lip and groaned, attempting to push the babies out. The contractions were making it difficult for him to breathe or even make an effort. And there was a part of him scared that if he didn’t pull this off, he risked the lives of his unborn twins. It was hard for him to even attempt to push this but as long as Alec was around, he could at least manage to make an effort for his sake. Andre was rubbing Magnus’ belly towards his groin to help him with the process. The Omega kept his gaze fixed on Alec and the delivery of both the newborns took another 3 hours of painful labour. They were two very adorable twin boys. By the time the second child was birthed – 8 minutes after the first one, Magnus was exhausted beyond his senses. As soon as the umbilical cord detached from his body, he fell into unconsciousness, leaving the crying newborns in Alec’s care.

The nurses took the babies away to the children’s ward to clean them and give them fresh blankets, and transferred Magnus to another ward, giving him some sedatives and medicines to ease with his discomfort. Clary and Isabelle had already reached the hospital by then and immediately went to be with Magnus when Alec went on to check the babies in the newborns ward in the infirmary.

“Do you have names that you decided on for your sons, Mr Lightwood-Bane?”, one of the doctors in the ward smiled at the sleeping infants after she noticed him watching them mewl and play in their cradles. Alec’s eyes watered when he recalled that he and Magnus had decided on the baby names for both girls and boys, even though they hadn’t chosen to know the gender of the babies yet. He placed his palm on the glass wall separating him and his kids and smiled, turning to face the doctor.

“Magnus said that if we had two boys... they would be called Ethan and Keith Lightwood-Bane”, he informed proudly. Both the kids were the exact replica of both their parents. Their skin tone was lighter than Magnus’ but darker than Alec’s. Anyone who saw them could point out that Alec and Magnus were the parents. They had Alec’s hazel eye color, but the shape of the eyes was slightly Asian. The doctor entered the names of the kids against their tag numbers and gave the birth details to Alec. That is when the Alpha first stepped inside and held both of the boys in his arms one by one. He wished Magnus was awake to do this with him, but his husband needed to rest after those stressful three hours. Another nurse rolled out the two kids in a pram and followed Alec as they entered Magnus’ room in the hospital where everyone was desperately waiting to meet them.

“Hi, babies”, the aunts cooed leaning over to observe the newborns in their cradle. “They’re so beautiful, big brother”, he heard his sister say. Alec picked one of the boys up and saw that he had a strawberry shaped birthmark on his finger. He was sleeping right now, and Alec’s heart sank when he pressed him to his chest. The baby was just too fragile and tiny but so precious. He lifted the baby further up and pressed a kiss on his forehead, lightly brushing his skin. The baby’s lips trembled, and he shook in his sleep.

“Welcome to the world, Keith Lightwood-Bane. Your parents love you so much and can’t wait to take you home with us!”, he tucked the baby back in his blanket and then handed him over to his mother who was on the verge of breaking down. By the time Alec picked Ethan up, he was a crying mess. Isabelle wiped his tears for him as he cradled the little sleeping baby around in his arms. Clary took Ethan from Alec next and pressed him to her chest, feeling the young one’s heartbeat against her own. This was her brother’s son... this was her little nephew. They were all crying when they picked the babies up and played with them. Alec looked over their shoulders and saw Magnus sleeping on the hospital bed. How he wished Magnus could be awake right now... living this
moment with him and their family.

A while later, Inaya stepped into the hospital room, escorted here by Luke and screamed watching her newborn baby brothers sleeping and playing in their cradle. Alec picked her up in his arms, shushing her because Magnus was resting, and introduced her to the babies. Her eyes widened when she noticed them, and she shifted closer to her father.

“They are so tiny, Dad”, she gasped, pulling herself closer to her father. “Look at those pink hands... oh my God. They are so small”, she sighed. Alec smiled and kissed her cheek. He bent over the cradle holding Inaya steady and helped her feel Keith’s soft palms. The baby cackled when he saw Inaya for some reason and curled his tiny fingers around her bigger one. She grinned and looked at her father, triumphantly.

“Yes, they are very small”, Alec whispered. Pulling Inaya and himself back after Keith let go off Inaya’s finger.

“I love them so much!”, she announced, with a slightly emotional tone. “They are perfect... and they are my family...”

“I know, kiddo... I know it feels unbelievable, doesn’t it? I love them and you so much. You have no idea how much joy the three of you bring Magnus and me. We’re all going to be a very big and happy family now.”, Alec kissed her cheek.

“Dad... they are my brothers!”, realization dawned upon the little girl. “I have two little brothers now...!!”

“Yes, you do!”

“I am a big sister!!”, she shrieked.

“Yes, honey!!”, Alec chuckled, putting Inaya back to the floor. “And I am sure that they are going to love their big sister so much!”, he told her curious frame of mind. She peered over the cradle and looked at the kids for a few more seconds before turning her attention to her sleeping father on the bed.

“Is Papa okay?”, she asked.

“Yes... he is. He is just very tired, so the doctors said that he should sleep and take rest so that he can build his strength back up!”, Alec kneeled behind her to come to her height and pulled her to his chest.

“Then we should leave... right?”, she whispered. “Papa needs to rest, and we shouldn’t disturb him, right?”, she turned around in his arm and sighed.

“Yes... but we need to take care of your baby brothers also... right? So, I was thinking that you could stay with Aunt Clary and Izzy for the night, and I will stay here with Papa and your little brothers? Will that be okay with you?”, Alec brushed her hairs away from her forehead and tucked a few strands behind her ears.

“Of course. And then I will go straight to school from Aunt Clary and Aunt Izzy’s place and will meet you Papa in the evening!!”, Inaya smiled.

“You’re my favorite... do you know that?””, Alec’s heart leaped in his chest and he pulled his daughter to his chest. Inaya wrapped her arms around her father and kissed his cheek. Alec rubbed her back and grinned.
“You don’t worry about me, okay? I’ll be fine...”, she assured him.

“I am not worried. I am just sorry that I haven’t been able to spend time with you”

“You were taking care of Papa... it’s fine”, Inaya shrugged.

“I promise you, that you and I will go on that trek soon... very soon!”, Alec opened the box of noodles and poked his fork inside. Inaya crossed her legs up and opened her mouth as Alec brought the fork full of noodles to her mouth.

“I know, Dad. Stop worrying about me!”, she chuckled.

“You’re my daughter... I will always worry about you!”, Alec deadpanned. They ate their dinner together in silence, stealing glances at Magnus who was snoring on the bed in one corner of the room. After they were done with their food, they threw the waste away and Alec packed the girl’s bag when Isabelle came to pick her up.

“Can I go and talk to Papa once?”, Inaya asked as Alec pulled the backpack to her shoulder. He shared a glance with Isabelle and then nodded at Inaya. Inaya slowly walked over to her father and climbed up the stool. She knelt on the bed next to sleeping father and kissed his forehead which was still pale and cold. “Wake up soon okay... I miss talking to you”, she whispered. Alec teared up watching his daughter be the softest person to his husband and he flicked the tears away after Izzy nudged him.

“I love you Papa!”, she jumped out of the bed and squeezed his hand before walking back and lacing her hands with her aunt Izzy.

“Don’t worry, Alec... I will take care of your princess”, Isabelle pressed a kiss to Alec’s cheek and gave him a hug. “Give Magnus my best when he wakes up... and wish him congratulations on becoming a father”, she looked over at her brother-in-law and then walked out of the hospital room, holding Inaya’s hand. Alec checked on the kids who were fast asleep for now and then walked over to Magnus’ bed, settling next to him. One of Magnus’ hands was marred with drips of glucose and sedation to keep him resting.

He looked so much better than a few hours ago. Alec flicked the hair off Magnus’ forehead and pulled the blanket up to his neck. “I love you. Take rest okay... I need my husband back to his original strength tomorrow”, he whispered, pressing a kiss on the back of Magnus’ hand that was still tube-less. He pulled an armchair between the babies’ cradles and Magnus’ bed and bolted the door from inside. Pulling a fleece blanket over his legs, he leaned on the armrest and closed his eyes.

What a long day it had been!

Magnus blinked open his eyes. The lights in the room he was in were dim and there was a constant beeping behind him. He groaned, rubbing his eyes to clear his foggy vision. “Alec...”, he coughed out, hoping his husband was with him wherever he was. It was still dark outside judging from the nightshade coming from the window. “Alexander”, Magnus cleared his throat and called out again. The man curled the blanket under his fingers and lifted his head up to look around. His eyelids were heavy with exhaustion and his body was rather stressed. Alec was sleeping on the armchair next to his bed, but his eyelids were fluttering as he attempted to wake up after hearing Magnus’ voice. He rubbed his eyelids open, yawned and looked towards his back to something Magnus couldn’t yet see because Alec and the armchair were blocking his view. Alec’s hand went up in the air as he stretched.
Magnus’ hand went to his belly to check on the babies, a 9-month old habit of his, and he felt a void in him when he couldn’t feel the twins’ heart beating and kicking inside him and the bump having disappeared now. Now that the babies were out of him, he had to learn to live a solitary life again.

“Magnus... hey!”, Alec’s voice brought Magnus back to the present. He looked at his husband and saw the man smiling as he stood next to Magnus’ bed now. Watching Alec’s delightful face made his own face curve into an inevitable smile. Everything felt alright now. Alec bent down, holding the headboard of Magnus’ bed, and he lifted his head further up and their lips mid-way for a kiss that they both knew that they needed.

“Hi...”, Magnus breathed out, smiling like he was intoxicated in this feeling of being in love with Alec all over again for the first time. He shifted on the bed and groaned slightly. The ache in his body was still there... very visible. He lifted his tubed hand to reach out to Alec’s face and stroke his cheekbone. His throat was so dry and itchy. Using his other hand, he tried to soothe his throat externally and Alec understood the gesture. He filled a glass of water and then brought it back for Magnus. He raised the head of the bed to make Magnus sit comfortably and then slid his hand behind his neck to help him drink the water.

“Better?”, Alec asked.

“Yeah... much better”, Magnus gulped the water down thirstily, relishing every last drop as it soothed his throat. Alec sat on the space next to Magnus on their bed and laced their fingers together. Magnus swallowed the lump down his throat and then lifted his gaze to meet Alec’s. “How are they?”, he asked.

“So beautiful. The most perfect babies in the whole wide world and people might call me biased but I have never seen someone as beautiful.”, Alec’s lips curved into the biggest grin possible. “They are asleep over there. Do you want to see them?”, he asked, pointing towards the cradles. Magnus craned his neck, wanting to have one look at the babies. “The first time I held Keith and Ethan in my arms, I felt like I was back to the time when we first brought Inaya home... they are so little... their hands, and their feet...”, he explained. Magnus threw his head back on the soft pillow and smiled.

“We are going to have a lot of sleepless nights and they are going to keep us on our toes now, so it is better if we let them sleep for now and take rest ourselves”, Magnus sighed, lacing their hands together. He closed his eyes and then breathed out a long breath. He had a smile on his face... and a little pride and relief. “We did it”, Magnus opened his eyes and looked up at the ceiling in the room.

“Yes, we did”, Alec lifted their laced hands together and pressed a kiss on Magnus’ knuckles. “You did”

Magnus parted his lips to reply to that when series of cries echoed from the other end of the room. Alec looked towards the cradles and then at Magnus... and exchanged a scoffing breath. Alec got up and picked up one of the babies who was crying. He rocked him in his arms, making sounds to calm him down. He walked back to Magnus and handed him over. “Ethan, meet your Papa”, he handed over the baby to Magnus who placed him close to his chest, swinging him gently.

“Hey baby...”, Magnus cooed, sniffing off his tears. “Look at you... yeah... yeah”, he swung him gently, patting his chest. “so beautiful...”, he undid his blanket to check if he had peed or anything and then wrapped him back after he found the baby dry. Ethan’s eyes met Magnus’ and his sobbing stopped. He blinked and looked at his father while being rocked by him and a few seconds later, stopped crying altogether. Magnus wiped off his tears and pressed the newborn close to his chest.

“They already have favorites”, Alec joked, holding Keith who was sleeping quietly in his arms.
“Well, what can I say? All the dramatic ones end up cuddling to me”, Magnus winked, swinging Ethan in his arms. The boy had stopped crying and was now throwing his hands out in the hair, chuckling in his father’s lap.

“Yeah?”, Alec arched a brow. Magnus pressed Ethan to his chest, rocking him gently and the movements ceased as the little boy fell asleep, playing in his father’s arms. Magnus’ heart fluttered with happiness. He handed Keith over to Magnus and took Ethan after he had fallen asleep to settle him back in the cradle.

“They are both so perfect”, Magnus said, his voice barely a whisper. He played with him for a bit and then handed it back to Alec who kept him in the cradle again. “I cannot wait to take them home, Alexander”, Magnus’ eyes were wide and twinkling with joy.

“I can’t wait to take all of you home”, Alec smiled as he stood straight up against Keith’s cradle. He was too happy to let any fear cloud his mind again. “But you need to rest now...”, he turned his concerned-husband mode on and raised an index finger at Magnus. The Omega rolled his eyes and pulled the lever, making the bed horizontal again. He shifted on the bed and made space for his husband. Alec climbed inside the blanket with Magnus and placed a careful hand on his belly. He placed his chin in the crook of Magnus’ neck and took a deep breath, taking his beautiful scent in his lungs.

“Am I making you uncomfortable?”, Alec asked. Magnus scoffed and pressed his lips to Alec’s forehead.

“No more than usual, darling!”, he sneered. Alec let out a sharp breath, almost laughing through his nose and let sleep grip him again.

>>> Two years later >>>

Idris was the still as beautiful as Magnus had remembered. Being back here was difficult, but he constantly reminded himself that the place didn’t mean bad memories for him, certain people did. And thanks to his family, those people were gone and would never come back to haunt or ruin Magnus’ life again. Even then, it had taken him almost a decade to return to his hometown and feel it’s magic again. A couple of months after the massacre, the Council had seized the Bane residence and auctioned off everything to the Lightwood Foundation for young and abandoned wolves after Magnus and Clary – the willed heirs of all the things Asmodeus owned signed off the deal to give all the fortune away. He didn’t need anything that belonged to his father after he had everything he had always desired. About five years after that auction, Alec and Magnus bought off a land on the outskirts of Idris, overseeing the Lake Lynn and built a cottage in the middle of the woods. A holiday home of sorts. And now, that huge two-storey villa was the venue of Clary and Isabelle’s spring wedding.

With the help of Maryse and Robert, the Lightwood-Banes had maintained a beautiful canopied lawn outside their home and Maryse had helped with the horticulture and garden decoration. It was a joint effort by her and Alec and Magnus and now that the villa was ready for use, it reeked of Alec and Magnus in every corner of their home. The whole place was buzzing with people today. Clary had invited Luke’s pack to Idris and they were out helping Alec and Underhill look after the last minute decorations of the garden where the wedding venue was supposed to happen. There was an official priest from the Council ready to officiate the wedding and help Clary mark Izzy. After the whole deal with Asmodeus and punishing the perpetrators, the Council had passed a law where the age-old mating custom was abolished. With Robert’s Consulate coming to an end in about three years from now, the Clave was on the horizon of a much-needed change with Underhill taking over
Magnus and Clary were in Magnus and Alec’s room and he was helping her and Maia finish up making the side-braid in her long hair. Her wedding dress was a long satin gown with a long hemline making a train behind her back. She had laced sleeves with floral patterns running all over the bodice, intricating covering her chest area in careful patterns. Her hands were mostly naked except for a mid-ring that Isabelle had given her as a Valentine’s Day present on their first year together. Magnus checked on her tresses that fell like a cascade over her shoulder and then crouched down in front of her to adjust the pleats of her dress. He wore a three-piece off-white suit with an indigo blue tie that was identical with the color of Alec’s suit.

“All done!”, Magnus sniffed, buttoning his suit up as he stood up tall in front of his sister. She was dabbing white powder on her cheeks, and her fingers were shaking just a little. “Look at you, so beautiful”, he gently cleared the loner strands of hair from her forehead and sighed with tears twinkling in his eyes.

“Don’t make me cry”, she sniffed, trying to hide her anxiety. “I am already so nervous, Magnus... please... don’t make me cry”, she pleaded. Magnus let our another sharp exhale and stroked her jaws. “I can do this, right?”, she asked.

“Most definitely”, he assured.

“Oh, and before I forget... you’re walking me down the aisle”, she informed, turning her head on her neck to check the back of her dress, where Maia was working.

“Me? I thought you’d ask Luke?”, he arched both his brows.

“Why would I ask Luke?”, Clary narrowed her brows. “You’re my brother... you are definitely walking me down the aisle”, she said as a matter-of-factly. “Where’s Inaya? And your little demon sons?”, she snorted.

“Clarissa!”, Magnus gasped. She was right though. Ethan and Keith were monumentally mischievous and a pain in both Alec and Magnus’ ass. Thanks to the two of them, both the men had no time for themselves even after two years of their birth. “They’re with Mom...”, Magnus rolled his eyes. “Trust me, Alexander and I deserve fifteen minutes off”, he chuckled, cursing himself for thinking like that about his own kids.

“Oh, I am sure you do”, she laughed. “It’s weird how much you struggle keeping Ethan and Keith in check... it is just...”

“difficult”, Magnus breathed out, feeling exhausted at the mere thought.

“hilarious...!”, Clary winked and replied at the same time.

“Well, forgive us Ms Morgenstern... Inaya was a pretty well-behaved kid at their age...”, he shrugged.

“I agree”, Clary huffed out a breath. “...she was always the dainty and delicate young girl who loved her fathers way too much to trouble them”

“She was... still is so perfect”, Magnus commented, almost sounding like he would drown in his own pride for his daughter.

“I know all parents love their kids... almost...”, she joked. Magnus tilted her head and rolled her eyes. “but you and Alec are just so smitten by your three offsprings... it is so cute... just so cute”, she
shivered, barking out a laughter. Magnus blushed as if he had been caught red-handed and turned to check on his own makeup.

“Listen... I am going to go and check up on your bride, alright? I don’t trust Alexander when it comes to all this... so, will you be okay?”, he held her shoulders and squeezed them gently.

“I will be”, she smiled. He kissed her softly on her cheek and dashed out towards Isabelle’s room on the ground floor. Isabelle’s dress was a mermaid cut wedding gown with a tulle backless bodice. When Magnus entered her room, she was instructing Alec to adjust a hair comb over her messy bun. The comb was supposed to keep her veil in place.

“I got this one, Alexander”, Magnus rushed and grabbed the veil in his hand. Alec sighed in relief and dropped his forehead on his husband’s shoulder as if he was relieved to have him by his side again. Magnus scoffed and patted Alec’s cheek, continuing to adjust his sister-in-law’s dress. The Alpha picked up his camera, readying himself to do what he was best at, capturing moments as memories. He turned his camera on and looked through the eyepiece, clicking multiple shots of his sister as a bride, and his husband who looked so sinful.

Everything felt in control and organized until they heard Ethan or Keith (?) break into a squealing series of sobs. Alec tilted his head back on his neck and rubbed his hand over his face and Magnus simultaneously groaned. “I’ll go and see what it is about, honey”, Alec huffed out a breath and walked past his husband, brushing his back in the process. Magnus hummed, holding a safety pin in his mouth as he continued to work on Isabelle’s dress.

Keith and Ethan were standing outside their house, Maryse crouched in front of them. Her hands held the boys apart as they struggled to reach out to each other, to probably beat the shit out of each other. Alec sprinted across his house and reached his sons. Inaya was sitting on the staircase with her forehead in her palms. She looked so done with her brothers. “What happened?”, Alec dropped on the floor, assisting Maryse.

“Keef plucked m’ shirt”, Ethan pointed at his brother and squealed in Alec’s ears, continuing to cry as if there was no way the shirt could go back in.

“He tol’ me Papa loved him moree”, Keith argued. Maryse slapped her forehead and surrendered in front of her grandsons.

“I am going to go and enjoy this wedding with Inaya...”, she huffed out. Inaya chuckled and grabbed his grandmother’s hand. “You handle these demons”, she whispered, rolling her eyes. Alec rubbed his forehead and placed a steady arm between his boys.

“Ethan... I am going to adjust your shirt again, don’t worry!”, he turned to one of his sons. “...and Keith... Papa and I, we both love you and Inaya equally... promise”

“Pinky??”, he held out his little finger. Alec curled his own little finger in his and nodded.

“Now come on, climb over”, he held out his free hand and Keith climbed on, wrapping his arms around his neck. Alec reached out and tugged Ethan’s shirt under his pants, adjusting his little suit that Magnus had picked out for both his sons in different colors to tell them apart. Once this was done and the boy stopped crying, he picked him up in his other arm and stood up. “Look... you both... and your big sister Inaya... you’re everything to me and Magnus... you’re all a part of us and we love you equally”, he turned around, heading towards the house.

“Even if I spill mustard over my shirt”, Ethan argued.
“Even then...”

“Or I pull Inaya’s hairtie out”, Keith chuckled at the memory.

“That is mean”, Ethan pitched in.

“Even then”, Alec interfered and assured Keith. “We love you... both of us, and that’s the end. Don’t forget that, okay? Now... shake each other’s hand and call truce”, he instructed his boys. The boys paused for a second, imitating the nuances of his dramatic husband and then held out their hands. The Alpha smiled, snuggling them close. He joined Isabelle back in the room where Magnus was almost done with her.

From Keith and Ethan holding Clary’s train to Inaya accompanying Izzy to the altar, the wedding had been gorgeous in all respects. The girls had recited their own vows to each other and then the priest announced them married. Their marking ceremony was left for later that night after the full moon came out and they were now enjoying post-wedding festivities. After having their first dance together, the girls were now on the dance floor, dancing with their brothers.

“You really put the boys to sleep?”, Izzy chuckled, as Alec twirled her back into his arms. He scoffed, kissing her forehead.

“I couldn’t be here otherwise”, he deadpanned.

“How did you even accept that you had married Magnus that night, all those years ago?”, she lifted her shoulders, gulping hard. Alec looked over her shoulder and saw Magnus and Clary chuckling as he twirled her around an axis and the grown flew in the air as if it was a beautiful waterfall. “I can’t process that I am finally married”, she sighed.

“It took a while... probably until Magnus and I were alone in our room the following night”, Alec breathed out.

“I am not talking about sex, Alec”, Izzy chuckled.


“Calm down, I am just kidding...”, she threw her head back and laughed. Alec relaxed in relief and then looked back at Magnus.

“I think after all the love that you share with this one person... you owe it to yourself to feel these butterflies, this feeling of everything around you seeming to be surreal. That’s just what you deserve... and what your love deserves. And cherish it okay? It lasts for quite some time, but you have to cherish this...!”, he advised.

“I love her, Alec”, Izzy breathed out nervously.

“Then hold on to that, and her and then you’ll be able to go through everything, together and stronger than ever”, Alec tipped her chin and kissed both her cheeks, wiping off the tears with his thumbs. He guided them towards the center of the floor and gently let her go. She was surprised when Clary’s hands found her again and they kissed gently. Alec walked backwards until his back hit the bar.

“It’s been a lovely wedding, Mr Lightwood. Someone here told me that you were behind all the decorations. I must applaud you. Everything looks perfect.”, Magnus teased, holding out a glass of
wine to his husband. Alec narrowed his brows and looked from the glass of wine to the Asian man.

“Thank you, Mr Bane”, Alec wasn’t sure where this was going but he played along. “I am glad you liked it. My husband tasked me with this role”, Alec lifted the rim of glass of his lips and sipped the wine.

“Oh, you’re married?”, Magnus retorted. Alec snorted, rolling his eyes, enjoying Magnus’ casual flirtation. He lifted his ring finger and wiggled it in front of the man. “Wow, who would have thought that a man as handsome as you would already be spoken for? Truly an opportunity lost for so many bachelors out here!”, he winked. Alec downed the entire wine and bracketed Magnus against the bar table between his arms. Magnus gulped his anxiety down his throat and made serious efforts to keep his eyes fixed on Alec’s.

“It was arranged by my parents... it’s not like I had any say”, Alec whispered, his voice a combination of sultry and sexy.

“Oh, you don’t love your husband, I take it?”, Magnus bit his lower lip, hiding the amusement in his tone.

“Oh, I do. I love him so much”, Alec rolled his eyes. Bending down to Magnus’ ear the next second, he licked his lips and whispered. “...but he wouldn’t mind if you...wanted some special time with me”, he joked. Magnus rolled his eyes and turned their positions around, trapping Alec between his muscular arms.

“Oh, he would very much mind...”, Magnus glared, pressing against Alec and letting him know how hard he was. To his (not) surprise, Alec was just as hard.

“I don’t think so? Because the last time I checked, he was flirting with someone’s husband too!”, Alec deadpanned.

“You’re enjoying this, aren’t you Alexander?”, Magnus snorted, bringing his lips dangerously close to Alec’s. The Alpha swallowed as the smell of wine and vodka tainting Magnus’ breath saturated his lungs.

“I am...”, Alec choked. He could feel Magnus’ lips tingling against his.

“Then I better make sure I don’t do anything to ruin this moment for you, Mr Lightwood!”, Magnus breathed, lightly grazing his lips against Alec’s. Alec let out a desperate exhale, choking on his breath when Magnus’ warm breath tickled his wet lips. He moved slightly forward so that he could join their lips together, but Magnus smirked, pulling only slightly away so that their lips failed to touch. Why wasn’t Magnus letting him kiss him? He was getting harder every second Magnus avoided him. The Omega looked around a second later, and firmly grabbed his husband’s hand, directing them inside their house. Alec frowned because he was hoping he could get a kiss at least before they parted at the bar. Alec had no strength left in him and Magnus literally pulled him inside, while he merely trudged along. The Omega loosened his tie and unbuttoned his coat as they reached their room. Once they were inside, Magnus shut the door and pushed Alec’s chest against it. The Alpha did not have a chance to recover from the movement and Magnus literally pulled him inside, while he merely trudged along. The Omega loosened his tie and unbuttoned his coat as they reached their room. Once they were inside, Magnus shut the door and pushed Alec’s chest against it. The Alpha did not have a chance to recover from the movement and Magnus pulled his coat off of him and unbuckled his belt, pushing his pants down. The doors to the balcony were open and cool breeze entered their room, making Alec shiver. His teeth hissed, clattering against each other.

“Magnus!”, Alec gasped as his cheeks pressed against the varnished frame of the door. Magnus undid his own pants that dropped on his feet as he walked out of them and grabbed a lube from the nightstand. He lifted Alec’s hand high up at the level of his head and planted them flat against the door by his side.
“Stay where you are, Alexander”, Magnus whispered.

Sliding his hand between Alec’s abdomen and the door, Magnus unbuttoned his shirt rather meticulously and pulled it off of Alec’s shoulder, leaving him completely naked against the bedroom door. They were too close to everyone else in the house and there was quite a bit of a chance that their sleeping kids would hear the commotion from the other room. Magnus brushed his thoughts away and pressed his lips behind the Alpha’s ear and placed a loud-mouthed kiss. “Alexander…”, he breathed out, rubbing his hand down Alec’s abdomen and reaching his hardened member.

“Fuck…”, Alec gulped, recovering from the dual effect of Magnus’ hand curling on his dick and his dick on his back.

“So beautiful”, Magnus whispered, nibbling Alec’s earlobe between his teeth and stroking his member between his hand making careful movements to arouse the Alpha. He let his tongue out and licked the back of Alec’s earlobe, trailing down the carotid artery that was excitedly thumping out of his body. He grinded his own hips against Alec’s back making rhythmic movements where their bodies moved together as if they were synced.

The movements kept Alec from relaxing or taking a small breather. Magnus’ hand on his dick was an amazing reminder of what was building up in his body. His cheek was squished against the door and his throat was bobbing, emitting loud moans. As the door thumped every time they thrusted against each other. “Magnus!”, he gasped again, curling his fingertips on the door as the orgasm build up.

Magnus was lubing his other hand and preparing him for something a bit more exciting for them. He used his index finger and the tip of his manicured nail to make a stroke around Alec’s hole, making him ticklish. Covering the distance between their bodies, Magnus nudged the inside of Alec’s calf, spreading the legs apart. He pinched his butt-cheeks and opened his mouth, taking Alec’s neck between his sharp canines. The Alpha threw his head back after Magnus inserted his lubed index inside him. The back of his head collided with his shoulder and he gasped, slamming his eyes open. “MAGNUS!”, he screamed.

“Shh... easy, Alexander”, Magnus let go off Alec’s neck momentarily and hissed. “The kids are asleep in the next room”, he gasped for breath while his finger played inside Alec.

“I hate you”, Alec clenched his jaw, trying to keep his excitement as silent as possible.

“Oh, do you?”, Magnus arched a brow and chased another finger inside Alec. The man gulped parted his lips and took a hissing inhale. He retracted one hand from the door, wanting to grab Magnus and haul him closer to his back but Magnus grabbed his wrist and planted it where it originally was. Magnus bit Alec’s neck, nibbling the skin softly between his neck. Those bites were going to leave nasty marks, but that was the point. He let his lips mark every bit of Alec’s shoulder until the Alpha was pink and sore all over. His dick lodged between the squeeze of Alec’s butt as they continued thrusting.

Alec let out a strong groan, throwing his head back on Magnus shoulder and the Omega let out a loud huff, making their thrusting faster. “…almost there”, Alec clenched his jaw and shut his eyes. Magnus’ hand that was curled around Alec’s dick was now flat on his pelvis, holding him close to himself. Alec slowly threw his weight totally on Magnus who lifted him off his feet, letting Alec curl his legs around the Omega’s ankles and teasing his cold and naked skin with the pointed nails of his thumb. “Magnus…”

“…yes, darling”, Magnus played, inserting a third finger inside Magnus. Alec bit back his lip and then exhaled a second later, splattering his release on the door. He heaved his chest, relaxing only for
a second before Magnus emptied himself on Alec. Alec slipped off of Magnus after the man pulled his fingers out and the Alpha’s forehead collapsed on the door, holding his fists against it and breathing heavily.

“...that was hot”, Alec breathed out. Magnus snorted looking around for something. The Alpha turned around, dropping his shoulder blades on the door. He made grabby hands, smiling and alluring Magnus in. The man shook his head and let himself come in Alec’s proximity. He slid his arms his waist and hauled him closer. Magnus lifted his palms on Alec’s chest that was sticky with sweat.

“...why, thank you, Mr Lightwood? I am glad you found all that hot...”, Magnus teased, curling his hands around Alec’s jaw.

“...I forgot to mention that my full name is Lightwood-Bane!”, Alec bobbed his nose against Magnus’.

“Your husband is very lucky, I suppose”, Magnus took his lower lip inside and smiled, dropping his chin to his chest.

“I hope he is...”, Alec mumbled, kissing Magnus’ left cheek. “Because I for one know for a fact that he makes me feel like the luckiest man in the world”, he said, pecking his right cheek and making the man blush all shades of red and pink.

“He is”, Magnus lifted his gaze up, assuring his husband. “He feels the same...and he loves you very much... more than he would like to believe”, he slid his hands around Alec’s waist.

Alec smiled at that and bobbed their noses together again. “Well, I love him too. More than anything else in the world”, the man assured. Magnus leaned closer and captured Alec’s lips in for a kiss which the Alpha had been wanting since the beginning of this whole ordeal. Alec left the door and pushed Magnus back, guiding the both of them towards the balcony. He placed steady hands around Magnus’ shoulder while the Omega undid his shirt and let it fall on the wooden floor. Once Magnus’ back hit the cold glass door of the balcony, they parted and stepped out naked in the dusky sky.

“You’ll lose, Alexander”, Magnus fixed his gaze on the setting sun behind the hills.

“To you, I’d love it more than winning”, Alec snorted, raising his hand to leap out of the balcony. They transformed right before their paws landed on the ground and ran right towards the Lake Lynn.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for being on this journey with me. if you would like to tell me what you thought about the chapter, you can comment here or DM/tweet at me on Twitter. My username is @aliaawrites

for those of you who haven't checked, i wrote an introduction to a new fic "hearts of darkness" . It's supernatural, vampire!Alec based... so you can check it out if you like :D

i'll see you around.

love,
aliaa.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!