Summary

“How come you don’t like surprises?”

Inspired by Magnus’s “I don't like surprises" -line in the 3x19 Love lock flashback.

Notes

Just a fluffy little something, dedicated to ralf because she is awesome. Takes place after the flashback.

This is officially the 50th work (if not the 50th fic) I've written for the Shadowhunter fandom! It feels surreal, but then, our boys seem to have a way of inspiring the muse.

For those waiting for the next installment of the Our Immortal Love -series, it should be up tomorrow evening.

See the end of the work for more notes.

“How come you don’t like surprises?”

The question is mumbled into his temple, soft enough that Magnus could have ignored it, if he didn’t know that Alec had felt him tense.
He makes an inquisitive noise, feigning ignorance.

“Earlier,” Alec clarifies. He nuzzles into Magnus’s hair, sleepy and content. “You said you don’t like surprises.”

Where are we going?

It’s a surprise, my boy.

Magnus swallows, disbanding the memory. The cold that settles in his bones has nothing to do with the frisk evening breeze sweeping over the balcony.

There’s a gentle squeeze at his waist.

“Magnus?”

Still soft, but now tinged with concern, and Magnus closes his eyes. He doesn’t want to ruin their evening, a perfect conclusion to a perfect day, such a rarity for them. But before he opens his mouth to divert the attention onto a safer topic, Alec continues.

“I was just curious, since you… you know. You always seem to like my surprises?” There is the hint of a blush tinting Alec’s tone; but, more importantly, doubt, as if Magnus could ever be anything other than delighted and utterly charmed by Alec’s thoughtful and yet somehow casual offerings, and that simply won’t do.

Magnus raises their entwined hands and kisses Alec’s knuckles.

“You are quite talented at the art of gift-giving.”

Alec gives a pleased little hum and presses a kiss to his temple, settling more firmly against him.

“You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to.”

He really means it, too, Magnus knows, chest expanding in a slow, aching breath. Alec is inquisitive but never intrusive, happy with whatever morsels Magnus is willing to share. He wants to know about Magnus’s past but never assumes that he has a right to it.

Which is why what comes out of Magnus’s mouth is not at all what he had initially planned to say.

“Let’s just say that I don’t have the best experiences with surprises.”

“Your father?” Alec guesses, because sometimes, he is more in-tune with Magnus than Magnus is with himself.

Magnus inclines his head.

“Among others.”

“What did he do?” Alec asks, in a tone that clearly states that marching into Edom and challenging Asmodeus would be as standard a procedure as evening patrol. It’s truly terrifying, being loved by Alexander Lightwood.

Magnus clears his throat. He forces a careless wave of his hand.

“Oh, it was never anything too unseemly. For all of his many flaws, my father was seldom outright cruel. At least,” he amends, “not to me.”
Tricking and manipulating and coercing others to do his bidding, now that was another matter altogether.

“My aversion doesn’t stem from anything specific that he did—though his idea of a ‘gift’ was far from what would be deemed conventional.” Magnus shrugs. “It’s the anticipation, the not knowing, rather than the surprise itself, I suppose.”

Comfortable silence settles over them, broken only by the distant echoes of the city life below.

“So…” Alec says after a while, voice thoughtful. “What you’re saying is that you’ve always been a control freak.”

Magnus blinks.

Ignoring Alec’s noise of protest, he disentangles himself from his boyfriend’s arms and turns to look at him with a raised eyebrow.

“You’ll forgive my straightforwardness, Alexander, but you are hardly in any position to question anyone else’s desire to not leave things to chance; or are you not familiar with the Mundane expression about pots and kettles?”

“Ah, so you do admit it?” Alec says, completely ignoring the point Magnus is trying to make.

“The only thing I admit to is my terrible taste in men,” Magnus sighs, gaze turned skyward—but it’s impossible to even fake annoyance with Alec’s chuckling warming him from the inside out.

“You know,” Alec says, facial muscles arranged into something that might have been seriousness, had it not been for his twitching lips. “I actually had another Mundane expression in mind.”

“Oh?”

“Something about the ineffectiveness of teaching old dogs new tricks?”

Magnus stares at him. Whatever expression he’s sporting, it makes Alec snort another laugh, and Magnus’s eyes narrow.

“Alexander,” he says, enunciating each word slowly. “Please tell me I misheard and that you did not just call me an old dog.”

Alec’s fingers scratch at Magnus’s nape. His eyes twinkle when Magnus can’t quite suppress a shiver.

“I wouldn’t dare.”

Magnus huffs, entirely unconvinced; but he goes with little more than a half-hearted grumble when Alec pulls him in for a kiss. He knows full well what Alec is doing, after all—feels it in the tension leaking from his shoulders, in past memories withdrawing into their dark corners once more.

Maybe this young pup can teach an old dog like him a thing or two, after all.

End Notes
If anyone knows of a course in title-making, please do let me know.

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