The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

by Sian265

Summary

No Shadowhunter has ever entered the Crescent City, but when a letter comes across the Inquisitor's desk, this becomes one mission that Inquisitor Lightwood-Bane and his husband, High Warlock of Alicante intend to take on themselves. However things are not what they seem in the Big Easy!

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

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The knock Alec had been waiting for sounded on his office door. “Come in,” he called out already rising from behind his desk and coming around to meet his husband. After a brief kiss, Alec waved to a chair in front of his desk. “Thanks for coming, Magnus.”

“Of course, Alexander, though it is unusual for you to ask for me to visit during the work day.” Magnus sat gracefully and rather than returning behind his desk, Alec took the chair next to him.

“Well I had a very unique request come across my desk and I wanted your input before I made any decisions.” Alec reached across his desk and picked up a letter, saying nothing more he handed it to Magnus. He watched his husband’s face as it went through a variety of emotions, many of them echoing Alec’s own responses to the letter.
Finally, Magnus set the letter down. “Well this is most unexpected!”

Alec eyed him curiously. “You ever been there?”

“Alexander! It’s forbidden, you know that.” Magnus raised a brow at his spouse.

He wasn’t fooled and eyed Magnus with skepticism. “Oh come on, you, resisting the forbidden? This from the same Warlock who was kicked out of Peru three times?”

Magnus laughed and winked at Alec, loving that his Shadowhunter knew him so well. “I know my reputation proceeds me, Alexander, but honestly the closest I ever got to the forbidden city was standing on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain and looking off in its direction.” Magnus looked off into the distance, eyes becoming guarded. “You know I’m not one for flights of fancy when it comes to intuition or imagination, but I will be honest with you Alexander. That place feels different, smells different, even standing so far away and only picturing in my head where it lay, that city is forbidding.”

Alec hummed for a moment, eyeing Magnus before speaking. “Well that does give me pause in what I was thinking of doing.” When Magnus looked back at him with a raised brow, Alec continued. “It’s not glory mind you, but I do have to admit that it would be a rush to be the first ever Shadowhunter to enter the Crescent City. I was thinking of taking this mission myself.”

The spark returned to Magnus’ eyes and he grinned devilishly. “Why Alexander, have I turned you into an adventurer?”

Alec’s own lips turned up into a smirk and he leaned towards Magnus. “You are a bad influence, everyone says so.” Pressing a hard kiss to his smirking husband’s lips, Alec rose and began gathering his stuff. “I’ll talk with Jia tomorrow, after you and I have slept on it.”

Alec’s hands clenched, blunt nails digging into Magnus’ hips as he could only hold on. He wasn’t sure what he had done, one minute they had been enjoying dinner the next, Alec was drug to the bedroom and devoured. Alec really wanted to figure out what triggered this maniac that was currently riding Alec within an inch of his life. Magnus had slammed Alec’s hands down on the mattress and then proceeding to lick and suck on every inch of Alec before straddling him and taking Alec deep with one downward push.

He could only throw his head back, grinding it into the pillow as Magnus kept up a furious pace, up then slamming down, over and over again, taking Alec deep into Magnus’ body, his inner muscles milking Alec’s cock before he lifted up. Alec tried doing his part by thrusting up, but
Magnus’ was firmly in control and Alec could only lay there and take it. And oh how Magnus was using him, so good Alec moaned. They both were drenched with sweat but neither had any intention of saying uncle, not with completion so damn close!

Alec decided he had enough of just laying there and became an active participant. Releasing Magnus’ hip, he took his spouse’s hard cock into his hand, rubbing his thumb around the tip to spread the moisture Magnus was leaking. He squeezed just on the edge of too much, before sliding his hand firmly down and then slowly back up. Magnus was so hot and hard in Alec’s hand, the pre-come making for an easy glide up and down. Magnus’ rhythm stuttered and he bore down hard on Alec’s lap. The groan he let out was rough and desperate, now Alec controlled their need.

If he had thought the in and out rough before, Magnus shot that to hell, slamming up and down in a pace that had Alec worried for a second for his husband, but the very hard cock in his hand alleviated that fear quickly. He stroked faster and harder and Magnus suddenly slammed down, grinding his hips in small circles. On the next stroke up of Alec’s hand, he squeezed the tip of Magnus’ dick, hard. The inner walls that squeezed Alec’s cock became so tight, and the heat! His hand stilled and his vision went white. Alec only distantly realized Magnus’ was coming also, too caught up in the tight heat and the rush of release as he poured himself into Magnus’ body.

When he could see and think again, Alec looked down at the dark head that rested on his chest. He raised a hand that was shaking and rubbed across Magnus’ wet back. Alec smiled, man he loved being married! Who said the fire died once tied together in matrimony? Fools! He felt the kiss Magnus pressed to his chest, before he rolled off Alec. “What got into you?” he panted out.

“You mean besides you?” Magnus laughed and wiped a hand across his brow.

“Yes, ass,” Alec said, half-heartedly slapping a hand across Magnus’ abs.

Magnus’ face wore a smile that clearly showed how pleased with himself he was, and how satisfied. “Hum,” he muttered, face changing into a dreamy look. “Must have been visiting my Inquisitor husband and seeing you in your seat of power. Got me all hot and bothered to see you so authoritative, Alexander.”

Now Alec’s smile was smug and very satisfied. “Well you are welcome to visit, anytime.”

Jia looked up from the letter Alec had handed her with a smirk. “I am assuming that you wish to take on this mission yourself?”
Alec smirked back at the Consul from his seat in front of her desk. “Can you blame me, and don’t tell me you don’t wish you could go as well.”

Jia laughed and nodded in agreement. “You know I do. To be the first Shadowhunters to enter the forbidden city of New Orleans and invited no less by the High Warlock!” Their relationship had changed a great deal from Alec’s days as head of the New York Institute. You could have knocked him over when Jia first approached him about being Inquisitor and then she further bowled him over when she revealed her plans for creating the first ever High Warlock of Alicante. Alec respected her, and further more, he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jia respected him and Magnus. Her acceptance of him and Magnus had gone along way towards what he now considered a friendship of sorts. They were open and honest with each other, and they listened to each other. He didn’t know if past Inquisitors and Consul were so united in common goals as he and Jia, he doubted it. Together, along with Magnus, they were forever changing the Shadowworld, for the better in Alec’s opinion.

“This is the first time that there has ever even been communication from New Orleans, let alone even a hint that they would consider allowing an institute there.” Alec’s gaze turned thoughtful now that the talk had turned to the details of the mission itself not just the uniqueness of the request.

Jia sighed heavily, handing the letter back across her desk to Alec. “There are so many questions and yes even some danger with this mission, however even if you hadn’t requested it, you are the best one for the job.” Jia opened her tablet and pulled up a schedule. “To even consider opening an institute there, we need their agreement signed to adhere to the accords, something the Downworlders there have never done. Also is there a need? Is this sudden desire for our involvement because they can no longer police themselves?”

Alec nodded. “In what little correspondence and research we have about the city it has always come down to their assertion that they can monitor themselves and keep the mundane population safe from the Shadowworld. It is such an unusual location compared to the rest of the world in that the divide between the Shadowworld and mundane one is so thin in New Orleans. No where else is the ‘supernatural’ so celebrated and embraced as in the Crescent City.”

“Yes,” Jia nodded. “That’s what makes this letter so mysterious, it says nothing, yet they knew we would not be able to resist the temptation of at least stepping foot into the forbidden. Be careful Alec and I assume Magnus is going as well?” At Alec’s nod, she continued. “That they put no limits or conditions on this visit is promising, so let’s make sure you and Magnus have sufficient backup.” At Alec’s instant frown, Jia asked. “What is it?”

He hesitated for a moment. “I’ve thought of all the possible dangers and believe me if Magnus would even allow it, I’d leave him home safe. My other concern is my choice of who will accompany us. I’d like to take Luke-,” Alec paused.
“But then that would include your mother?” Jia interrupted to finish Alec’s thoughts.

“Yes, and I don’t want her exposed if the mission is going to be dangerous. Of course, she would kill me if she heard me saying this.” Alec grimaced. “However, Luke is the best choice to go.”

“Trust in your mother, Maryse is not reckless, nor is she stupid. If she thinks it’s too dangerous. She would stay back-, but I think she would be more of a value than hindrance on this mission. Maryse knows the laws and the accords better than anyone.” Jia rose and Alec did as well. “Put together your team and whatever resources you need. We will speak again before you depart.”

Alec nodded and left Jia’s office, mind already running over details of personnel and equipment. He needed to speak with Magnus, looks like they were about to go to New Orleans.

Alec stepped out of the portal right in front of his mom’s shop. Entering the bell over the door signaled his arrival, he heard his mom call out from the back. “Be right with you.”

Maryse was wiping her hands as she emerged from the backroom. “Alec!” she called out happily coming around to meet her first born and pulling him into a tight hug. She pulled back and looked behind him. “Magnus didn’t come?”

“He had some packing to take care of and some appointments to move.” Alec chuckled, loving the fact that his mom looked so disappointed that Magnus wasn’t with him. He, like spouses everywhere, was now firmly convinced that his mother liked his husband better than him.

Maryse hummed with disappointment, moving away she flipped the out to lunch sign and locked the door. Motioning for Alec to follow her, she went into the back of the store. His mother had a small kitchenette setup that allowed her to take her lunch breaks as well as make tea, the latter which she poured into two cups and indicated Alec should sit. Taking a sip before setting her cup down, Maryse eyed him curiously. “Did I forget plans or is this a surprise visit?”

Alec chuckled, never having been able to fool his mother for long. “No, you didn’t miss anything. I’ve got a mission.”

Maryse raised a brow; Alec came by that look honestly. “Then shouldn’t you be speaking to Luke?”
“I have spoken with him but I ask that he let me be the one to explain to you what’s all involved.”
Alec hesitated and Maryse picked up on it of course.

“What’s the mission?” She asked and took the letter Alec silently pulled out and handed her.

Watching her face, he saw the shock and even excitement appear in her eyes, her gaze shot up to his face and he nodded, yes it was real. “Wow,” she said, handing the letter back to him.

“I am assuming that Luke is excited to go?” Maryse shook her head at her own question. “Of course, he is, who wouldn’t be! This is amazing, that they even reached out Alec!”

He looked own at his folded hands as they lay atop the table, noticing his tell-tale nervousness in the way he rubbed his thumbs together. Looking back up, the hesitation was clear in his eyes.
“Honestly mom I didn’t at first want to include Luke for one very important reason.”

Maryse looked sad as the reasons became clear to her. “Because he might want to take me along, is that the reason Alec?”

Alec reached across and grasped his mom’s hands, giving them a squeeze he spoke quickly. “We have no idea really of what we are walking into there. This could be a trap, be really dangerous Mom.”

“Alec I can take care of myself. Even deruned I am still a trained Shadowhunter, runes don’t take that knowledge away.” Maryse smiled gently at her son, she couldn’t be angry, not when his reason came from concern and love.

“I know, that’s what Jia said and I know I could use your knowledge on this mission. So Maryse Lightwood, you want to be one of the first ever Shadowhunters to enter the city of New Orleans?”
Alec smiled at the answer that was clear in his mom’s excited gaze. He had his answer.

When Alec returned to Alicante he sent a fire message to the High Warlock of New Orleans. It said simply that the Clave had received their invitation and that a delegation from Idris would arrive within the week, he said nothing of who exactly that delegation would be. Even though the letter had come to him personally, it had said nothing of the Inquisitor being the one to meet with them, Alec liked that they had a little element of surprise on their side, not only would they meet with the Inquisitor of the Shadowhunters but at his side would be the High Warlock of Alicante. Alec hoped New Orleans was ready for Magnus Lightwood-Bane.
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Chapter Summary

No Shadowhunter has ever entered the Crescent City, but when a letter comes across the Inquisitor's desk, this becomes one mission that Inquisitor Lightwood-Bane and his husband, High Warlock of Alicante intend to take on themselves.

However things are not what they seem in the Big Easy!

The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

Over the next day and a half, Alec met with Luke and Magnus, trying to narrow down who else should be recruited for the mission. Alec looked over at Magnus who had grown silent during their latest round of discussions. “Magnus, what’s on your mind?”

Magnus let out a heavy sigh and slumped back on their sofa. The trio had been meeting in Alec and
Magnus’ home since Alec was much more prone to interruptions at his office. “As loath as I am to admit this out loud, I think it would be wise to add another trusted Warlock to the personnel going.” At Alec’s raised brow, Magnus frowned. “It’s not that I doubt my abilities in anyway Alexander. It’s the nature of where we are going. The Crescent City is a bowl, a bowl that has had magic poured into it for centuries. The city has also been run by Downworlders, who we have no records on and no idea as to their power.”


The grimace on Magnus’ face spoke to how unpleasant he found this chore. “My first thoughts would be Cat, and while she is truly powerful, her magic lies more with healing. I, of course, hope we do not come to need healing that requires a Warlock of Cat’s capabilities.” Magnus stopped speaking and the internal war on his face had Alec fighting a smile, he knew whom Magnus was thinking of and he couldn’t decide if he was going to be mean and force his husband to name him or if he should take pity on Magnus and make it his idea.

Alec was such a sucker for Magnus. “What about asking Lorenzo, you think he could leave his High Warlock duties for this mission?”

The smile he got and the promises of reward in Magnus’ eyes made Luke cough to cover his chuckle. Alec ignored the other Shadowhunter. “How about I ask him, I wanted to go to the Institute anyway and see if Izzy would let me steal Underhill.” That would give Alec, Luke, Maryse, Andrew as the Shadowhunters going and Magnus and Lorenzo as the Warlocks. Surely, this group would be more than formidable enough to handle anything they might encounter.

Luke nodded and rose from his seat. “I’ll confirm with you tomorrow that we are set. Now I’m heading for home and packing that needs to be done.”

Alec saw the older man out and returned to find Magnus stretched out on the sofa and watching Alec with a great deal of fondness. Alec moved around the coffee table and bent over, pressed a hard kiss to Magnus’ lips. “You so owe me,” he teased his spouse.

With a surprise move, Magnus reached up and grasping Alec by the arms toppled his Shadowhunter so that he came down on top of Magnus, just where he wanted him. Before taking those smirking lips, Magnus mumbled. “I think I have a proven history of rewarding you handsomely, Alexander.” Alec was too busy kissing Magnus to respond.

For the second time in less than a week, Alec stepped out of a portal in New York, this time, his old work place, the New York Institute. He had fire-messaged Izzy earlier in the day, asking if he could meet with her and Underhill. He also asked Lorenzo to attend the meeting. Alec wanted to firm everything up so that they could leave for New Orleans the day after tomorrow.
The two young Shadowhunters at the door immediately snapped to attention. Alec didn’t recognize them but knew Izzy had been recruiting. He hadn’t made it more than two feet when Andrew Underhill, the Institute’s head of security greeted him. “Inquisitor,” Andrew said, and stepped in beside Alec as he headed for the ops center. Heading inside the heart of the Institute, Alec could see nothing much had changed. Shadowhunters still monitored screens, did research on others, and came and went with great frequency. The hustle and bustle was a far cry from his now quiet office with Shadowhunters that went home at the end of the business day.

“Izzy in her office?” He asked Underhill, stopping a moment to watch a mission broadcasted over one of the monitors.

“No Sir, she had to run down to the lab but said to set you up in her office and to tell you there’s coffee and no she didn’t make it.” Andrew smiled at Alec’s chuckle and waited until Alec moved away towards his old office before falling into step again with him. Andrew waited until they moved away. “Izzy said you requested my presence at this meeting?”

“Yes, I did and also Lorenzo will be joining us, did she mention that?” Alec asked, looking careful at his former head of security. He couldn’t help a little bit of curiosity regarding the state of the Shadowhunter and High Warlock’s relationship. Alec smirked to himself, wasn’t that a weird turn of phrase. He could have been talking about another Shadowhunter and High Warlock, and look how well that turned out.

“He mentioned it last night and once you are settled I will come back and wait for his arrival.” Underhill opened Izzy’s door and Alec stepped inside.

He thanked Underhill and watched him go, smile growing, well he had his question answered. Seems the two spent time together in the evening. Alec wiped the smile off his face as something just occurred to him and a scowl replaced it. Here he was internally gossiping. Magnus would be so proud.

Izzy rushed through the door moments later, pulling off her white lab coat she flung it at her desk before throwing herself into Alec’s arms. “Hermano!” she said, crushing Alec in one of her famous hugs.

Alec laughed, returning her hug. “Good to see you Izzy.”

Pulling back, she frowned up at him. “How come the only time you visit anymore is work related? You and Magnus owe me so many make-up dinners, and I want expensive dinners, Mr. Inquisitor!”
Laughing and nodding in agreement, he knew better than to not agree, Alec drew her back into another hug. He’d missed her. “Sorry Izzy, and you are absolutely right and I’ll make Magnus throw in a shopping trip as well.”

“Now you’re talking,” she said pulling away and taking a seat on the sofa. Reaching over she poured them each a cup of coffee, the aroma telling Alec it was from their favorite coffee shop.

Taking a seat beside her, he offered his thanks. “We are just waiting for Underhill and Lorenzo to join us and I will get down to business.” They enjoyed their coffee and talked about the family for a couple of minutes. Alec was in touch with his Parabatai frequently and he knew Jace and Clary were taking it slow since the red head had started to remember her past. He probably saw their mom more than Izzy. Alec well understand the demands on one’s time that being the Head caused. They spoke about Max and the issues he was having deciding his future. The few minutes together were pleasant but too short and Alec vowed to make more time for this family. The knock and Izzy’s call for entre stopped their talk for now.

Lorenzo and Underhill came in the door smiling. Alec rose from his seat to meet them. “Lorenzo, thanks for coming.” He held out a hand to the High Warlock and got a firm shake in response.

“My pleasure, one does not turn down a request from the Inquisitor after all.” Lorenzo smiled and took a chair across from Alec and Izzy and to Alec’s great surprise, Andrew perched on the chairs arm instead of taking his own seat.

“Well I do appreciate it. Now that we are all here, I will get right down to business, time is of the essence. We have had an unforeseen and honestly shocking request come in.” Alec paused here while Lorenzo and Underhill got coffee. Once they settled, he continued. “New Orleans has opened discussions about a possible Institute in the Crescent City.”

Alec was not at all fazed when Lorenzo spit his coffee out in shock. “You’re kidding, right?” Rey asked, eyes wide and mouth open in disbelief.

“No not at all. We got a request for a delegation and an invite into the Forbidden City, no conditions put on the invitation either.” Alec smiled as all three in the room looked at him, various levels of disbelief and shock on their faces. “I’m taking the mission myself, as well as Magnus, and I am putting together a team.” Alec turned to Izzy and raised a brow. “Izzy I’d like to borrow your head of security for the mission.” He next looked at Rey. “Lorenzo, Magnus wanted to extend an invitation for you to come along to assist as well.” After he finished speaking, Alec sat back and picked up his coffee, he could feel all their eyes on him, but their eyes were distracted as each person mulled over what he had just told them. Alec didn’t interrupt their thoughts, just waited.
Izzy was the first to speak. “I will not stand in Underhill’s way if he wished to take on this mission and honestly, I am incredible jealous that he gets this opportunity. Wow! Alec I cannot believe it, the Forbidden City!” She sat forward in her seat, more resembling the excited young girl Alec remembered than the stern competent Head of the New York Institute.

Andrew spoke up after Izzy. “Wow is right, I cannot believe it and I am honored that you asked for me, Alec.” He paused and looked at Lorenzo, they shared one of those silent conversations that couples seem to do before he turned back to speak. “If it’s okay, Lorenzo and I would like to discuss this privately before making any decisions?”

“Of course, but I do have to ask that you decide quickly. We are on a short turnaround here and if you both decide not to come, I will have to find others, understand you are our first choices.” Alec rose and held out a hand to both men.

Both men rose as well and shook Alec’s hand, but then they looked once more at each other, had another one of those ‘couple’ moments before turning back to Alec. This time Lorenzo spoke. “Forgive us, Mr. Lightwood, but we need no more time. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity even for an immortal such as myself and we are truly honored that you and Magnus thought of us first.” Lorenzo paused, looked at Andrew then turned back to smile at Alec. “We are eager to go on this mission with you.”

Alec grinned and patted both men on the shoulders. “Well then that’s excellent. Settle what you need here. Can you both be in Alicante in the morning? I know that is not much time but I would like us to depart day after tomorrow for New Orleans. We have much to discuss.” Getting their agreements, Alec turned to his sister. “And, of course, I will bring you back something special from the Crescent City.”

Izzy’s ‘you’d better,’ drew laughter from all of them. Izzy, leaving Andrew behind to get his affairs in order for tomorrow escorted Alec out. One last kiss and hug later, Alec was stepping through the portal for home.

Arriving home before Magnus, Alec made two calls. First, one was to Luke letting him know the team was assembled and they would meet tomorrow as a group. The second was to the Consul’s private chef. He had been offered numerous times the man’s services but until now had not accepted the offer. Now Alec decided to surprise his hard working spouse with a romantic dinner just the two of them. He did not know what this mission would bring or when they might get some alone time again. So tonight, Alec intended on taking full advantage of his husband, in every way possible.
By the time Magnus came through the door, Alec had accomplished a lot. The table was set with a white tablecloth, red roses, and sparkling wine glasses. Their dinner rested on plates with silver domes covering it. The aroma stirring a hunger for food. Alec would take that, for now.

Magnus smiled upon seeing Alec’s hard work. “Darling this looks wonderful, what’s the occasion?”

Alec went to greet Magnus and after exchanging a kiss, leaned back to smirk. “Can’t I do something nice for my husband?”

Magnus laughed and allowed Alec to pull his chair out and seat him at their table. Dinner was luscious, the chef obviously knew what he was doing. The Dover Sole fell apart on their forks and the asparagus, cooked to perfection. For dessert there were fresh peaches in a brandy sauce over a vanilla bean ice cream. They both pushed away from the table completely full. Taking their brandy to the sofa, they talked quietly about their day. Alec only brought up work once, telling Magnus what he had told Luke, that their team was assembled. Magnus laughed as Alec described his curiosity about Underhill and Rey and Alec even shared what he considered gossip, observations about the pair.

Finally, Alec sat his glass aside and rose. Looking down at Magnus, Alec smiled secretly. “Give me about ten minutes then join me in the bathroom.”

Magnus frowned briefly but looking into Alec’s eyes, the hazel extra bright with anticipation, he decided to wait and let his husband have his plans play out without interruption. “Okay Alexander,” was all Magnus said, sipping slowly on his after-dinner drink.

Alec got to play out the rest of their evening exactly how he had imagined. They soaked for a time in a bath rich with the scent of sandalwood. Then there was the slow massage Alec treated Magnus to, leaving no inch of Magnus’ body untouched. Normally their love making was frantic, almost animalistic. Alec wasn’t sure why, he guessed that it was because they were still newlyweds, as if in some small corner of their hearts they still couldn’t believe they were together, married, and accepted. Whatever the reason, that night, Alec made slow love to Magnus, almost mesmerized by Magnus’ beauty. Their touches lasted for hours, their kisses until their lips were swollen and sore. Nothing was hurried, nothing was rushed, instead each breath, cherished, and savored. When they came together at last, Alec thought it must be like low tide, the gentle rolling in of the waves, not slapping at the shore, but caressing it, covering it, slowly.

As they settled at last, breath evening out, their bodies still in contact, Alec knew his heart would never be as full as it was at that moment.
Chapter Summary

Alec and Magnus along with their hand picked group layout more plans for the Big Easy visit and they finally step foot in the Forbidden City.

The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

3

Alec met with everyone in his office, Lorenzo and Underhill arriving in Idris first thing that morning. They spread out across the small conference table, the only one missing was Maryse. They would be making a stop in New York only long enough to pick her up before portal to a meeting point. Alec had offered more than once to work on getting Maryse’s ban lifted, but his mom cited her reason, chief among them that she would feel on display without her runes in Idris, and Alec never wanted to make her feel uncomfortable.

He spread out a map of New Orleans. They had discussed and finally decided on a portal to Mobile, Alabama. That was the closest any of them had ever been to New Orleans, and surprisingly it had been Luke who had been to Mobile once. The delegation from the High Warlock of New Orleans would meet them in Mobile and portal them the rest of the way into the Crescent City. They were already taking chances with the unknown here; Alec didn’t like it but didn’t see what choice they had, none of them ever having been inside Louisiana let only the forbidden city, they needed a guide for the portal.
“Well, we don’t know much.” Alec began. “No idea who the High Warlock is, where they live, or what we are walking into.” Even with laying out those dire unknowns, the thrill, and excitement gleamed in Alec’s eyes. “What we can assume is that something has changed, and changed drastically enough that they now feel like they need Shadowhunters.”

“This could mean demons, and Greater demons at that.” Luke broke in to say and Magnus nodded.

Magnus looked thoughtful and tapped two fingers against his lips. “I can only imagine the draw a city filled with that much potential magic would be to a Greater demon. Filling up for centuries and no Nephilim in sight to ruin their fun!”

“Could it be that the Downworlders in the city may have grown out of control?” Lorenzo asked.

Magnus frowned. “It could be or that there is discord and challengers for the High Warlock to handle. I hope we are not being called there for some internal power struggle. New Orleans is such a bizarre place.”
“How do you mean?” Alec asked. Leaning back, he observed the group for a moment, loving how well everyone was already meshing and working together, he couldn’t wait to see his mom with them also.

Magnus sipped his coffee a moment before replying. “I cannot think of another place where the mundane residents and tourists not only are aware of the supernatural but activity seek it out and support it. The tourists expect it and would be disappointed if they did not see the vampires, ghosts, and voodoo priest. Not that I think they really believe it, but it would be so easy being a Downworlder in that kind of environment.”

Lorenzo nodded, completely understanding, as Magnus did, the draw that living in that kind of acceptance would be. “I can also see the potential for all kinds of abuses with there being no policing by the Clave.”

“They may very well have a similar set of rules and ways of policing themselves. Long term abuses couldn’t have sustained a tourist industry.” Magnus leaned forward eagerly and Alec thought as he had before that Magnus may enjoy his debates with the other Warlock more than he let on.

Letting out a deep sigh, Alec thought he’d never been on a mission before with so little information going in. He could see the others realized this as well. “I think we can all agree that we have so many more questions than we do information, at least at this juncture.”

Underhill spoke up for the first time. “If they are truly ready to invite Shadowhunters into their city, establish an Institute, it makes me wonder what knowledge they have of the Accords they would have to agree to. I, for one, am very happy that Maryse is coming with us, for that very reason.”

“Agreed,” Alec said. “If we do not need to discuss anything else right now, we best leave. Mom will be waiting for us and the time to meet our contact is approaching.” Alec rose and the rest of the group did as well. Magnus and Lorenzo would bring their luggage once they knew where they were inside the Forbidden City.

The entire group stepped out of the portal into Maryse’s closed book store. She was waiting, but so also was Izzy. Alec first hugged his mom then sister. “Izzy what are you doing here?”

Isabelle put her hands on her hips and frowned at Alec. “You didn’t think I was going to let almost my entire family go on a mission like this without seeing you off, did you?”
Alec shook his head and gathered her back into his arms, hugging her tighter he pressed a kiss atop her head. “We will be fine. You know I’ll look out for everyone.”

“Who’ll look out for you hermano?” Izzy wished into the material of his shirt.

“Magnus, of course.” Alec released her and stepped back. “I promise we will come home in one piece.”

“You’d better,” she warned. Looking at the entire group she directed her next words to them all. “The New York Institute is on high alert for the duration of your mission. All communications from any of you are to be marked red flag and immediately brought to my attention, no matter of the hour of the day.”

Maryse smiled proudly and hugged her daughter goodbye. Each of the group made their farewells, before with a whoosh, Magnus opened a portal and Luke stepped in first, guiding the rest to Mobile. They stepped out of the portal into what Alec was sure was a new Edom. “By the Angel!” he groaned; sweat already gathering along his hair line and upper lip.

Luke laughed. “You’re now in the deep South Alec, this is what they call humidity.”

“It’s October!” Alec couldn’t help but complain. The group stood in an old warehouse along Mobile’s coast. The building bore the remains of its product, bits of cotton still floated across its floors.

“That is why true Southerners only leave their homes in the early morning, or late evening.” A dry voice remarked and the group swung around to see a tall, thin, ebony colored man smiling at them. The man’s face bore the true agelessness that only vampires and warlocks were able to obtain, and since it was daylight, Alec was going to guess that this was a warlock in front of them. His skin was so dark that it had undertones of deep purples. He was bald and had deep set eyes, so dark they almost appeared black. “I apologize I did not mean to startle you.” He moved towards the group, stopping only a few feet away before giving them a brief bow. “Allow me to introduce myself; you may call me Dr. John.”

Magnus stepped towards Dr. John before Alec could caution him not to. “Dr. John, The Voodoo medicine man?” Magnus asked, face alight with curiosity.

Dr. John laughed. “Well that is what the mundanes called me in the 1800’s. I, like you Magnus
Bane, and your companion, Lorenzo Rey am a warlock. My powers lie in the healing arts just like your friend Catarina Loss."

“You know who we are?” Lorenzo asked also stepping forward despite Andrew’s hand that reached out for him.

Dr. John must have seen Underhill’s movement because his face turned somber. “I swear to you all, I mean you no harm. Isolated by choice we may be, but not unaware of the happenings in the Shadowworld.”

Alec read nothing but sincerity in the warlock’s face. Stepping forward he held out a hand. “Allow me then to formally introduce myself and the group.” Dr. John’s face once more broke into a smile and he eagerly accepted Alec’s handshake. “I am Alec Lightwood-Bane, Inquisitor; this is my husband and High Warlock of Alicante, Magnus. Lightwood-Bane.” Alec gestured for each member of his group to come forward and Dr. John eagerly greeted them all.

He seemed equally fascinated by Luke. “You are the Shadowhunter who was once a Downworlder?” Dr. John asked and listened eagerly to Luke’s confirmation. “Fascinating,” he muttered before shaking Maryse’s hand. Once introductions were out of the way, Dr. John rubbed his hands together addressing Alec once more. “If your group is ready I will portal us all to my High Warlock. She is most eager also to meet you.”

Glancing at his group and receiving their nods, Alec took a deep breath. “We are ready.” Dr. John opened a portal and Alec stepped through first behind him. The group stepped out into a completely new world, into lush foliage and a smell none of them had ever encountered before. If Alec had to break down the individual smells he would have said, wetness, decay and death, all scented with flowers the likes of which Alec had never seen. It reminded him a great deal of the tropics, places like the West Indies and the Bahamas, places Magnus had introduced Alec to. The last of many blooms surrounded them, scents coming from Magnolia, Hibiscus, Gardenias, and Jasmine. Alec looked at the house that rose behind this garden and couldn’t contain himself. “Wow,” he whispered.
Dr. John smiled, pleased with Alec’s admiration. The house, more like mansion, rose behind the garden like its own jewel. Delicate, intricate, iron balconies and fences surrounded it. The home itself was a pale rose color with darker grey balconies on each floor. It had shutters also in the dark grey trim and along the roofline, detailed fixtures lined the entire top of the house. The iron fence rose over six feet and completely enclosed the gardens and house. It was a timeless, stately, beautiful home. “Come, this is the home of our High Warlock, she is eager to greet you.” Dr. John began leading them across a stone path, through the garden and toward the hugewraparound porch.

“Can you break down what we are smelling?” Alec asked. “I would say its water but that doesn’t seem enough?”

“That dampness you smell, with its underlying scent of death my friends is the swamp. New Orleans lies well below sea level and is surrounded by swamp land. I don’t recommend exploring that, the added scent of death indicates how treacherous the swamp can be.” Dr. John warned. He stopped before an enormous pair of French doors, so tall they must have been eight feet. He did not knock but opened the doors and gestured them in. They stepped into gleaming wood and the scent of beeswax and lemon. Everywhere the eye looked, it gleamed. In the center of the foyer there was a sweeping staircase with large banisters, their tops decorated by lion heads. The entry was bare except for small Queen Ann tables and flower arrangements, but the wood needed no more decoration.

Dr. John led them into a room off the foyer. It was huge, with two seating areas and an immense fireplace. The furniture was all covered in rich jewel toned fabric, some faded by the sun that streamed in from 15-foot tall windows. Delicate tables and small loveseats dotted the room, along with crystal lighting fixtures. It reminded Alec of some of the French homes Magnus had shown him, the older more expensive ones. From one of those loveseats rose a small woman. She couldn’t have been more than 5’4” but her very presence made her seem six feet tall. She was stately, with dark hair done up in braids and wrapped in a crown around her head. She had rich brown skin that reminded Alec of chocolate. She wasn’t beautiful in the traditional since, with a broad forehead, full lips and high cheekbones, but she was very handsome and striking. Alec especially liked her eyes, light brown, with laugh lines and a twinkle in them that showed she had a joyous spirit.

She wore a welcoming smile and Dr. John went to stand next to her. He leaned down for the kiss she pressed to his cheek. “Thank you, dear.” She stated and turned to look at them, her smile growing. “Welcome to New Orleans, or as the locals will say, Yat, which means hello, how are you.”

Magnus gave a delighted laugh and eagerly stepped forward. “Marie Laveau, High Warlock of New Orleans, I presume? I should have not expected anyone else!”

TBC…
Alec & Magnus and the rest of their group meet the High Warlock of New Orleans and get to experience Bourbon Street, but not everyone is happy with Shadowhunters being in their city.

“The Voodoo Queen?” Alec said with surprise.

Marie smiled. “Well I couldn’t tell the mundanes I was a Warlock. Voodoo Queen was something they could accept.” She moved forward and held out a hand to Underhill. “More explanation in a bit, but now I want to greet you all. I feel like I know each of you. Andrew Underhill, the head of security for the New York Institute.”

Underhill looked shocked but reached out a returned her handshake. She seemed genuinely pleased to meet them, evident by the eagerness in which she took Andrew’s hands. Next, she moved on to Lorenzo, and exchanged some words with him in Spanish. Lorenzo must have liked what she had
to say because he wore a smile. Stopping before Luke, she tilted her head for a moment before speaking. “Lucian Graymark, born a Nephilim, became an alpha Werewolf, only to return to the Nephilim. You stir a great many emotions in the Downworld.” She squeezed his hands for second saying nothing more as she moved on to Maryse. “The way you have stood behind your children is an inspiration to us all, Maryse Lightwood. It’s a pleasure to welcome you to New Orleans.”

Finally, she came to a stop before Alec and Magnus, she grinned up at them. “Well you two have certainty set the Shadowworld on its ear now haven’t you.”

Alec frowned down at her. “You are very well informed for someone who hasn’t allowed outsiders?”

Marie moved back towards the sofas and gestured for them all to sit. She nodded at a young man at the door who began bringing in refreshments. Taking a seat Marie waited until Alec and Magnus sat down across from her, and the others spread out around them.

“We may be isolated from the rest of the Shadowworld, Mr. Lightwood-Bane but we do have those who leave our city, be it for work or personal. All we require is a blood-oath from them that they will not reveal our city’s secrets. We also occasionally travel outside New Orleans, again with the required blood-oath.” Marie picked up her cup and gestured for Alec to try his.

Alec took a sip of his drink, the unusual coffee exploded on his palette. The taste was strong, but underneath the coffee was something else, something Alec had never had before in his coffee, an earthiness and underlying hint of spice. “This is wonderful, what’s in it?” He took another sip, unable to resist the new flavor of his favorite beverage. How had she known that Alec was the coffee connoisseur?

Marie smiled. “We add a spice called Chicory to our coffee here. I am glad you like it. I will send some home with you.” She looked at Magnus with a great deal of curiosity. “I have for many years wished to invite my fellow Warlocks to visit my city, but as you are aware Mr. Lightwood-Bane, we Warlocks are funny about blood-oaths.”

Magnus smiled. “Yes we are,” was all he said regarding the oaths. “I too would have loved to visit your city before today. I came close once, stood on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, gazing in the direction of this city, but alas, I turned away.”

“I know,” Marie said with a small smile. At Magnus’ raised brow, that smile became a little smirk. “One of my abilities is to sense magic, having studied the magic of New Orleans my entire life, I can sense when a new element is close.”
Lorenzo sat forward in his seat. “So, you are saying you could sense Magnus and I the second we stepped out of the portal?”

“Yes, once you are emerged into the fabric of my city then the thread of your magic will begin to take on the feel of the city.” Marie turned back to Alec. “Now that you have been brought here, if you wish to retrieve your bags? I thought you could all stay here with me.”

Alec nodded, “Thank you, we appreciate the hospitality and it will make our talks more productive if we do not have to factor in travel time.”

Underhill rose, Lorenzo at his side. “Alec, Ms. Laveau, we would like to go back and retrieve the bags now, if that would be okay?” With their agreement, Lorenzo opened a portal and he and Andrew stepped through, returning only moments later, arms full of luggage. Marie directed the same young man as before to take the bags to their rooms.

“I have not asked about weapons. I know Shadowhunters like to be armed and that you can glamour those weapons. Every Downworlder in the city is aware of your arrival and just who you are, but I cannot send you out into the city without telling you that not every member of the Downworlder population is happy with my decision to invite you here.” Marie let out a deep sigh. “I cannot ask you not to defend yourselves if attacked; so, I will only ask that you use caution, please.”

“Should we expect trouble?” Alec asked with a frown, not at all liking that he may have exposed the others to more danger than he had been aware of.

Marie sat forward on her seat and shook her head. “No, not at all, my warnings to the city should be enough. However, you well know how youngsters in their newly turned state can react without thought or pause. I did speak with our local alpha and clan leaders regarding this and they have assured me that their people have been advised of proper behavior towards you.”

Alec still did not like this, no idea what he was walking into or bringing the others into. “Can you tell us now why New Orleans has reached out to the Shadowhunters after all these centuries?”

Marie hesitated, looking off into the distance like she was hearing something they didn’t. After a few moments she looked back at Alec. “I heard that about you, Inquisitor, that you mean business and that’s a good thing. It’s what we need. May I ask though that we postpone any serious discussion until tomorrow? I wanted you all to take a small tour of the French Quarter before it
gets to dark to see anything, and then you have reservations at one of New Orleans restaurants, Antoine’s.”

“Ms. Laveau with all due respect we did not come here to play tourist. We came because as you say, for the first time in its history, New Orleans reached out to the Nephilim for help, I’m here to answer that request if I can.” Alec really wasn’t trying to be difficult. Despite knowing so little about her, he liked this High Warlock. He needed some hint as to what they were going to be dealing with, that was all.

“What happened then? How did that magic manifest itself? How did it get out of control? It starts to attack bigger and scarier things, things that we now find ourselves helpless to deal with. That is why we need the Shadowhunters and outsiders like your husband and your friends. We need your help before New Orleans no longer is run by Downworlders, but run by a Prince of Hell.” Marie rose and nodded her head towards the door. “Now, rest a bit, unpack, and Joshua here will show you to your rooms. You will depart within a couple hours for Vieux Carré.” She left the room.

Alec’s senses were on overload. Everywhere he looked there were people, lights, laughter, and underlying it all, a smell that he had never encountered before. Of course, there were some smells he could do without, like the stale beer and the scent of too many bodies packed close together. Underneath all that though, you could smell the age of the buildings around them. Their little group barely made a ripple in the crowd, giving credit to Marie’s statement that they could move about freely, un glamored.

They could not walk together, so Luke led the way with Lorenzo escorting Maryse. Magnus and Alec walked hand in hand with Underhill bringing up the rear. Alec felt a little useless, since it was obvious Luke and Andrew had discussed the best way to protect their assets, something Alec still wasn’t used to being. He tried hard to see everything, but with so many flashing lights and different doorways to explore it was impossible. So, they slowly made their way to the restaurant for dinner.

Alec thought about their trip down to the Quarter, as he had heard some locals call it. The High Warlock had insisted that they walk down and over a block and catch the St. Charles Streetcar. The Garden District where Marie lived was beautiful with old trees dripping with Spanish Moss, Lorenzo had been mesmerized by the evidence of Spanish architecture, said it reminded him of home. The contrast between the peaceful almost hushed environment of the Garden District and the Quarter was startling. Alec could understand why so many chose to live away from the hustle and noise. There had been one stately home that had Alec’s mouth hanging open, it had the typical of the area iron fencing, but the fencing was shaped and designed to resemble a corn field! Magnus said he had read some where that the fence was a gift from a loving husband for his home sick new bride. The street car had been fine, Alec haven ridden one before when they went to San Francisco. He much preferred the environment of Marie’s home to the Quarter!
Finally, they arrived at the restaurant and were seated quickly thanks to the reservations made by Marie. Alec could tell that Magnus and Lorenzo were impressed by the old-world elegance of the restaurant. Magnus ordered the wine for the table and Lorenzo the appetizers. Alec could tell that this was going to turn into a pissing contest if someone didn’t put a stop to it. Lorenzo and Magnus got along better now, he wouldn’t call them friends exactly, but more of a grudging mutual respect. They still competed though, just in safer environments like the restaurant. He saw Andrew lean over and whisper something in Rey’s ear that had the Warlock smiling and setting back in his chair much more relaxed. Alec helped also by putting his hand under the table on Magnus’ thigh. Giving his spouse’s leg a squeeze, he almost laughed aloud when Magnus’ huffed and sat back.

After that little battle of wills, dinner was wonderful. They kept their conversation steered away from the purpose of their visit instead speaking about what they had seen of New Orleans so far. They each ordered recommended chef’s local favorites and all the plates were passed around family style. Alec willingly admitted the food was like nothing he had ever had before, spicy and so full of flavor. When he finally laid his napkin down and scooted back from the table, he had to rub his small bump of a food baby, ignoring Magnus’ laughter at his expense. “Definitely want to walk about a bit after this meal,” Alec said.

Magnus made sure the servers would extend their appreciation and admiration to the chef and settled their tab, leaving a healthy tip for the excellent service they had received. They all moved much slower as they entered the frenzy of Bourbon Street. This slower pace allowed Alec to really observe the revelry around them. What he especially enjoyed seeing was all the different couples on the streets and the ease in which they showed their togetherness. This was something Alec was becoming more accustomed to expecting and he always was thankful when he did not have to censor himself with his husband. He saw men kissing men, women kissing men, and women kissing women, even a drag queen or two.

They drifted away from the parting along Bourbon Street into the quieter sections of the Quarter. Here one could really see the history and age of the buildings. Many of the smaller streets were still paved in cobblestones, and each little front facing home had shutters done in bright and bold colors. Almost all the high gates and walls that separated the homes’ interiors from the street were lined with broken glass. “Why do you think they do that?” He asked, pointing up to the gate in front of them, lined with half broken bottles and pieces of sharp glass.

“I’m betting it’s to keep unwanted trespassers out, Alexander. Who would want to try and get over that gate without cutting themselves?” Magnus pointed to what appeared to be drops of blood. “Though it does look like some foolish soul tried, it’s an effective deterrent.”

Alec nodded and they strolled on. He almost couldn’t even hear the noise anymore, the night around them only filled with the sound of insects. They were passing an alley, a spot where the street lights did not reach when three young males stepped out right in front of Luke and Maryse, stopping the group in their tracts. Alec quickly moved up to the other side of his mother.
One of the men stepped forward. “We have been following you for five blocks trying to figure out what the hell you are. Then it occurred to us, we bet you are all the High Warlock’s Shadowhunters.” The spokesmen looked them up and down and sneered. “At least three of you are, we don’t know what the rest of your group is.”

Alec stepped in front of his group, saying nothing as he felt Magnus move to his side. “We are the invited guest of the High Warlock of New Orleans, as to what we are or are not, that is something you will have to take up with her.” Alec kept his voice mild, but there was no hiding the under tone of authority, or steel.

The men snickered before their leader once again spoke for the group. “Well we aren’t high enough on the food chain to be in the know, so share why don’t ya?”

Alec’s hand itched for his bow, which was glamoured on his body. He hesitated only because of Marie’s plea for caution. “Well as visitors to your city I am afraid we are not at liberty to disrupt your customs or lines of communication. So, until your High Warlock deems it otherwise, introductions will have to wait.” Alec moved forward and the rest of his group followed. He stopped when the men stepped directly in his path.

“Come now,” the leader taunted. “I’ve heard some tales now about you Shadowhunters and how badass you are, how about a demonstration?”

He asked for it, Alec thought.

TBC…
Chapter Summary

No Shadowhunter has ever entered the Crescent City, but when a letter comes across the Inquisitor's desk, this becomes one mission that Inquisitor Lightwood-Bane and his husband, High Warlock of Alicante intend to take on themselves.

However things are not what they seem in the Big Easy!

The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

5

The ringleader didn’t even get an opportunity to blink, before the sharp tip of an arrow was aimed right at his face. His two cohorts froze as well. They too found themselves pinned in place by Alec’s arrows. He had drawn and notched his bow with three arrows before the young men could react.

“That enough of a demonstration for you?” Alec growled.
Everyone but Alec and the three pinned in place swung around at the sound of clapping. A very large man stepped out of the shadows; he was smirking and eyeing Alec and the three youths with amusement. “Learned your lesson yet pups?” he said. The stranger was massive, towering over even Alec’s 6’3” by several inches. He had dark hair and a neatly trimmed beard. Even dressed casually in jeans and a t-shirt, there was no mistaking what he was. He carried himself like an alpha. He stopped a few feet away from the group, cautiously eyeing the red magic that sparked between Magnus’ hands, magic he had called when the stranger stepped out of the dark.

“All me to apologize for my pups here, they often think when their elders speak it means they can ignore those words and do whatever they’d like, no matter the consequences. I thank you for teaching them this lesson.” The man made sure his hands where visible and his body language open. “My name’s Stephen and I’d like to welcome you to N’awlins.”

“You’re the alpha here?” Luke asked stepping forward.

The man, Stephen, eyed Luke curiously before smiling. “Yes, and you are Luke Garroway, the alpha from New York?”

Alec wished they would skip the pleasantries; it wasn’t easy holding three men at arrow point for more than a few minutes. As if this alpha, Stephen, could read Alec’s mind he growled low and mean and the three young wolves spun on their heel and took off. Alec lowered his bow, but did not put it away just yet.

“Ex alpha,” Luke answered. “We spoke on the phone once though and I appreciated your willingness to talk and the advice you provided. Your pack here is known for how well its run.” Luke stepped forward and shook the hand the other man held out to him. “Let me introduce the group to you,” Luke subtly gestured it was ok to Alec and he put his arrows away, glamoring his bow once more.

“Yea, I heard you took some fancy Clave potion and returned to being a Shadowhunter. Many of us didn’t believe it and now I can say I’ve seen it with my own eyes. Is it true that there is no more of this magic potion?” Stephen asked.

Luke looked to Alec and got a small nod, a fact that wasn’t ignored by Stephen. “Yes, there was one vial left and the source was destroyed.” Luke left his explanation at that and moved next to Alec. “Stephen this is Inquisitor Alec Lightwood-Bane.”

Before offering his hand, Alec put his other arm around Magnus’ waist and drew him to Alec’s side. He didn’t like the way this Stephen’s eyes had paused a little too long over Magnus, not at all
noticing how they stopped on him not Magnus. “And this is my husband, High Warlock of Alicante, Magnus Lightwood-Bane,” he added, ignoring the small nudge from Magnus’ elbow. Alec saw with glee the alpha’s eyes fall to where Alec’s arm was wrapped around Magnus’ waist, message received. He continued the introductions, noticing how admiring Stephen’s eyes were as they passed over his group.

“Well if we had known how-,” Stephen paused and again ran approving eyes over them. “How ‘fit’ you Shadowhunters were the invite would have come much sooner. I’ll look forward to our High Warlock’s shindig a bit more enthusiastically now.”

Underhill frowned, “Shindig?” he asked.

“A party,” Magnus answered. “We were not aware of any party held by the High Warlock?” Magnus addressed the alpha.

Stephen grimaced. “Well now she will be right unhappy with me if I have spoiled the surprise, but really just a small get-together to welcome y’all and introduce you to the city’s Downworlders.”

Magnus smiled slightly. “We will confer with the High Warlock then.”

Stephen seemed to sense Magnus’ lack of enthusiasm at his company. “I’ll take my leave of you then for now. I have some pups to deal with after all. Luke, we will talk more soon. Nice to meet y’all.” Stephen disappeared into the night following his pack members.

They drifted back along their tour, Alec looking down curiously at Magnus as they walked side by side. “You didn’t like him, the alpha?” Magnus gave a snort and even Maryse let out a little laugh. “What?” he asked confused.

Magnus rolled his eyes, but with a great deal of fondness at his obvious spouse. “Alexander, it was not my figure that his eyes kept coming back to, though your caveman impression done for the wrong signal did work well for me and my message.”

Surprisingly Alec just shrugged his shoulders. “Whatever, I think I made it very obvious that we were both taken.”

Maryse laughed as Magnus replied, “That you did darling that you did.”
Alec turned to look at the rest of the group, who had partnered-up and were walking either hand in hand or close together. “I don’t know about you guys, but I’m bushed and have seen enough for one night.” Magnus seeing the nods of agreement opened the portal that would take them back to the High Warlock’s home.

Letting out a frustrated sigh, Alec turned over onto his back. He couldn’t get comfortable in this strange bed and even stranger house. Every time he started to drift off, the cricking and groaning of this old house woke him up. Added to that the bed felt weird, he wasn’t use to sleeping on a ‘pillow top’ he thinks Magnus called it. The damn thing was tall too, coming to Alec’s waist; he’d even seen Magnus hop a little getting into it. The bedclothes also smelled funny, like old lady funny.

“Alec?” Magnus mumbled voice groggy. He turned over and slid a hand over Alec’s chest, fingers catching in the curly hair there. “Cannot sleep?” Magnus asked.

He turned his head on the pillow looking at his sleepy spouse. “No, this bed feels funny and the house makes too much noise.” He totally wasn’t pouting, not at all.

“The spirits are restless, probably at all the new people in the house.” Magnus started sliding his hand down Alec’s chest, heading directly for his groin. “I can exhaust you, that’ll help you sleep.” He said suggestively.

Alec stopped Magnus’ hand’s downward journey. “Ah no, you said spirits right? As in ghosts wandering around and watching us?”

Magnus leaned up on one arm and looked down at Alec with a frown. “Yes, spirits. Let me get this straight Alexander are you saying no sex while we are in this house?”

Alec widened his eyes and shook his head. “We are not doing that with a bunch of ghosts watching us Magnus!” Alec sounded horrified by the very idea.

Tugging his hand free from Alec’s grasp, Magnus plopped back down and let out a frustrated sigh. “Well then we need to wrap this mission up pronto!” He scooted over and laid his head on Alec’s shoulder and returned a hand to his chest, fingers gliding softly now over the warm skin under his hand. “I sense no ill will from the spirits here Alexander, get some rest.”

Letting out a sigh of part resignation and part relief, Alec closed his eyes.
Alec and Magnus returned the good morning greetings they received as they joined everyone at the breakfast table. Their late arrival got some amusement and even Marie had a smile on her lips as she waited for them both to seat themselves. “Inquisitor, I have been tasked with issuing an apology on behalf of the house and its spirit residents. They wished me to tell you that they mean no harm, and will be more courteous of your rest. There was also some sort of message about not watching?”

Alec flushed red and Magnus laughed. The table was full of breakfast foods and the smell of coffee. Alec took the plate Underhill passed him and looked down with a frown. “What are these?” he asked, he wasn’t touching the messages from the ‘spirits.’ The plate was full of large odd shaped pastry covered in what looked to be powered sugar.

“Those are called beignets, and they come from Café du Monde, famous here and a must have if you visit our city.” Dr. John smiled at Alec’s confusion. “They are deep fried donuts, hollowed out and covered in powder sugar, delicious and addictive, try one,” he urged.

“They’re good,” Lorenzo muttered, stuffing his face with the sweet treat.

Alec joined in the laughter; Lorenzo’s mouth and the tip of his nose were covered in the white fluffy sugar. Andrew wet the tip of his napkin and cleaned up the other man. Alec took one and passed the plate around the table, leaning into Magnus, he whispered. “I’m missing pancake day in the Alicante cafeteria.”

“Only you like those things, Alexander. They look and taste like hockey pucks.” Magnus whispered back.

Marie waited until everyone had filled his or her plates before addressing Alec. “I received an early morning phone call from the alpha of the New Orleans pack. He told me of his wolves’ misbehavior and that he told you of the party?”

Alec swallowed the sticky pastry before replying, he didn’t think he liked these beignets. “He apologized and we accepted that. As for the party, is that really necessary? Wouldn’t our time be better spent getting started with the reason we came here?”

Marie frowned and Magnus placed a hand on Alec’s leg under the table. He knew from his visits to the South in the past that they conducted themselves differently than others. Business was often done in a social setting, deals made over dinner, dancing, and cocktails, not what his serious-minded spouse was use to. Magnus gave their hostess a charming smile. “Marie, while we can appreciate the idea of a party, the Shadowhunters are not use to handling serious matters in that
setting and are more comfortable in meeting rooms and on the battlefield.”

“Oh I see,” Marie’s frown cleared and she nodded in understanding. “We have a large population of Downworlders here in New Orleans, but the talks we need to have will only involve a few of us. This party was a way to let the others in the community meet you all and see that you are not the bogeyman that they have been told you are. Most Downworlders in New Orleans have never even seen a Shadowhunter let alone met one.” She reached over, picked up a small card, and handed it to Magnus. “The party tonight is just an informal get together for the community to meet you before we sit down tomorrow for the reasons we invited you here.”

Magnus passed the card around the table. It was an invite to the High Warlock’s’ home for that evening. Resigned, Alec accepted that he was going to have to be social and even worse, try to make a good impression. He hated parties! Magnus smiled at him, amusement in his gaze. The rest of breakfast was spent firming up the day’s plans. Magnus and Lorenzo wanted to spend some time with Marie, her library and apothecary. Luke, Alec, and Andrew planned some sparring and touring the Garden District while Dr. John took Maryse to some of the city’s many antique markets. After their meal, and thanking their hosts, the group scattered to their pursuits, promising to meet later for the party.

At Alec’s request, the group gathered before the party in his and Magnus’ rooms, Lorenzo providing the warding to prevent curious ears from listening in. Alec tugged on his tie, and the knot that seemed to want to strangle him. “Stop it, you’ll mess up my work,” Magnus scolded, straightening Alec’s tie, again. He hated wearing them, the suit jacket he didn’t mind!

He didn’t think it was necessary but Alec warned anyway. “We still don’t know why we are here so keep your ears open tonight; see if you can pick up on the mood of the city’s Downworlders.” Receiving nods all around, Alec grimaced before continuing. “I’m sure all of you will mingle and be pleasant and if you see me put my hands behind my back please come and rescue me.” He asked getting laughter all around.

Maryse came up to him as the others besides Magnus left the room. Brushing imaginary lint of his jacket, he leaned over so that she could kiss his cheek. “You’ll do fine, Alec, just picture a room full of stuffy Clave officials.” She and Magnus both laughed and Alec made a face as he followed them from the room. Time to be social, oh boy!

TBC…
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The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

Alec felt like he had stepped back in time. The High Warlock of New Orleans had a ballroom in her house! It was huge, easily holding the ‘small’ get together she hosted for them. The walls were covered in rich thick wallpaper, the design featuring the gold fleur-de-lis that was the symbol of New Orleans. The floors were marble and high above them hung three crystal chandeliers, the lights bouncing off the walls providing little prisms of light. About 75 guests circled the ballroom, after having met them all in a receiving line the High Warlock insisted upon, Alec was free to find a corner to stand, not hide, despite what Magnus claimed. Alec was sure Magnus was going to want him to dance; after all, they had a damn string quartet playing.

He shifted feet, leaning against a column and holding what was now a warm glass of champagne. The receiving line had been interesting, he thought. The reactions they received from the guest had been a mixed bag. The Warlocks, Magnus and Lorenzo, got lots of interested looks and eager handshakes, but Alec and the other Shadowhunters got suspicion, distrust, and even a little fear. He watched as his group mingled and was happy to see more interest now in the guests’ gazes than fear. Alec didn’t know what stories were told young Downworlders about Shadowhunters, but he imagined they featured the Nephilim as some sort of bogeymen, come to steal bad Downworlders away, sad part was, in the Clave’s history that belief wasn’t too far off from the truth.

A small smile graced his lips as he watched Magnus in his element. His husband was surrounded and telling one of his stories that had the group laughing and giving him many an admiring gaze. Alec was fully aware of how magical his spouse was, but the name-dropping he just knew Magnus was doing, now that called for some teasing later. So focused on Magnus was Alec that the attack when it came caught him completely by surprise. The vampire had him spun around and pinned to the column by arms that felt like cold cement. The creature was smaller than Alec but he couldn’t move so strong was the vampire. The cold face pressed into Alec’s neck had him shuddering in repulsion. “Mon cher, you smell divine,” it whispered. “Never have I had the pleasure of tasting Nephilim blood.”
The blazing rope of furious magic wrapped around the Vampire’s neck, jerking him back off Alec and driving him to his knees. Magnus stood cat’s eyes furiously trained on the now struggling Vampire. “You will not taste him,” Magnus hissed, hands spread as he wrapped the Vampire in red furious ropes of magic.

All around them conversation and music came to an abrupt halt. Breaking through the gathering crowd, Marie approached Magnus cautiously. Alec rubbed his arms, stepping towards his spouse, trying to restore some feeling in his arms and hands. Marie said nothing to Magnus but frowned heavily at the struggling Vampire. “Jacques, what is the meaning of this?” She demanded.

The Vampire, Jacques, stopped struggling, perhaps realizing there wasn’t a way free from Magnus’ fury. “I only became a little carried away, cher. I lost control but for a moment, now can you ask our visitor to release me?” He didn’t sound all that sorry to Alec’s ears and it was obvious from the look on Magnus’ face that his husband wasn’t satisfied either.

Marie raised a brow, the silence in the room stifling. “I hear no remorse in your voice Jacques, and I do not think the High Warlock of Alicante is so quick to forgive your attack of his spouse, the Inquisitor of the Clave!” Her voice rose at each word until she was shouting for the whole ballroom to hear. At her feet, the Vampire Jacques went pale. “You fool,” Marie hissed, her fury making the hair on the back of Alec’s neck stand up. She whipped out her hands; a block of ice blue surrounded the Vampire. “You may release him, Magnus, he is not going anywhere.”

Magnus with a great reluctance released Jacques and went to Alec’s side, immediately taking his arms in hand and pushing up Alec’s jacket to see the bruises left by Jacques’ grip. A snarl curled his lips at the sight of discoloration on Alec’s skin and he shot Jacques a venomous glare before healing Alec. They both looked at the frozen Vampire, Marie’s magic had him immobile, and they could see the struggle in his eyes and he fought her hold over him. Marie’s sway over the dead was obvious as seen by the way she controlled Jacques.

“Your foolish actions have jeopardized our talks before they could even begin!” She hissed at the kneeling Vampire, freeing his mouth so he could snarl back at her.

“Not my talks! I did not want their Angel blooded kind here, this is all you, Marie!” Jacques pat back at her, the crowd shifting uneasily.

Marie scoffed. “Yes, we all know of your objections, too afraid that your activities would now bring consequences. It is because of you and your recklessness that we need the Nephilim!” Marie pulled her hands up, drawing Jacques to his feet and spinning him around so he faced her and the crowd at her back. “You will make reparations to their satisfaction and you will agree to whatever
they demand or Jacques, you will be run out of New Orleans never to be allowed to return.” At his mutinous look, she tightened the icy hold on him. “You will swear a blood-oath now this very moment in front of us all, or you will suffer the consequences.”

Alec could read the hatred on this Jacques’ face. He wasn’t sure even if the Vampire took a blood-oath that he wouldn’t break it at first opportunity. Exchanging a glance with Magnus, Alec stepped forward. “Is he the coven leader of the Vampires of New Orleans?”

Marie glanced at him curiously. “No,” she replied. “They removed him from that position over a decade ago. He is old and powerful and thinks that gives him the right to do whatever he likes without repercussions.”

Alec looked at the arrogant Vampire, he wasn’t inclined to be lenient. Alec didn’t care if this scared the Downworlders of New Orleans, the message must be sent that attacking Shadowhunters came with stiff penalties, he was about to demonstrate that. “Since I am the injured party and acting as Inquisitor, the punishment should be my decision.” Alec put his hands behind his back, spine stiff and straight, and these Downworlders didn’t know him, but his group did and knew from that posture and look that the hammer was about to fall on this Jacques.

Marie seemed pleased by this and graciously nodded her head. “Inquisitor we would greatly appreciate and welcome your wisdom in this matter, especially because you are the wronged party.”

Alec’s voice came out like a whip. His decision quick and brutal in its delivery. “Very well then, you are sentenced to serve 15 years in the guard in Idris.” He ordered, eyes piercing. “Magnus, if you please?” Alec stepped back and the Vampires’ eyes widened in alarm. Magnus opened a portal and with a sweep of her hands, Marie sent the Vampire to his punishment.

Marie was so pleased she actually dusted her hands together with a smile and turned back to her guest. “Let’s not let him ruin our evening, shall we?”

Alec spoke up. “If I may address the room, Marie?” At her eager nod he continued. Looking out at the sea of faces Alec sought to address the slight nervousness that remained in the air. “I want to assure everyone here that the Vampire Jacques was in no way punished because he didn’t yet agree with the High Warlock’s desires of the presence of Shadowhunters in your city. He was sentenced to the guard because he attacked unprovoked and without just cause. Now I say we continue what has been an enjoyable evening.” Alec, of course, was lying about the enjoyable part, at least for himself, but they didn’t need to know that about the Inquisitor, yet.
The music started playing and voices started out at low mutter but steadily rose as people began moving away and talking among themselves once again. Alec’s group surrounded him and Magnus, his Mom first to approach. “Alec, are you okay?” Assuring them all he was fine, Magnus pulled him away and towards the dance floor. Alec almost whined. “Magnus, you know I can’t dance.”

Spinning Alec around and drawing him into his arms, Magnus tightened his hold. “Nonsense Alexander, you move beautifully.” He spun Alec out once more and back into his arms. “Besides I need a moment or two to compose myself.”

Alec relaxed in Magnus’ arms, “Think we sent the right message?” he whispered.

Magnus leaned back enough to look at Alec. “I think you did brilliantly, Alexander, now no more talking, dance with me.” Magnus softly ordered.

As they glided across the dance floor, Alec and Magnus had no idea the conundrum they presented to the Downworlders in the room. They had met the formal pair during the reception line, been first hand witnesses to their fury and power in dealing with the Vampire, and now were seeing the pair as spouses. Only their group understood the complexities of the two men dancing so obviously in love, eyes only for each other. They got to see Magnus whisper something, a teasing glint in his eyes, and saw even the rarer sight of Alec throwing back his head and laughing joyously. They were astounded at the sight, this Shadowhunter and Warlock, married, in love, devoted, truly boggled their minds. What Magnus and Alec also didn’t realize was that their dancing, allowing the Downworlders of New Orleans to see them like this, it gave those in the room hope, hope that welcoming Shadowhunters into their city would bring peace, finally.

After the song ended, they moved to the refreshment table, Alec ducking his head a little at all the gazes that still followed them. They had just each taken a glass when a small group of Vampires approached them, led by a smaller, much younger Vampire than their attacker had been. The lead Vampire might have been shorter in stature than those around him, but his power was evident in his sharp blue gaze and the deference those around him gave. He bowed briefly to them before speaking. “I am Fabrice and I am the coven leader of the Vampires of New Orleans.” The Vampire still bore traces of his native homeland; his features were also clearly European, with high cheekbones and a sharp nose. “We beg of you that you will not hold Jacques’ actions against us. He has long been a thorn in our sides and we applauded your handling of him, Inquisitor.” He bowed once more to Alec who nodded in return.

Alec made no promises but had a question of his own. “Will you be at the table tomorrow for our talks, Fabrice?”

“Oui,” Fabrice nodded eagerly. “We are most eager to see what the Shadowhunters can bring to
Magnus nodded and said something to the Vampire in French that seemed to please him greatly and he turned to introduce his companions. Alec and Magnus made a point of shaking each hand. With one more nod and brief bow, Fabrice led his group away. Alec turned to Magnus and leaned down so he could whisper in Magnus’ ear. “I’ve had just about enough party how much longer do you think?”

Magnus tilted his head in the direction of the entrance. Alec looked over to see Marie saying goodnight to guests as they began to depart. With a relieved sigh, Alec wrapped an arm around Magnus’ waist. “Thank the Angel,” he whispered.

Magnus gave a soft chuckle as their group made their way to their side. “Was that the Vampire leader who just left?” Underhill asked. “I also sent a quick report to Jia about what transpired and what the charges were for that Vampire Jacques.”

“Thanks Andrew, and yes that was the Coven leader. He seemed much more eager for our presence than the other one, but we shall see tomorrow when the reality of what it will take to bring us permanently to this city is revealed.” Alec’s gaze turned thoughtful and rested on Marie as she said goodnight to her guest. “Mom, I want to sit down with you before the meeting and go over the easiest way to summarize century’s worth of Accords and what’s expected.” Alec turned his gaze to Magnus, “You too, since you were actually present at most of them.” At his husband’s nod, Alec started moving towards the door. “I don’t know about you guys but I am exhausted and tomorrow promises to be a long day and night.”

The last of the guests were saying their goodnights as they approached Marie. She turned to them, eyeing Magnus and Alec with some concern. “I hope tonight’s ugliness hasn’t ruined our chances for aid?”

“Not at all my dear,” Magnus answered. “We are well aware that not everyone will welcome Shadowhunters and we too have dealt with misbehaving Vampires in the past.” Magnus winked at Alec’s bark of laughter.

Marie had a smile but also a little puzzled frown on her face at Magnus’ remarks. “Well excellent then. The talks will begin at sundown tomorrow in deference to our Vampires. I know we all have a lot to prepare for so I have arranged refreshments in the library and small meeting space beside it for you tomorrow.”

“Thank you, Marie.” Alec answered, appreciating her foresight to their needs. “Also thank you for
the party tonight, that incident aside, I think it did a world of good for your people to see and meet us.”

“They especially enjoyed watching you and your husband dancing!” Marie laughed at the small flush Alec wore. “Bonne nuit, Réves agréables.”

“Good night and pleasant dreams to you as well,” Alec answered. They made their way to their rooms, Alec eagerly removing his suit and pulling on a comfortable pair of pajama bottoms. Plumping up the pillows he leaned back with a sigh of relief, making room by lifting his arm so Magnus could snuggle close.

Tilting his head back against Alec’s shoulder, Magnus grinned. “Nookie?” he asked eagerly.

“Back rub?” Alec suggested just as eager.

Magnus frowned. “You weren’t really serious about me not getting any while in this house, right, Alexander?”

Alec only grinned and rolled over, presenting his back to Magnus. With a deep sigh, Magnus started massaging. “I guess that was my answer.”

TBC…
Chapter Summary

The talks begin. New Orleans Downworlders learn what will be expected of them if they sign the Accords, but a new Warlock may derail the talks before they can even begin!

Chapter Notes

So just a heads up, not a chapter with a lot of excitement. So be prepared for a lot of political talk and more than you wanted to know about the Accords!

The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

Alec sat at the head of the table on one end, while Marie sat at the other end. Maryse and Magnus surrounded him, and representing the New Orleans’s Downworlders were Stephen as alpha for the werewolves and Fabrice as head of the vampire coven. Joining the warlocks were Dr. John and an older man named Ashland, who was third in power among the Warlocks of New Orleans. They hadn’t met the other man at the party, evidently he had some pressing business elsewhere, but Alec could tell Marie was not pleased with the other Warlock. Alec wasn’t sure he cared for the Warlock either, he’d been standoffish and abrupt when introduced.

He nodded to Maryse and she handed out the large binders Alec had put together for the Downworlders to review. They didn’t contain the entire history of the Accords and the Covenant, but enough to give them an idea of what was involved. More importantly, the binders contained what they would be agreeing to. “First let me welcome you all and also thank our host, The High Warlock of New Orleans, for reaching out to us. We have all met but let me once more introduce my people here tonight. On my left is Maryse Lightwood, in addition to being my mother, she is also an expert on the Accords and Covenant Law. Seated to my right is High Warlock of Alicante, Magnus Lightwood-Bane. Magnus was present at the Accord’s signings and has served as High Warlock for several cities.” Alec went around the table and introduced his people, noting that the new Warlock guest seemed unimpressed.

Finishing up, Alec turned his attention to the end of the table, where Marie sat. “I would like to officially start our meeting here tonight with why Shadowhunters are being invited to New
Marie looked around the table. “Since the first Downworlders called New Orleans home, we have vowed to police ourselves, to isolate ourselves from other Downworlders and the Nephilim. We had our reasons, some out of necessity and some out of fear. We are not here now to rehash long ago decisions and weigh their effectiveness. We are here tonight because we need the Shadowhunters.” Alec watched their faces carefully as Marie spoke, he saw agreement on Stephen’s face, Fabrice’s face was blank, and the third Warlock’s face wore a scowl. Marie must have noticed this as well, because she pointedly looked at him as she continued.

“The incursions by Demons and Greater Demons has been happening more and more. Attacks on innocent Downworlders and Mundanes continues to rise while we find it harder to conceal from the Mundane police. Despite our best efforts, we are too few and not enough have the power or knowledge to battle the demons we are seeing. We need the Nephilim’s help, that’s the bottom line.” Marie kept Ashland in her sight as she delivered her remarks, perhaps sensing he was going to be the voice of descent. “We have investigated much these past few years on the root cause of the increase in demon incursions into our city, and I stand by my findings that the bowl of power that is our Crescent City has become full and these attacks attract more and more seeking power for nefarious reasons.”

Alec gathered his thoughts before speaking; one point needed to be addressed first before any further negotiations proceeded. “Our immediate concern when your request reached us and when I began my research into your city, centers around the Covenant. The Shadow World here in New Orleans is too exposed, too many of its secrets branded about for the purposes of tourism. Your city thrives on the showing of magic, vampires, and other things that are required to remain hidden.”

Stephen spoke up. “Inquisitor, the tourists who we thrill with those things truly do not believe them. They come for the hint of magic, ghost, the macabre, but then they return to their mundane lives, not realizing that they have been touched by the Shadow World.”

Alec frowned. “It is a risk Stephen, that none of us Nephilim wish to take, or can even be allowed to take. Perhaps you do not fully understand, but the Covenant is Angel Raziel’s unbreakable command. Shadowhunters are sworn at any and all costs to protect the mundane world from the Shadow World that includes any knowledge of it.” He looked at each Downworlder before continuing. “If you sign the Accords, you too would be held accountable for upholding the Covenant.”

The New Orleans Downworlders looked unhappy and upset at Alec’s words, but better now to bring this up than later when misunderstandings could occur. “Inquisitor,” Dr. John asked. “What types of changes would have to be made to put us in compliance with the Covenant?”
Alec looked to Magnus before responding. “Without knowing all the activities each Downworlder is involved in that also involves mundanes, I cannot yet answer.”

Magnus spoke up. “Many other locations struggle with this battle, keeping the Shadow World hidden is not only the Nephilim’s struggle but every Downworlder’s as well. When we offer our services to the Mundanes we run the risk of exposure, but I and Lorenzo can attest to the fact that it is possible. We both have made our fortunes from offering services at a high price, and we both have remained hidden from Mundane knowledge.”

Marie leaned forward eagerly. “I, for one, would love to hear more about this, Magnus. I have long struggled with my name being on the lips of Mundanes despite any efforts to remain anonymous.”

Lorenzo nodded to Magnus when he inclined his head to include the other Warlock. “We can share that knowledge with all your people, but it’s really control over your tours, spells and potions sold to Mundanes, your Vampire sightings?” At Fabrice’s look, Lorenzo continued. “Establishing tighter controls over what’s given and shown to the Mundanes. Each of your people must also embrace the mission of keeping the Shadow World hidden and they can do this without damaging your income from the tourist.”

“Let’s move on for now, bottom line, it’s doable. One more thing I would like to discuss before we delve into what is in the Accord’s you would be required to sign. My next question goes to the heart of your request and what your people have been told. Downworlders in New Orleans have been without anyone telling them what to do for centuries, how will your people react when Shadowhunters suddenly start policing them?” Alec looked at each leader as he asked this; he would not bring one Shadowhunter into this city if it were to be a war zone.

“Before I turn this over to my mother so that she can walk you through the binders in front of you, I’d like to explain a little about the Clave and our organizational structure.” Alec received nods around the table, he hadn’t known how much knowledge about Shadowhunters they possessed and Jia had wanted the chain of command completely outlined so there were no questions later on. “The Clave is made up representatives chosen by the Enclaves and Conclaves around the world. There is also a Downworlder representative from each of the major cities, and we encourage all cities to establish their own Downworlder council as we did first in New York. Our Consul, Jia Penhallow is the highest appointed official in the Clave. My role as Inquisitor is charged with investigating wrong doings of Nephilim, establishing and deciding criminal punishments of Nephilim and Downworlders.” The Warlock, Ashland, interrupted Alec before he could continue.

“What about the Mundanes? Who decides their guilt and punishments?” He demanded; scowl still present on his face.

Alec pinned the Warlock with a stern gaze, he wanted to make sure that the ornery cuss fully understood his next words. “Mundanes do not sign the Accords; therefore, they are not subject to
Covenant law. Now some of my other duties, to continue, are the right to take control over missions and appoint Heads of Institutes.”

Ashland was not finished unfortunately, and Alec’s patience was about at an end. Marie must have realized this because just as Ashland opened his mouth she hushed him. Alec shot her a grateful glance before nodding at his mom to take over. Over the course of several hours, Maryse went over what was expected if they signed the Accords. She explained in detail the process for Reparations and answered many questions regarding them. Alec’s thoughts drifted as his mom continued. His thoughts turned to what if’s. What would an Institute in New Orleans look like, who would he staff it with, how many Shadowhunters should be assigned initially, things like that consumed his thoughts until he was brought out of them by an elbow from Magnus.

“What?” He asked, looking up at the table and all eyes on him. Underhill’s lips curled in amusement and Alec shot him a glare. “Sorry, but to answer your question Marie, Institutes are either in abandoned churches or other holy ground.” The talks continued and this time, Alec kept an ear turned in.

By the time they reached a stopping point, dawn was approaching and everyone was exhausted. Conducting the meetings at night for the Vampires messed with all their sleep schedules, but it wouldn’t be the last meeting so they sucked it up. Alec closed the meeting. “You have all been given a huge amount of information in one night and I know you need time to digest it and meet with your people. So I propose we adjourn and come back once you each send word to the High Warlock that you are ready to meet again.” Everyone nodded his or her agreement gratefully. Alec rose and went with Marie to say goodnight, leaving behind his group to discuss the night’s events.

Marie joined them at the table along with a cart loaded with breakfast. Everyone expressed their thanks, hungry and exhausted after an all-night meeting. Alec waited until everyone had a full plate before speaking. “Thoughts?” he asked, glancing around the group.

“Besides the pain in my rear, Ashland, I think it went very well.” Marie spoke up. “I do not see any issues arising and believe the Accords will be signed.”

“What’s his deal?” Luke asked, wiping his mouth and piling more food on his plate. Alec wondered if Luke still thought he had a werewolf’s metabolism.

Marie took a sip of her coffee before responding. “Ashland is one of those old school Warlocks who shuns anything that involves change or progression. He also does not like the Nephilim. I suspect that in his past he had a run in with some Shadowhunters or even perhaps broke a law and has been hiding out here in New Orleans. You know how we Warlocks love to change our names.”

She nodded her head to Magnus and Lorenzo before continuing. “I was not going to invite him to the talks, but he insisted and I know he will fight the decision to bring an Institute here.
Fortunately, he does not have the power or backing to stand in the way.”

“Well we shall do our best to convince him that signing the Accords is the best solution.” Maryse said before rising and placing a hand on Luke’s shoulder. “I’m off for bed. Thank you Marie for the lovely meal.” Marie nodded and smiled as Luke rose to join Maryse. Calling good night or morning, they headed upstairs to their room. Andrew and Lorenzo were next to depart.

Magnus waited until all but he and Alec remained with Marie before addressing what he could read off the High Warlock. “Marie, I know you have stated that you invited the Nephilim now because of the increase in Demon activity, but I sense there is something else in your timing decision?”

Alec looked curiously at his husband, he hadn’t sensed anything, but Magnus was better at reading people than him. Looking over at Marie, he saw her face change, and knew right then that they had seen only a mask, or some sort of glamor before now. The High Warlock suddenly looked much older, with dark circles under her eyes, and even a slight tremble in the hand that sat down her cup before responding to Magnus.

“You are very astute, Magnus. I apologize if you feel I have been deceiving you or hiding things from you, but I have worn my mask for a while now and it has become second nature to hide behind it.” Letting out a deep sigh, Marie smiled grimly at them. “I am actually happy that you have seen through me and I was going to tell you more of my motives for the invitation to the Shadowhunters.”

Magnus was also more compassionate than Alec, he thought, watching as Magnus reached over and took Marie’s hand. “We know you have not known us very long, but I promise you, we are kind and compassionate people first before Inquisitor and High Warlock.”

Marie smiled gently at Magnus and patted his hand in thanks. “I’m tired Magnus. All my life has been spent here in New Orleans, and for almost two centuries as High Warlock. I’m tired and I want to retire, step down and travel, see some of this world that I have hid from all these centuries.” Looking at Alec, a determined glint in her eyes, Marie continued. “So Inquisitor, once the Accords are signed, I will be asking you to also find us a new High Warlock of New Orleans.”

TBD…
Chapter Summary

No Shadowhunter has ever entered the Crescent City, but when a letter comes across the Inquisitor's desk, this becomes one mission that Inquisitor Lightwood-Bane and his husband, High Warlock of Alicante intend to take on themselves.

However things are not what they seem in the Big Easy!

The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

8

The bed creaked and Alec winced. Glancing over his shoulder, he was relieved to see Magnus still asleep. Easing from the bed and picking up some clothes, Alec snuck into the bathroom to get dressed. The house was silent, minus the usual creaking that seemed its normal state. Everyone was still in bed, and Alec couldn’t sleep. Slipping out the front door, he braced himself in the afternoon humidity. The Garden District was quiet, he could hear the traffic over on St. Charles, but strolling along the green canopied streets, he felt alone.

The houses sure were spectacular, Alec thought, stopping before what had become his favorite, the corn-stalk iron fencing always a source of amazement. Running his fingers across one the stalks, Alec frowned and shook his head, but the fuzziness around the edges of his vision didn’t go away. He clenched his eyes tightly closed and put a shaking hand to his forehead, his head was killing him. Alec carefully turned back towards Marie’s, swaying as his head felt like it was going to come off his shoulders. The violent stomach cramp sent him to his knees, and Alec moaned. He blinked, the sidewalk coming fast, then, only blackness.
It’s the cold that wakes him. Alec is shivering, the dampness squeezing his chest. He comes to coughing. “Good, you are awake.” He squints his eyes past the flashlight, not really all that surprised to see that asshole Ashland standing over him. “W-what?” Alec tries to get out.

“I was concerned that perhaps my spell killed you too quickly, but now at least I get to deliver to a more fitting resting place.” Ashland shown the light around the room Alec found himself in. The stone, dirt, and cobwebs, seemed to be some sort of basement, or underground room. There as no light except for the flashlight Ashland held. The air smelled musty, and wet.

Alec flexed his bound hands, hearing the metal clink, handcuffs were tight around his hands, arms stretched behind his back. He wore only the jeans and t-shirt he’d left the house in, but what was even more disturbing, his feet were bare, toes curled in the cold. Coughing once more, Alec struggled to speak. “W-where am I?”

Ashland laughed before responding. “Why, you are in the famous Marie Laveau crypt, her final resting place, or what should have been her resting place if the bitch had the good sense to die.”

Raked by a violent shiver, Alec squinted past the light. “Why?”

Sneering, Ashland leaned down closer to Alec’s face, lips curled, face twisted by hatred. “Nephilim!” he spat. “Always thinking you’re so much better than the rest of us. Shadowhunters here in New Orleans! This was our safe place, a safe place away from your judgments and rules! You have no business here and our High Warlock,” Ashland spat in the dirt near Alec’s head. “She should be burned for inviting you here!”

“What’d you do?” Alec asked.

“What are you talking about, Nephilim?” Ashland leaned back, standing once more over Alec.

Coughing, Alec glared up at the Warlock. “What did you do that had you running scared from the
Ashland’s face flushed red and he cursed before kicking Alec sharply in the stomach, causing Alec to violently cough.

“You won’t be around long enough to find out Inquisitor, enjoy your final resting place, too bad Marie couldn’t join you.” Ashland turned and left Alec taking the only light with him.

The stone door shut with a boom that didn’t sound all that promising to Alec. Rolling onto his side he blinked, trying to see anything in the pitch blackness. He didn’t know how long he’d been out, didn’t even know if it was the same day, was Magnus looking for him yet? Testing the cuffs, Alec took stock of his body. His clothes were wet, but he felt hot, feverish, and Alec knew the dampness combined with wet clothes were to blame for his shivering and coughing. The handcuffs were tight. Alec rolled onto his back quickly then forced himself into a seated position. Bracing himself, he lifted his lower body, ass first, and carefully, slowly, began pulling his cuffed hands and arms under his legs. Straining, he got just past one hip, forcing himself further, Alec pushed and screamed!

Rolling onto his side, Alec panted passed the pain, his dislocated shoulder throbbing. Forcing himself to continue, Alec couldn’t stop the moans as he moved his arms under his hips, knees and finally slipped his feet over his cuffed hands. Hands now limply laying in his lap, Alec closed his eyes, battling past the need to pass out. Sweat dripped off his face and he panted past the pain, the coughing fit shaking his shoulder causing even more agony. He didn’t know how long he sat there, head hanging, but finally, he forced himself to get to his feet.

Alec needed to pop his shoulder back in, but first he had to find a wall or something solid. The room from the look he’d gotten when Ashland’s shown his flashlight around wasn’t very big, maybe 12’ by 6’ and had two stone slabs on either side on the door. His eyes widened and he frantically felt for his front pant pocket. Dammit! The asshole not only took his shoes but also his stele. Taking a deep breath, which brought on more coughing, Alec began shuffling his feet carefully along the dirt floor. Moving his arms sent stabs of agony across his shoulder, but Alec carefully held his hands out in front of him, feeling desperately for something solid. His bare foot hit something hard, he fell forward, unable to stop himself with his bound hands. Making a fast decision, Alec turned his body to his uninjured side, falling heavily against stone steps. Fresh pain now on the other arm, Alec slid weakly down onto the earth. Laying his head in the dirt, Alec’s eyes closed as his vision grew even darker.

His body was drug, head flopping weakly as Ashland cursed him and dumped him heavily back in the middle of the crypt. “Give you credit,” The Warlock gasped out, breathing heavily after dragging Alec’s body. “You Shadowhunters never give up.” Alec could only moan softly as he was dropped onto his back, head thumping against the hard ground.
Alec could only hear snatches of Ashland’s words, head swimming too much to focus. He heard bits, ‘Shadowhunters swarming the city, two days gone now, heat getting too much.’ He thought he heard before darkness came for him again, ‘leaving the city, but here you will die, Inquisitor.’

‘Magnus,’ Alec’s mind whispered.

Jace was always so loud, Alec frowned. Wait, was that Magnus’ voice? He sounded so upset, so worried. Alec tried to go to him, tried to get his mind and body to respond, but nothing kept the blackness from taking him again.

It was the light, the warmth, and the lack of pain that pulled Alec free from the darkness. His eyes slowly opened to so much light, that he had to blink, and blink again as his vision was filled with a much beloved sight. Magnus leaned over him, smile joyous with relief, eyes red rimmed with heavy dark circles under them. “Rest Alexander,” Magnus whispered, and leaned down to brush a kiss across Alec’s forehead. “You are safe, I’ve got you.” Alec slept.

Alec moaned in pleasure. He would never again complain about the softness of the bed as it cradled his body, the heavy blankets no longer smelled funny either. He opened his eyes to a familiar sight, Jace seated on the end of the bed, hands twirling a stele, Alec’s stele to be precise.

“You know you don’t go on mission without me, Parabatai.” Jace scolded.

“Was supposed to be a diplomatic mission,” was Alec’s response as he groaned and pushed himself upright, leaning back against the many pillows behind him. His head swung towards the door as it opened to reveal Magnus carrying a tray. Alec smiled. “Hey,” he whispered, throat still gravelly with remains of his illness.

Jace patted his leg as he got up from the bed and headed towards the door. “That’s my cue; don’t need to see you lovebirds reunited, again!”

Magnus laughed and came around the bed, sitting the tray on the small table, he took a seat beside Alec. Looking him over, Magnus nodded with relief. “The worst has passed, we got to you just in time, Alexander. You scared me to death.” Magnus scolded, but the weight had been lifted from his smile and eyes.
“How long was I missing?” Alec raised an arm, inviting Magnus to scoot closer.

“Three days, three long nightmarish days, Alexander.” Magnus moved onto the bed so that his head rested on Alec’s shoulder and his body was stretched out next to his husbands.

Alec tightened his arm around Magnus. “Did you catch him?”

Magnus grew tense under Alec’s arm, anger bristling again. “Yes, we caught the rat bastard trying to cross the Gulf on some steam boat of all the things! Thankfully, he attacked and Marie killed him. We have to thank the wolves for their help. Stephen and his pack caught the bastards scent and tracked him trying to board the boat.”

They were silent for several moments, Magnus relaxing once more in Alec’s arms. They just took a minute to soak up the other’s presence, that they were together, whole, reunited. “Jace?” Alec asked.

Magnus groaned before answering. “There was no stopping him, he threatened to storm the city unless allowed entry. He, of course, felt your illness, injuries.” Magnus leaned back so that he could look up into Alec’s face. “It took us so long, even with mine and Jace tracking you, to find you. That damn stone crypt messed with the tracking so bad.” Magnus laughed. “Jace didn’t come alone either. The Consul was fit to be tied, and she sent a whole contingent of Shadowhunters to search for you.”

Alec raised a brow. “What did the city’s Downworlders think about that?”

Magnus grew serious. “They all were looking for you also Alexander. We had Warlocks, Werewolves, and Vampires teamed up with Shadowhunters tearing the city apart. Marie was amazed and even more convinced that Shadowhunters belong in New Orleans. All the Downworlders were not expecting the ease with the Shadowhunters worked with them, and without censure since it was one of their own who kidnapped you.” Magnus’ body gave a shudder and Alec tightened his embrace. “I still have nightmares Alexander, the image of you lying so still on that crypts dirt floor. You were so cold, so gray.”

“I’m so sorry Magnus,” Alec whispered. His head rested heavily on Magnus, his eyes growing heavy once more. He didn’t register Magnus moving and easing him down onto the pillows. He felt Magnus pull the covers back over him snugly and felt the lips that briefly touched his own. Magnus’ ‘rest, Alexander,’ followed him into his sleep.
Alec took the glass of fresh juice Dr. John handed him gratefully. The full breakfast and coffee he’d been allowed going a long way towards making him feel better. “So, what’s the verdict, Doc?” He asked, sitting the now empty glass back onto the tray Magnus had brought him.

Dr. John grinned and handed Alec a glass filled with what Alec had discovered was a vile concoction that tasted like old socks. Taking it with a grimace, Alec took his medicine like a big boy, face twisted with disgust as he handed a laughing Magnus the glass. “You were suffering from pneumonia, the dampness and cold of that crypt got into your lungs and without your stele to activate your healing rune, you became very ill, very quickly. Add to that a dislocated shoulder and broken wrist, you were very hurt, Inquisitor.”

“Thank you, Dr. John for all your help in healing me.” Alec smiled at the gentle old Warlock, his manner and healing so different from the feisty Cat. Dr. John smiled once more before patting Alec’s leg and leaving him and Magnus alone.

Alec had a host of visitors already that morning. His mom spent time assuring herself that Alec was whole, Luke looking on. He’d even Face Timed with Izzy, letting her scold to her heart’s content. Alec’s call to Jia had been the longest. In addition to checking in, he had filled her in on Ashland, the vampire sitting in a cell in Idris, and his hopes to finish up the talks with the New Orleans Downworlders. The Consul had her doubts after Alec’s kidnapping, but he reassured her of the value in adding New Orleans to the cities Shadowhunters protected. Alec had also met with Marie, just Magnus present. Their conversation had been productive and Alec convinced both Warlocks that the talks could resume tomorrow night.

Finally, only Magnus remained. “I believe Alexander that we can wrap this up tomorrow night. The City’s Downworlders are most eager now for the Nephilim to be in New Orleans.”

Alec reached over and pulled Magnus down beside him, snuggling up close, he wrapped Magnus in both arms. “Let’s wrap this up then. I am more than ready to go home.”

Magnus let out a laugh. “Why Alexander, aren’t you going to miss your new friends?”

“What new friends?” Alec frowned at his smirking spouse.

“Why, your peeping-Tom spirits, of course.” Magnus laughed louder at Alec’s groan and suddenly
flushed face.

TBC…
Chapter Summary

No Shadowhunter has ever entered the Crescent City, but when a letter comes across the Inquisitor's desk, this becomes one mission that Inquisitor Lightwood-Bane and his husband, High Warlock of Alicante intend to take on themselves.

However things are not what they seem in the Big Easy!

The Big Easy Just Got Complicated

Alec moved down the line of Shadowhunters who had come to help search for him. He made it a point to shake each hand and give personal words of gratitude, thanking each also for representing Shadowhunters so well among the city’s Downworlders. He had already spoken with Jia, extending his thanks to her as well, and felt heartened by her ‘of course, you are our Inquisitor.’ That more than anything else let Alec know his deep value to this generation of the Clave.

He saved Jace for last. Clasping arms with his Parabatai, Alec then hugged the blond close. “Thanks, man,” he whispered.

Jace smiled at him when they pulled apart. “No thanks necessary Alec. You’re my Parabatai, I’ll always come when you need me.”

He watched as each Shadowhunter went through the portal before he took Magnus’ hand and rejoined the others in the meeting room. Alec took his seat at the head of the table with Magnus seated beside him. “I want to thank each of you and please tell your people that they have my gratitude for searching for me and bringing the Warlock who took me to justice. My people were most complimentary of your efforts and it speaks to how our presence here in New Orleans cannot help but be successful.”

He received smiles and nods around the table. Marie looked to each leader, sharing a look before she spoke up. “Thank you Inquisitor, our people spoke highly as well of the Shadowhunters they worked alongside of. They talked of the respect the Nephilim showed them and that more than anything else speaks to the quality of the leadership now in the Clave.”
Under the table, Magnus squeezed Alec’s hand and he wore a proud smile on his face. Alec could not help the little flush of pleasure that Marie’s words gave him. He cleared his throat before continuing. “Have each of you had an opportunity to present the Accords to your people?”

Stephen leaned forward eagerly. “I have, and before you were taken my people had many questions and expressed concerns. However, after working with your Parabatai and Shadowhunters they no longer express any reservations, and are now eager to work more closely with the Nephilim.”

Alec looked at Fabrice. “And the Vampires? Are you and your clan ready to sign?”

The Vampire leader nodded, not as eager as the alpha, but more reserved. Alec didn’t know if it was truly because they still had concerns or if all Vampires were as reserved as this clan leader. Looking down to the other end of the table, Alec asked the High Warlock of New Orleans what her decision was. “Marie, how do the Warlocks of the city feel?”

Marie rose to her feet with a smile; next to her Dr. John’s face also bore a happy grin. “Inquisitor, on behalf of the Downworlder population of New Orleans we would like you to bare witness as we sign the Accords.” Picking up a pen, Marie signed her name with a flourish before passing the document around the table.

Alec let out a sigh of relief. He watched as each person at the table signed, his people signing as witnesses. At last the document that would make the Crescent City the newest home for the Nephilim reached Alec and he signed with a great deal of satisfaction. Despite crazy Vampires and homicidal Warlocks, the Forbidden City was no longer a place where Shadowhunters were not allowed. Now they could forge new relationships, and keep this city safe for the mundanes and the Shadow World. Alec rolled the document up and handed it to Magnus, who with a flourish sent it on its way to Alicante for the Consul to sign off on.

Marie clapped her hands and her staff brought in a rolling cart loaded with champagne. Handing out glasses and filling them, Marie raised hers. “To the opening of our hearts and our city to the Nephilim, to new friends and a new tomorrow for our city, to the Shadowhunters!” Everyone joined in the toast with happy and hopeful smiles. Before Marie left the table, she brought out a pristine white feather and with a wave of magic, the feather disappeared. At Magnus’ questioning look, Marie explained. “For many a century, my calling card, if you will, has been a single white feather. I just sent that feather to every Downworlder in the city; they will now know that the Accords have been signed.”

Alec said goodbye to his mom and Luke in the foyer of Marie’s home. He had requested that
Underhill and Lorenzo stay behind, but Maryse needed to get back to her bookstore. Accepting her tight hug, Alec whispered in her ear. “Thanks. Mom,” placing a kiss on her cheek he next extended a hand to Luke. “Appreciate it, Luke and I will see you back in Alicante next week.”

“Next week?” Luke asked with a grin, releasing Alec’s hand and placing an arm around Maryse’s waist.

“Thought you and mom could take some time off together.” Alec said, raising a hand. “I don’t want any details please, unlike the last vacation you took together.” Luke just laughed and led Maryse to the portal Lorenzo had thoughtfully provided. Before the pair stepped through, Marie spoke some words to them, quietly, that had Maryse laughing and nodding eagerly. Alec figured an open invitation to New Orleans had been extended.

Marie moved towards Alec and Magnus. “Would you both accompany me somewhere?”

Nodding, Alec and Magnus stepped through her portal and found themselves in a large open park. “Where are we?” Alec asked, looking around. It was a stunning space. He could see a bridge in the distance, the design unusual and a testament to the age of the space.

“We are in what now is called the Louis Armstrong Park, and more specifically and older, this part is called Congo Square.” Marie led them towards a large archway with triangular points that resembled a half sunrise. Magnus hissed in surprise, as they got closer to the archway.

“What is it?” Alec glanced curiously at Magnus who was observing the structure with some awe. He saw Magnus glance at Marie and she nodded back at him with a smile.

Magnus looked back up at the arch. “It’s a tween space, Alexander. To anyone else but a Warlock simply a beautiful piece of architecture, but it’s a portal. This connects with other worlds. Gates and Doorways are tween places, and the most magical of times they can connect with the spirit world during the tween times between light and dark or otherwise known as sunrise and sunset. It’s incredible.” He finished, awe in his voice.

“What’s it mean?” Alec looked up at the structure, not completely understanding the reverence Magnus viewed the stone with.

“Nothing to a non-magic user, but this will attract many magical creatures. Speaking of which,” Magnus turned to Marie. “I have been meaning to ask, why are there no Seelies here in New Orleans?”
“There have never been, as long as I can count. Many of us believe it is because of our climate and the fact that we are surrounded by swamps and marshlands. Being under sea level may also be a reason, but truly I have never met a Seelie so I have not had the opportunity to ask.” Marie shrugged and moved away from the arch, leading them to a large open circular spot in the park.

Alec and Magnus followed along. Magnus with an ironic twist to his lips replying to her. “Well we know some Seelies, sometimes unfortunately, I may very well ask.”

Something else had been bugging Alec after their private conversation with the High Warlock. “Marie, you told Magnus and I that you wished to retire. The Clave has never involved itself in the selection of High Warlocks and I am very hesitant to change that precedent.”

Magnus picked up when Alec grew silent. “Are there no Warlocks here that your people would trust to elect as your replacement? What about Dr. John?”

“He does not want it; believe me I have asked many times. Many of my fellow Warlocks are like me, have been in New Orleans all their lives. John and I are the most powerful but none has ever shown an interest in being High Warlock. John actually wants to go to the Spiral Labyrinth and have the opportunity to study with the Warlocks there. I just want to travel and perhaps settle some place new for a time. Oh, I will never leave forever, but a chance to see other places and meet with other Warlocks!” Marie’s eagerness and excitement could not be missed. She turned to Alec. “I know it is unusual, and I am not asking for you to pick and install a New High Warlock here, but perhaps you might know of someone who would be open to settling here and becoming part of our community, you or your husband.” Marie smiled at Magnus. “A recommendation by you both would almost guarantee my people’s approval.”

Turning back around she swept her hands wide to encompass the park. “This place has long been a magical space for us. A space we could be free, free to celebrate, to dance, to come together, this space is special to the city.”

They became silent, just letting the magic and peace of the space invade them. Alec could swear that he heard the sounds of drums, of laughter, and the whispers of people praying to their gods. For several moments, they just sucked up energy the park offered so freely. Finally, Marie moved on and they followed. Magnus took Alec’s hand. “We will think on your request, High Warlock.” He promised.

Since the signing of the Accords the night before, Alec had tasked Andrew and Lorenzo with scouting for a location for a new institute. It seemed old abandoned Churches were plentiful in New Orleans as well as Hallowed ground. When Alec and Magnus returned from their trip with
Marie, Alec sat down with Underhill to see what he had found.

Handing Alec a stack of pages, Andrew drew one out and placed it on top. “This one seems the most likely pick St. Rosa de Lima. The Archdiocese of New Orleans closed the former church after a storm in 2005. The permits look like its open to any type of lease as long as the original facade is kept intact. The Clave can purchase outright without any city oversight.”

Alec studied the pictures Andrew had included. It was certainly large enough and reminded him of the New York Institute, being the same size and similar front entrance. “This looks great Underhill,” Alec said. “Let me contact the Consul she if she approves and we will move forward on purchasing the church, good job.” Alec praised, pleased with what Underhill had accomplished in so little time. Alec waited for Andrew to nod his thanks and depart before he picked up his phone. He had two very important calls to make, first to Jia then to Izzy. The first was to acquire something, the second call to steal someone.

TBC…
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Alec borrowed Marie’s study for the meeting he needed to have. He and Magnus sat on a small loveseat she had in front of a large fireplace and mantle. He had discussed his decision with Magnus after having listened to Izzy bitch him out for an hour. Magnus agreed completely with his decision and thought his overall plan had a great chance of succeeding, so much so, that Magnus had already placed a call to New York.

Marie came in and following her was Underhill and Lorenzo, each taking a seat in the small area set aside in Marie’s study. Alec leaned forward, and waited for Andrew to seat himself. “I spoke with the consul and Isabelle a few hours ago and we have reached a decision that affects you, Andrew.”
Underhill’s eyes widened and he shot a glance at Lorenzo. “Me? How so?” he asked Alec, nerves showing themselves in how he sat up rigid against the back of the sofa.

“Nothing bad or at least I don’t think it’s bad.” Alec said with a smile. “As you know with the signing of the Accords and the acquisition of property, we are ready to move forward with the establishment of an Institute here in New Orleans.” At Andrew’s nod, Alec continued, noticing that Lorenzo seemed to be catching on quick to where Alec was going with this. “With that new Institute we also need a new Head, and I would like you to be the new Head of the New Orleans Institute.”

Magnus gave a soft laugh at the gap-mouthed expression on Andrew’s face. The Shadowhunter sat stunned, eyes wide with disbelief. Next to him, Lorenzo frowned. Magnus caught the other Warlock’s gaze and subtlety shook his head, hoping Lorenzo understood that there was more to the announcement.

“Now I know this is a huge decision and one that warrants some serious thought about, but I also don’t want this to drag on too long. This city needs Shadowhunters sooner rather than later. Make no mistake, Andrew, you are my and the Consul’s first choice, our only one at this time. However, if it’s not what you desire then we need to move onto another candidate, so think quickly.” Alec sat back and picked up Magnus’ hand, his signal that Magnus was up.

Magnus looked at Marie and receiving her nod of agreement turned to Lorenzo. “Something else we only recently learned that may affect you Lorenzo, is that the High Warlock of New Orleans wishes to retire. Now they have never had another High Warlock and are not familiar with how the outside world operates with the election of that position. However, Marie knows of no one else in the city that has shown any interest in taking up the duties of High Warlock. So say a certain outside Warlock decided to make his home in New Orleans, was known to have the current High Warlock’s favor, well who could say that he wouldn’t then become the next High Warlock?”

Lorenzo’s face still wore a frown, but his gaze was off in the distance, mind working furiously. He blinked and pinned Magnus with a look. “What about New York?”

“New York has a constant influx of new Warlocks all the time and many who would be powerful enough with a good enough reputation to be elected to the High Warlock position.” Magnus shrugged his shoulders. “Perhaps even we could talk Catarina into finally taking the position.”

Underhill appeared to still be stunned and hadn’t said a word since Alec’s announcement. Alec stood and reached down for Magnus’ hand, Marie stayed seated and Alec figured she wanted to assure Lorenzo that his chances of her position were excellent. “We will leave you to talk it over, just come get me if you have any questions or concerns.” Lorenzo nodded and laid a hand on Andrew’s thigh prompting the Shadowhunters to look at them and nod, but he still said nothing.
Magnus waited until they were in their room before asking. “Think he will take it?”

Alec paused folding his clothes to go into his bag. They had decided to pack and would hopefully return to Alicante that evening, baring any issues here in New Orleans. With any luck Alec’s part was over. He’d gotten the Accords signed and chosen the Head of the new Institute, fingers crossed. “I think he will. Andrew is ready he just needs to believe it himself. Lorenzo never hurts for self-confidence, maybe some of that will rub off on Andrew.” Alec looked up and grinned at Magnus’ snort regarding the self-confidence part Rey was a bit of a pompous ass, but he grew on you and had come through for them in the past.

After packing, they both freshened up; Marie was taking them for one last dinner at Tujague. Alec was also stopping by Café du Monde for chicory coffee; he also still had a gift to purchase for Izzy. The Angel knew that he’d better not go back to New York empty handed especially after stealing her head of security. Joining Marie, Dr. John, and Lorenzo and Andrew, they took a car to the restaurant. The welcome was as if they were royalty, Alec and the others did not even order, food just started arriving at their table. Many people also stopped by to greet Marie and be introduced to her group. It did not escape Alec or Magnus’ notice that she took extra care to introduce Lorenzo and Underhill.

“She’s good,” Magnus leaned over to whisper in Alec’s ear.

The feel of Magnus’ warm breath across the skin of his neck, and the warm, heavy hand that rested on Alec’s thigh under the table, had his breath catching and a familiar heat settling in his stomach. His voice was more growl than normal as he turned his head to stare into Magnus’ eyes. “I’m so ready to go home.” Magnus, the tease, only smirked, knowing full well what he was doing to his spouse.

Marie grinned over at them, and Alec felt a flush heat his face, surely, she hadn’t heard him? Alec turned his attention to the man talking with Lorenzo, he caught part of the conversation, something about property for sale in the Garden District. Oh yeah, Marie was good. By the time they pushed back from the table, they were all stuffed. Alec would miss the food, it was nothing like he had tasted in the many places Magnus had introduced him to. Extending their thanks to the chef, owner, and their servers, they all decided to walk off a bit of their dinner. The car followed behind them as Alec and Magnus got their last glimpses of the French Quarter.

“I cannot thank you all enough for coming here, trusting on blind faith our message. I’ve been pushing for many years for change, for our city to give the Nephilim a chance. The timing was just never right. It was only after your marriage, Alec and Magnus, that the hearts and minds here became open enough to try.” Marie stopped before a small simple house. It was old and worn down, but surprisingly not ready to collapse. “This is where I first made my home here in the
Quarter, long before I made my fortune selling spells and protections to the Mundanes. I know I told you how I am ready to see some of this world we have hid from but when its time for my spirit to rest, it will always find its way home to Vieux Carré.”

Magnus took the smaller Warlock’s hand. “It’s truly a special place and we thank you for sharing it with us.”

She spun to face them, face heavy with regret. “You are thanking me after your husband was attacked by not only a Vampire but later kidnapped by one of our own Warlocks!” Shaking her head, Marie let out a heavy sigh. “I cannot express our sorrow enough Inquisitor that happened to you. Just when I think I know my peoples hearts they do things like that.”

Lorenzo spoke up before Alec or Magnus could reassure the High Warlock. “As much as we try and see others hearts, we must remember that they also have free will. No Warlock or leader of any kind can anticipate everything. The way the city’s Downworlders rallied together is a testament to your leadership.” Lorenzo shot Alec and Magnus a slightly sarcastic glance, but the hint of humor in his eyes softened his next words. “Besides, things like that happen to these two all the time. I cannot begin to tell you how many times we have been called in to save them, usually from themselves!”

Everyone laughed, that was except Alec and Magnus, whose scowls caused even more mirth at their expenses.

Alec sat the last of their bags in the foyer. Magnus was speaking with Marie and Dr. John, and being handed several bottles of potions and herbs to take back to Alicante with him. Before Alec took joint them, Andrew called his name.

“Alec, can I speak to you for a moment?” Standing next to him was Lorenzo.

He joined them, searching their faces for any hint of their decisions, but could read nothing. Coming to stand in front of them, Alec saw that their hands were joined. “Andrew, Lorenzo, have you reached a decision?” They both nodded.

With an encouraging glance from Lorenzo, Andrew spoke up. “Inquisitor, I would like to formally accept the position as head of the New Orleans Institute.”

Alec broke into a huge smile and he held out a hand to eagerly clasp Underhill’s. “That’s
wonderful Andrew! I am so happy for you, and can I assume that a certain High Warlock will be joining you here in New Orleans?” Alec looked at Lorenzo, daring him to break his Shadowhunter’s heart.

Magnus joined them with Marie and Dr. John just as Lorenzo wrapped a possessive arm around Andrew. “As soon as I can settle my affairs in New York, Inquisitor, I intend to join Andrew here. We have already found a house that I think will do beautifully!”

“Excellent!” Magnus said, “I will assist with New York how ever you need me to Lorenzo.”

Alec drew Andrew aside with a hand on his arm, moving a bit away so that he could speak privately with his newest Head. “Once I am back in Alicante I will make an official announcement and I promise you all the resources you will need to get this Institute up and running quickly.”

Andrew blinked and had to clear his throat, Alec could tell he was fighting his emotions. “Thank you, Alec, for everything, for believing in me, giving me a chance, and for always being an inspiration to Shadowhunters everywhere, it means so much to so many of us.”

Alec gruffly cleared his throat. “W-well you are welcome and you are the best choice.” Already edging away, and ignoring Andrew’s sudden amusement, Alec turned back towards the others. Shaking Marie and Dr. John’s hands, giving one final farewell for now to Lorenzo and Underhill, Alec took Magnus’ hand and stepped through the portal to home.

Stepping into their living room, Alec let their bags drop with relief, home! Magnus was already moving towards the drink cart and Alec collapsed gratefully onto their sofa. “I am so glad to be home.”

Handing Alec a glass, Magnus sank down beside him. “Me to, Alexander, me to.” For the next few minutes they sat in silence, finishing their drinks and just relaxing in the familiar surroundings, relaxing in the way they could no where else but home.

Setting his now empty glass onto the table, Alec went to rise. “I’m going to check my inbox and send Jia a message that we are home.” Before he got very far though, Magnus grabbed his arm and pulled him back onto the sofa. Alec didn’t even have time to form a question before his lap was full of his husband.

“I don’t think so, Alexander.” Magnus smirked down at him, and his hands became very busy with
the belt holding Alec’s pants closed. “Come now, Shadowhunter, time to get naked!” Magnus wiggled his ass around Alec’s lap, letting him know just what Magnus intended to do the naked Shadowhunter.

“Magnus,” Alec half-heartedly tried to stop the hands that were intent on disrobing him. He started laughing as his shirt was raised and tossed over the sofa. “What’s gotten into you?”

Magnus whipped his own shirt off. “Hopefully it’s what’s getting into you, Alexander!” Magnus jumped to his feet and grabbed Alec’s hands, pulling him eagerly towards their bed. “Now come on Inquisitor, I promise there are no nosey spirits here to watch you come - undone.”

Alec’s scandalized ‘Magnus!’ did in no way impede the activities that occupied them deep into the night.

The End.

End Notes

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