A Fighting Chance

by heartsdesire456

Summary

When Magnus Bane bought the space for his dance studio, Pandemonium, he had no idea that the wall between it and the MMA Training Gym next door was so thin. Neither did he realize that a dispute over the loud music would lead to him becoming involved in the world of MMA and, more importantly, guide him to the man who would end up changing his life.

Update: Available in Russian at this site
Update: Available in Chinese at this site
Update: Available in German at this site

Notes

Update: I ADORE this BEAUTIFUL aesthetic made for my fic!!!! Go follow her on tumblr! <3
I don't usually do long ANs but this has to be one.

To start out with, this was never supposed to be what it is. The original idea for this fic came from a joke about a whole other fandom about where a dance studio has a rivalry with the gym in the neighborhood, and I somehow applied it to how, with so many dancers in the Shadowhunters cast, you could easily make it a Shadowhunters fic where Dance Teacher Magnus gets in a dispute with the jocks at the gym next door over their loud music. I then thought about how one of my favorite TV shows (explained further down) made me think of Alec in one of their characters and I thought, "Oh man a little fic about Dance Teacher Magnus going over to the MMA gym next door and being challenged by Fighter Jace to punch him once and the music will stop."

And then ALL OF THIS HAPPENED! WHAT THE HELL GUYS?! THIS IS LIKE THE THIRD LONGEST FIC I HAVE WRITTEN IN MY LIFE!

To explain things (that I remember since I've been working on this tirelessly for 2 weeks and 2 days with breaks to DO MY FINAL PAPERS FOR THE UNIVERSITY SEMESTER GOD HOW DID I WRITE THIS?!) that will help you understand the fic and my motivations:

A) One of the very best TV shows that I've ever watched is Kingdom which is a show about a MMA fighter family. Nate is a closeted gay fighter and the youngest, golden son who is basically empty he's so repressed. He has no personality he's so afraid of his sexuality. A LOT of stuff in him reminds me of Alec (there's a line Alvey says about having a fighter that doesn't want to hurt anybody) but Alec isn't nearly as bad off as Nate.
B) My experience with MMA is Kingdom and Google, so don't expect accuracy. I generalize a lot to avoid just that.
C) There isn't a lot of dance like I originally planned, but I also never planned on... most of this fic. However, the actors for Raphael, Magnus, Clary, and Isabelle are all dancers which is why they are that group.
D) The story about the tattoos is kept vague so as not to try and imply any specific culture. It's entirely fictionalized. I swear I'm not ripping off an ancient culture, lmao.
E) The Simon/Raphael is minimal, I just couldn't help myself. I love Simon and the TV show really makes me ship it.
F) This is based on the TV show only. I draw almost NOTHING from the books, though I have read them all, so if something seeps through, sorry!

And last of all I tried to tag as best as I can but there is a lot more in this fic than all of that. HOWEVER! The violence is fighter-violence. There is no non-MMA related violence of any sort in the fic. No worries about abuse or anything.

See the end of the work for more notes

(Update: HOLY SHIT LOOK AT THIS COVERART BY (I can't do cyrillic characters but it's that person credited there, sorry person!))
“One and two and three and-” Magnus lost count when the mirror hanging on the wall behind him rattled, making him grit his teeth. He watched the dancers stumbling some without his count, since they were just beginners, and caught up. “Six and seven and eight-” The thumping behind him from the hard and heavy bass on the other side of the wall was really throwing him off, but he feared if he turned up the music on his end any more, the students couldn’t hear him.

He sighed, gesturing for Isabelle to cut the music. He clapped his hands together. “Give me just a second, guys,” he said with a bright, forceful smile. “I’ll be right back,” he said, sliding into the Uggs he kept in the corner in case he had to run into the alley out back to take something out, because he didn’t have time to bother putting on his shoes as he stormed out the front and walked right down the step and around the corner to the door right next to his.

When Magnus opened Pandemonium two years ago, the real estate agent who helped him find the
perfect building for his dance studio didn’t bother telling him that the gym next door that was undergoing renovations at the time was not just a regular gym, but a MMA training gym. He had no idea his students would have to deal with meathead MMA fighters hanging around on the curb or, far worse, the *goddamn noise*.

Apparently, MMA fighters worked out to God awful metal garbage played at a volume so loud that the bass made the wall between their buildings rattle and the beat interrupt his dancers. And that was when there weren’t big training fight days and the shouts and cheers were loud enough to be heard through the wall as well.

Obviously, they had hidden the fact that the wall between their spaces was practically as thin as the walls in an apartment building when they sold Magnus the space.

As he stormed up to the door to The Institute (yes, the dumbest name ever, in Magnus’s opinion), he glowered at the doors unhappily to try and settle his anger. He barely wrenched the door open when two blond people on their way out stopped in surprise.

“Oh sorry,” the woman said, smiling, shoving the man back to let Magnus in. Magnus started to step up onto the stoop, but a thick, tattooed arm shot out across the door, stopping him. He turned to look at the man, raising an eyebrow.

He gave a smile that made Magnus want to slap the look off his face. “Hey, I know you. You’re from next door. Mark or something.” He smirked, looking over Magnus’s baggy sweatshirt, yoga pants, and Uggs. “If you’re coming to try and register, I think you might have a better shot down the road at that 24-Hour Fitness place with the Aerobics teacher that has the big tits. Might be a bit more your speed.”

Magnus had to bite his tongue to keep from telling the big, blond jerk in front of him where he could stick his recommendations. “Actually my name is Magnus Bane,” he started calmly. “I am the owner of the dance studio next door, and I’d really like to speak with the owner or manager or whoever is in charge of your…” He looked past them into the sort of dark and dirty looking gym.

“Establishment.”

The woman fixed an apologetic smile on her face, elbowing the man in the ribs. “That would be me, at the moment.” She offered her hand and he noticed she had the same kind of tattoos that the other guy had. “Lydia Branwell, please, come in,” she said, and Magnus made sure wink meanly at the blond guy on the way past. “Sorry about him,” she said, as the man left. “That’s Jace, his family owns this place. I’m the manager right now,” she explained, leading Magnus past a few mats on the floor, all with sweaty, half-naked men rolling around together on them.

Magnus raised an eyebrow. “No wonder Blondie at the door was so annoying. All this homoeroticism must make a lot of men stressed out when they start questioning their sexuality,” he said and Lydia actually gave a small smile of amusement before she could suppress it.

They didn’t walk much further before she got to an office. She knocked on the door casing as she headed in. “Alec, we’ve got a visitor.” She gestured for Magnus to enter ahead of her, and he did so, only to nearly stumble when the man behind the desk stood up. He was quite possibly the most beautiful man Magnus had ever seen. Like, ever. And Magnus had seen a lot of beautiful men in his life. “Magnus, this is Alec, his family owns the gym,” Lydia introduced. “Alec, Magnus Bane is the owner of Pandemonium.”

Alec blinked a few times, looking at Magnus, then blushed and smiled. “Y-yeah. I know. I mean, I’ve seen you before. Outside. Not- not like in a creepy way.” He laughed nervously. “I didn’t- I don’t- I never watched through the window or anything, I-“ He ducked his head, blushing. “I’m
gonna stop talking now.” He cleared his throat, standing up. “So what can we do to help you?”

Magnus ignored the frankly amusing stuttering (or how tall Alec was, jesus) as well as the same sort of weird tattoos – seriously, what the fuck? - and crossed his arms, tapping his foot. “Well, actually, I’m sort of bummed you’re totally adorable and not a jerk like your brother, because I came here to yell at whoever was in charge of this noise,” he stressed.

Alec frowned. “What noise?”

Magnus spluttered, gesturing to the ceiling. “This horrible, angry shouting stuff that’s rattling the windows!”

Lydia tilted her head. “Well, I’m sorry, but fighters like training with music. Especially this week, some of these guys are cutting weight.”

Magnus shrugged. “And you can’t just turn it down? I’m in the middle of a beginners seniors ballroom lesson, these people are hard of hearing as it is, they can’t hear me counting over your recorded car-crash sounds and it’s not okay,” he said to her.

“Look, Mr. Bane, I am sorry,” Alec said, and Magnus turned, raising an eyebrow. He genuinely looked cowed. “But she’s right. I’ve got one guy that’s been running uphill for the past three hours. He needs the distraction. He’s got until tonight to cut the last eight pounds.”

Magnus glared. “And I’ve got sixty-five year olds who are paying thirty bucks per hour for dance lessons right now that I’ll have to refund if you don’t turn this shit down,” he argued.

Alec looked genuinely sorry, but Magnus couldn’t find it in himself to actually care because he shook his head and that answer was what mattered to Magnus. Lydia shrugged. “Sorry, Magnus, but he’s right. We just can’t.”

“So what do I tell my students?!” Magnus asked angrily.

Lydia shrugged. “Turn your music up louder?” she suggested.

Magnus gaped, and then snapped his mouth shut, narrowing his eyes. He looked over at Alec and back to Lydia and sniffed. “Well. If that’s how it’s going to be.” He turned on his heel and stalked off, stomping back to the front door. “Stupid fighter freaks. Damn pretty men. Dumb ass metal music.” He grumbled to himself the whole way back to his studio, where he stalked to the corner to kick off his shoes and crank the music up.

“Alright, ladies and gentlemen. Let’s try again!”

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Two days later, Magnus came out of the office and found Raphael feeling of the ankle of one of the little boys in his class while he sat there crying. Magnus gasped, rushing over. “Oh no, Toby, are you okay?” he asked, kneeling down beside them. Toby was only eight, the youngest in that particular class, so Magnus always worried he’d get ran over by the bigger kids one day.

Raphael muttered something under his breath, and Magnus looked at him expectantly. Raphael looked at Toby, and then spoke to Magnus barely above a whisper, leaning close so he could hear. “The beat from next door is confusing them, they get it mixed up with the beat from our music, and one of the larger kids crashed into him.” He pulled away and put Toby’s foot down. “It does not feel like anything is sprained. You will probably feel better in a little while,” he reassured. He helped Toby to his feet and helped him over to sit beside the stereo. “Here, you can help me out over here.”
Magnus could hear the music from next door pretty clearly without any of their music on, so he could understand what the problem was. He looked at Toby and stood up, going right back to the office. He might not be able to talk them into turning the music down, but when he grabbed the office phone and dialed the local police station, he figured a noise complaint might just shut them up.

When a police car had parked outside and two cops went into The Institute, Raphael looked over at Magnus and raised an eyebrow. Magnus just smirked in response, turning back to where he had his under-10’s jazz class stretching while Raphael’s class finished up.

Because of this, he was in the middle of a split when the door banged open loud enough to startle most of the kids into falling out of their splits. He turned his head and saw the cop car was gone, only to turn all the way around, coming out of his split as he saw the big, blond guy – Jace – stalking towards Raphael. Magnus scrambled to his feet. “It’s okay, I’ll be right back,” he said to his kids, then rushed over before Raphael could get too angry.

“If you didn’t call the cops then who the hell was it?!” Jace asked, looking down at Raphael.

“I did,” Magnus said, stalking up to him. “And watch your mouth in a room full of children,” he snapped, getting between him and Raphael.

Jace blinked, and then snorted, grinning. “Oh, so it’s you again.” He scoffed. “Really? Calling the cops? Isn’t that a little petty-“

Raphael started to shove past Magnus, only to be held back. “One of my students got hurt because of your stupid music,” he hissed at Jace. “You have been asked to turn it down, and now you injured a child because you won’t cut down what has to be eardrum bursting music when your members could just invest in some earbuds for their workout!”

Jace rolled his eyes. “We’re an MMA gym, it’s not like we have fat chicks on treadmills over there.”

Magnus gaped. “First off, that’s a really terrible thing to say. Don’t degrade anybody exercising just because they aren’t big, steroid-stuffed jocks like you,” he argued. “And second, your music is not important to your sport! Mine is! This is a dance school. The beat from your background noise throws off my students and today an eight year old got hurt because of you and your hypermasculine ‘man’ music. So back off and enjoy the fine for noise violation,” he said, gesturing to the door.

Jace laughed incredulously. “That’s awfully rich coming from a skinny little pretty boy like you, Bane,” he said, looking at Magnus’s petite figure in another baggy sweatshirt and yoga pants. “Looks like you could use something a little masculine for once,” he goaded.

Magnus laughed harshly, and lowered his voice so the kids didn’t hear before replying, “I’d bet my right leg I’ve got my hands on more tits than you would know what to do with, Big Man, so clearly my makeup and feminine clothes aren’t that much of a setback.”

It was worth Raphael cursing at him in Spanish that he didn’t ever need to hear that just to see the shocked look on Jace’s face as he struggled to find a retort only to eventually give up and storm out, leaving just as quickly as he came.

The noise complaint intervention lasted all the way until the weekend. From the flyers on all the posts and storefronts along the street, it was some sort of ‘weigh-in’ night at The Institute and all day before the weigh-in, they were having intra-gym fights for the amateurs.
And, obviously, that required the loud ass metal music again.

Isabelle was teaching a ballet class while Magnus tried to do some paperwork in the office, but he knew that if he was getting a headache from the shouts and thumps and that damn ring bell all day long, she had to be ready to rip her hair out trying to teach an upper level ballet class in those conditions.

After about less than half an hour further, Isabelle came into the office, looking frustrated. “I had to cut class early today,” she said, going over to her purse. She pulled out her phone and sat against the desk. “This has to stop. I can’t take another class like this,” she said, dialing someone. Magnus started to ask who she was calling, but she cursed and hung up. “And of course my brother isn’t answering his phone now,” she said with a sigh.

He didn’t know who her brother was or why she would call him, but he didn’t care, because he had also had enough. He stood up, the chair sliding out with a bang, and turned to leave. “Fuck it,” he said simply. “I’m going to go over there and talk to them again. If I don’t come back, it’s because I’ve been murdered by assholes with ‘roid-rage,” he said, and Isabelle laughed at his retreating back.

“Just threaten to call the fire department about their blocked exits,” she suggested as he was halfway out of the room.

Magnus spared a moment’s thought of how the hell Isabelle could know whether or not they had blocked exits, but he really didn’t care. He was pissed. When Magnus got to The Institute’s front door, he shoved it open and stormed past the front desk. He shoved his way past all the people milling around the sparring mats and headed straight for the blond hair he saw beside the cage closer to the back. As he passed the open office door, he heard someone curse and scramble to get out of a chair, so he figured whoever was in charge had spotted him, but he really wanted to deal with that cocky asshole, Jace.

“Mr. Bane! Mr. Bane, can I help you?!”

At the sound of someone calling Magnus’s name, Jace turned away from the cage doors and grinned, shoving a wrapped hand through his sweaty hair. “Oh hey, if it isn’t the dancer from next door,” he said loudly, earning laughs from the gaggle of meatheads standing around the cage. “What’s it this time, Bane? Gonna call the cops again?”

“Mr. Bane, please, we can talk about this-“

Magnus turned around quickly, making the tall, pretty one nearly fall over as he avoided running into him. “Oh no, Alec, this one is between me and your brother,” he said, and Alec looked at Jace with an annoyed look. Magnus turned back around, shoving his way between two men who were probably each the size of about three of him. “Alright, Asshole. What the hell do I have to do to make you turn the goddamn music down?!” he demanded. “Because as much as I love visiting the set of every gay porn film ever-“ There was a lot of ‘wait a minute now’ cries of outrage at that, “I really need to do my job. My business is important. I’ve put up with this shit for two years, and I’m done. It seems like it’s getting worse lately.”

“Probably because we’ve got winning fighters recently,” Alec offered rationally from behind him. “More training-“

“Don’t bother, Alec;” Jace interrupted. “Pretty Boy Bane thinks all his Tinkerbelle little girls are athletes, too. He won’t respect our winners any more than losers.”
Magnus gritted his teeth. “Look. I’m not the one talking shit about your athletes! I’m sure you have plenty of great fighters, but I train dancers who work just as hard as any of you do and they’re six year old children. I’m not talking shit about fighters, I’m not concerned with your business, I just want you to respect my goddamn dancers!” he shouted. “Turn the fucking music down!” he yelled, cheeks burning with anger.

Jace looked impressed, then grinned. “Know what?”

Alec stepped up beside Magnus, giving Jace a stern look. “Don’t you dare. I know that look-“

Jace walked up to Magnus, grinning at him. “I’ve got a great idea. Get in the cage with me and get in one solid punch and I give you my word, we’ll turn the music down from now on.” Alec started to argue but Jace continued. “I won’t hit back, just blocking. Let me get you taped up, you get in, and if you can get one solid hit in five minutes, we’ve got a deal.”

Magnus raised an eyebrow. “Are you serious? Do I have your word that you’ll keep your end of the bargain?”

Jace gave him an amused grin while half the guys around them started laughing. “Yeah, Bane. You’ve got my word.”

Alec groaned. “Jace, this is a bad idea-“

“Alec, come on, look at him,” Jace said, as if Magnus wasn’t even there.

“Alec, I still think it’s a bad idea-“

Magnus butted in. “Deal,” he said, holding out his hand. Jace grinned and shook on it while a whoop went up around the crowd. Jace reached out for the tape sitting ringside, and Magnus held out his hands, staring Jace down as he taped up his hands and wrists. When he finished Magnus climbed up into the cage, pausing by the door to pull his sweatshirt over his head. He felt a little ridiculous standing there in knee-length sweatpants with “NYC” down the thigh and a loose, cropped tank top that said Caution: Goes Both Ways in pink, purple, and blue letters, but he couldn’t wait to put Jace in his place.

A few of the guys around the caged were looking at Magnus’s now-bared arms with unsure expressions, and he smirked to himself. Everybody always seemed surprised to see how much muscle definition he had on his petite frame. Jace got into the ring with just a mouth guard in, no head gear, and Alec stood on the stairs, glaring at him while holding the headgear in his hand. Jace looked at Magnus as he jumped a few times to loosen up, grinning as he saw his shirt. “Oh I was wrong, Alec, he isn’t straight after all,” he called, and Magnus turned his head in confusion, only to grin when he saw how red and wide-eyed Alec looked, shaking his head in panicky little shakes.

That explained a lot, really, Magnus figured. Although, going by the way he was looking around like he was about to be jumped, Magnus felt sort of sad thinking about how likely it was that anybody not fully hetero would be shunned in this environment. He suddenly felt even more determined to punch the shit out of Jace, if only to show the big, dumb jocks around the ring that toxic masculinity was seriously overrated. “So,” Magnus asked, rolling his shoulders and neck, swinging his arms to stretch them out. “How does this work?” he asked, eyeing Jace as he bounced around.

Alec spoke up from the open door. “The bell rings, and then it will ring again either once you punch him or when the time is up,” he called, and Magnus winked at him.

Jace laughed. “Don’t worry, Bane. We all know you’re a dancer. We won’t laugh too hard when
you can’t get in a good punch.”

Magnus gritted his teeth, and as soon as the bell rang, he was across the cage. Jace blocked his first punch with his forearm, and the look on his face when he felt the strength of Magnus’s glancing blow was a shocked and confused one. Magnus swung a few more times without landing a hit, but Jace was smiling. “Hey, you’re not as bad as I thought you would be- oof!” Magnus punched him hard in the stomach while he was distracted and then drew back his right hand and punched that smug look right off his face as hard as he could.

There was a collective cry of shock when Jace went down, flat on his back. Magnus skipped back, more than a little shocked at the way Jace groaned as he rolled to his side and up onto his knees, a hand coming up to grab his face, but after a few seconds, the pain finally hit Magnus and he let out a groan of pain between gritted teeth, grabbing his right hand as he leaned over, shoving it between his knees as he tried not to shout in pain.

Jace was back up onto his feet by the time Magnus looked up again, but his eye and the surrounding area was red and he was looking at Magnus in shock. Alec, however, walked over to Magnus, bending over some to look Magnus in the face from his position with his hand between his legs, gritting his teeth against the pain. “Did you hurt your wrist?” he asked sympathetically, and Magnus looked up, biting his bottom lip as he nodded. Alec gave him a sympathetic nod. “It happens when you throw a strong punch without working up to it.”

Magnus straightened up, holding his wrist against his stomach as he exhaled roughly. “Holy shit, I didn’t know it hurt to punch somebody.”

“Oh yeah,” Alec said with a small laugh. “C’mon,” he said, nodding his head towards the stairs. “I’ll unwrap it and make sure you didn’t break something.”

When they walked back past Jace, Jace gave him an impressed nod, offering his hand. “I really didn’t expect you to have that sort of strength,” he said, and Magnus rolled his eyes, offering his left hand since his right was out of commission.

“A deal’s a deal, right?” Magnus asked, and Jace grinned.

“A deal’s a deal,” he agreed, giving Magnus a surge of smug pride as he followed Alec down the steps and through the crowd that was now ribbing Jace for Magnus knocking him down.

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Magnus gritted his teeth while Alec knelt in front of where Magnus sat on the couch in the office, carefully undoing the tape around his hands and between his fingers. “I tried to warn him,” Alec said with an amused little grin on his lips. He glanced up at Magnus, who raised an eyebrow. “I told him not to challenge you to punch him.” He looked back down, turning Magnus’s hand over to undo the tape over his palm. “I’ve seen you dancing through the front windows, so it’s pretty obvious you’re stronger than he thought you were.”

Magnus hummed. “Well if I knew how much it hurt I might not have punched him so hard,” he said, frowning down at his hand. “Although, it felt really good to knock that smug look off his face for once.”

Alec smiled. “He was being stupid and cocky so he deserved it. He knows dancers aren’t weak. Isabelle used to kick his ass when they sparred growing up.”

Magnus looked up in surprise. “Isabelle Lightwood?” he asked. “My Isabelle?”
“Yeah,” Alec said, looking up. “My sister.”

“Isabelle is your sister?!” Magnus asked quickly, gaping. “Holy shit, that’s why she tried to call her brother when she was complaining about the music making her cut her class short. Whoa. She never told me you guys were her brothers.”

Alec looked at him confusedly. “Well, we are. Alec, Jace, and Isabelle. And we have a little brother that’s still a kid named Max.” He hummed. “She really never mentioned us?”

“Well I knew she had siblings,” Magnus said. “I just didn’t know it was you people over here in this concussion factory.”

Alec laughed, shaking his head as he finished removing the last of the tape. “That’s a new one, I must say,” he said, then turned Magnus’s hand over, feeling of his wrist where it met his hand. “Okay now tell me if this hurts,” he said, pressing in certain spots. Magnus shook his head every time Alec looked up until Alec pressed on the underside of his forearm a bit above his wrist, making him hiss in pain.

“Ow, ow, there;” he complained, tugging his hand back some.

“Sorry,” Alec said, rubbing at his forearm further up and then back down. “I think it’s just a pulled muscle. It doesn’t feel like you broke anything and a sprain would hurt further around.” He met Magnus’s eyes with a smile. “You should be fine in a day or two, but I’d take some ibuprofen and maybe get some ice on it just to make the pain stop.”

Magnus pouted dramatically. “Tell your asshole brother his face broke me,” he said with a faux sniffle, grinning when Alec rolled his eyes and laughed. “But really, I know it was sort of ridiculous to punch someone, but this music thing has to stop,” he said in a softer tone. “You seem to be the most reasonable one between you, Jace, and Lydia. So please don’t make me have to call the cops again. I understand you have a business to run, but you actually can train fighters without the music being so loud, whereas I physically cannot teach dancers to dance when they hear and feel two separate beats going on. I’m pretty sure I could lose dancers over this,” he stressed in a more sensible tone, holding Alec’s gaze.

Alec nodded, looking apologetic. “I understand. I really do. I mean, I don’t like it,” he said honestly. “Because my fighters like the music loud, but if you call the cops again they’re going to fine us and since you’re right, we can do it without the music so loud, there’s no reason to be paying fines for it.”

Magnus rolled his eyes. “Tell your fighters I will personally buy every single one of them a pair of five dollar earbuds they can plug into their phones if they want that damn loud music.”

Alec grinned. “I’ll be sure to pass along the message,” he agreed.

Magnus wasn’t sure how long they sat there, simply smiling at each other like idiots – because he had to be honest, Alec was probably the prettiest face he’d seen in a long time – before he finally dragged his eyes away from Alec’s big, hazel eyes and stood up, prompting Alec to stand with him. “Well, I should probably be getting back,” he said, and Alec nodded. Magnus’s smile turned into an amused grin and he nodded to his hand, which Alec still held gently between both of his. “I kinda need that back,” he teased.

Alec blushed, dropping his hand like it was going to bite him. “I- I’m so sorry, I just- I forgot- I didn’t-”

“Oh no, it’s fine,” Magnus said, winking at Alec. “You can hold my hand whenever you want, I just
need to borrow it to head back to teach my next class.”

Alec just blushed even deeper, head bowed. “Um, tell Izzy I’ll call her back later?” he said in parting, and Magnus just nodded, letting Alec walk him to the door of the office.

“See you later, Alec,” he said, and Alec waved absently before Magnus turned and left the gym, feeling a bit of a wiggle in his tummy as he thought about those pretty eyes and big, strong hands.

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Magnus didn’t get to talk to Isabelle until after their next class, at which point he followed her to the office and pointed a finger at her with his uninjured hand. “You could’ve told me the people next door were your family,” he accused playfully, flopping into the desk chair with a huff.

Isabelle shrugged unapologetically. “The first day I started you were bitching to Raphael about the ‘Rocky wannabes’ that linger outside your studio all the time. I figured you might not like me very much if you knew, and then I realized that the crap involved with being next door to The Institute really was that annoying and didn’t want to own up to it. But,” she added. “After the other day I figured you knew. You met them after all.” She sat on the top of the desk, giving him a devious grin. “Now, tell me what you threatened with this time to make them stop!”

As he remembered the look on Jace’s face when he got off the floor, Magnus laughed evilly to himself. “I knocked your brother the fuck out, that’s what.” Isabelle gasped and Magnus held up his right hand. “The pretty brother had to make sure I didn’t break my wrist.”

“Oh my God, you punched Alec?!” she asked, hand coming up to cover her mouth.

Magnus made a face. “What? No, the blond asshole one.”

She relaxed. “Oh yeah.” She waved a hand. “He’s our brother, but he’s adopted and was adopted pretty late in life, so by ‘my brother’ I figured you meant Alec.” She looked at him with a slow grin. “Did you just call my dear big brother, Alexander Lightwood, ‘the pretty one’ instead of Jace?” she asked teasingly.

“Of course I did,” he said, making a face. “Jace is a cocky jerk who looks like a gorilla,” he said bluntly. “Has anybody ever told him that?” he asked absently. “Does he know he has a face like a primate? I wonder if he has ever noticed it himself.”

Isabelle laughed. “Oh my God, you think Alec is more attractive than Jace! That’s a first.”

Magnus scoffed. “That’s ridiculous.” He kicked his feet up. “Not to gross you out, ‘Izzy’, but Alexander is probably the most beautiful human I’ve ever seen. I would climb that like a tree… and he’s tall enough I could actually climb him,” he added. He sighed, smiling up at the ceiling. “I like that name better. ‘Alexander’.” He curled his injured hand against his chest. “And those big, manly hands are so warm and strong. Mmmmm.”

“Oh, I’m gonna cut you off there,” Isabelle said, miming gagging. She leaned forward. “But really, you punched Jace?”

Magnus grinned proudly. “Yep! He totally tried to be all cocky and show off by challenging me to punch him one good time in the cage with him blocking my punches and he clearly didn’t realize I’m strong, too.” He shook his wrist. “I hurt myself, but man it was worth it for the shocked look on his face. And he made a deal so I expect him to keep his end of the bargain,” he added.

Isabelle just cackled, clapping her hands. “I love it!” She sighed. “Also that music! Finally! I’ve
complained to my mom about it but she just said, as expected, that ‘our fighters are more important than silly dancing’,” she said, scRUNching up her nose.

“So your mom owns the place?” he asked and she nodded.

“ Mom was a fighter when Alec and I were little,” she explained. “ She had retired at first when she got pregnant with Alec, and then she and dad had me, and she decided she wanted to go back to it since there was a scene growing in America. Before Alec, she lived in Japan to fight. But after I was born, she got back into it until I was like seven or eight.” She snorted. “You can imagine how much my mother respects my dancing. The only reason she even let me do it as a little girl is because Alec and my dad stood up for me.”

Magnus hummed. “That’s… different.” He grinned. “I’m still so pleased that I fixed our problem, got to punch Jace in the face, and got to stare at that big, beautiful man for a little while.” He shook his head. “Man, the things I would do to him if he was on the market.”

“You mean Alec?” she asked, giving him a confused look. “He’s single, why do you think he isn’t?”

Magnus raised an eyebrow slowly. “You mean Lydia and he aren’t… you know.” He waved a hand. “They seemed to be pretty close.”

Isabelle scoffed. “Please. Alec is gayer than Raphael.”

Magnus sat up some. “Is he in the closet, then? I mean I figured he isn’t straight, Jace said something that made me think he might be into men, but I figured if he was with Lydia it wasn’t anything that mattered, so he kept it locked down.”

“No,” she said. “Everybody knows about it, because when my mom started introducing him to these female fighters all the time he finally snapped and yelled at her that he’s gay.” She shrugged. “He just keeps it sort of reserved because, you know, a gym full of fighters isn’t the place to let it out that you’re into men. Especially since he still does take fights, and there just aren’t gay fighters in MMA,” she said with an annoyed pinch to her lips. “The sponsors would back out, the other fighters would refuse to take fights in case he ‘gets off on it’, there would probably be people bitching about how it’s not safe for him to bleed all over the ring since he probably has AIDS and shit like that,” she said bitterly. “So he’s out, but not entirely. If he and Lydia act it up a little, he probably is just doing it so the people at the gym don’t get suspicious about him never talking about a girlfriend or whatever.”

Magnus groaned. “God I hate jocks. Of course there are no gay fighters. I don’t know why I’m surprised,” he said, shaking his head. “Poor Alexander. He’s too cute to face that much homophobia.”

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Magnus was stretching alone while Raphael changed in the back when the front door opened and he looked up with a smile for Isabelle. “Good morning!” he called cheerfully, laying on his stomach between his spread legs. He raised an eyebrow when she held the door open with her foot and, for the first time in the year and a half she had worked there, Alec walked in carrying a big box for her. Magnus narrowed his eyes at her and she just smirked, confirming his suspicions.

She was totally trying to get Magnus to do something about how cute he found Alec.

“ Izzy, c’mon, where do you want this? I can’t see where I’m walking,” Alec complained and Isabelle winked at Magnus.

“Magnus, where do you want the new gear for the tap class, that fundraiser performance thing,” she
asked as she headed on back to the office. “Alec, do whatever Magnus says,” she instructed before skipping through the door.

Magnus grinned at her and blew her a kiss. “Wherever is fine,” he said, climbing to his feet. “Here, I’ve got it,” he said, walking over to the box – because he couldn’t see Alec’s head behind it – and grabbed the side of it. “Let’s just lower it down,” he said, and he steadied the box while Alec got his hands out from under it.

When they got it lowered to the ground, Magnus raised his head and saw Alec looking right at him, both of them significantly closer together leaned over like that. “Good morning, Alexander,” he said with a warm smile. He was rewarded with a bashful grin and Alec’s ears turning red.

“Nobody really calls me that. Not even my mom when she’s mad,” he said, and Magnus tutted.

“Which is a damn shame,” he said, winking. “It’s a beautiful name. Feels very graceful coming off the lips and tongue, really. Alexander.”

Alec ducked his eyes and stood upright, reaching up to fiddle with his hair, avoiding Magnus’s eyes. “Uh, thanks?” he asked, laughing nervously as he met Magnus’s eyes again.

“No, thank you for helping Isabelle with this stuff,” Magnus said, opening the box. He did a little happy dance as he snagged one of the sparkly, sequined top hats and popped it on his head, posing dramatically. “Cute, right?”

Alec smiled in amusement. “It’s a little… small,” he said, and Magnus dropped the hat back into the box with a big smile.

“Well it is for a bunch of ten year olds so there is that,” he said brightly. “There’s some city manager type person doing a big fundraiser to revitalize some of the sidewalks in the neighborhood and they asked us to do a performance since two of his kids are in the tap class and I couldn’t really say no. Any publicity is good for the studio,” he said, hands going to his hips as he looked around. “We could use some sprucing here. Only two years in and I’ve already got some paint peeling in spots.” He turned back to Alec. “Should’ve asked more questions of that realtor when I bought the place.” He gave him a teasing look. “Like whether or not the gym next door would drive me crazy until I punched the annoying guy over there.”

Alec grinned, shaking his head. “Oh man, have you seen the black eye you gave him?!” he asked, digging his phone out of his pocket. He walked around the big box and stood beside Magnus, bringing up a photo and holding the phone out.

On the screen, Jace was pouting dramatically with a big, ugly black eye while Isabelle mockingly held her fists up like she had been the one to punch him. Magnus laughed. “Oh wow, I really did not expect that!”

Alec nodded, putting the phone back. “It’s so good. He’s telling everybody he got it sparring, but whenever I get a chance I make sure they know it was the dance teacher next door that he was ‘sparring’ with.” He glanced at Magnus’s wrist. “Your arm ended up fine, then?” he asked and Magnus nodded, holding his right hand out to show Alec.

“Yes, it never swelled, or got worse. It’s totally fine now. The first day it was sore, but it was like you said. Just a pulled muscle,” he said, smirking up at him. “Although, hard to complain about any injury too much when a gorgeous guy is the one to fix you up afterwards.”

It broke Magnus’s heart a little when Alec opened his mouth, looking confused, before his eyes
widened and he blushed, snapping his mouth shut again. “Oh,” he muttered to himself. Magnus really wanted to smack whoever convinced that gorgeous man that he wasn’t. “Well, I-I should.” Alec gestured towards the door, licking his lips nervously. “People. At the gym.” He ducked his head with a sigh. “I’m- I’m gonna just leave now.”

The wiggling in Magnus’s tummy from before had turned into full-fledged butterflies as he watched Alec walk away, shoulders slumped and neck bright red. He was quite possibly the cutest thing Magnus had ever encountered. “I’ll see you later, Alexander,” he called, positively beaming when Alec glanced back at the door and offered an embarrassed little wave before leaving. Magnus waited until he had fully disappeared before letting out a dramatic sigh and spinning around in a circle with a bit of an exaggerated squeak.

“That was disgusting.” Magnus jerked around and Raphael was standing in the doorway to the back, arms crossed.

Magnus pointed at him. “You wish a man that beautiful blushed when you flirted with him,” he accused and Raphael scrunched his nose.

“I think my boyfriend would be upset if I did,” he replied and Magnus nearly fell over.

“Boyfriend?! What boyfriend?!”

There was a crash from in the office and Isabelle stumbled out, trying to get the trashcan off of her foot as she gaped at them. “Raphael Santiago, you have a boyfriend?!”

Raphael screwed up his face, turning to face her. “You know my boyfriend, what are you talking about, Isabelle?” Magnus and Isabelle shared a look and turned back to him with identical looks of confusion. Raphael narrowed his eyes suspiciously. “Is this some sort of prank?”

“No, it’s not a damn prank, who are you talking about?” Isabelle asked, clearly trying to think. “Is it that guy at the coffee shop you smile at every time you order?”

Raphael put a hand to his forehead. “I’m so confused right now-“

“SO ARE WE!” Magnus cried.

Raphael shook his head. “Dios, Simon, you know Simon, Isabelle, Simon is my boyfriend, you have to know this.”

Isabelle gave him a disbelieving look. “Simon?! Clary’s nerd friend? Since when are you dating Simon?!” she asked, shocked.

“For nearly as long as I’ve known you!” he shouted, holding his hands out. “You don’t know I’m dating Simon?! What the fuck?!”

Magnus hummed, tapping his chin. “Simon, Simon, Simon- wait, you mean the weird one with the glasses that sort of looks like a vampire?” he asked in confusion. “I thought his name was Sherman?”

“How could you be dating Simon and I not know about it?” Isabelle asked him, hands on her hips. “I don’t believe you. There’s no way. I see Simon all the time when I go out with Clary. Also, he stares at my boobs all the time, why would your boyfriend stare at my boobs?”

Raphael crossed his arms over his chest, giving her a raised eyebrow. “Perhaps he wouldn’t if your breasts weren’t bigger than my head and your shirts smaller than Magnus’s ass,” he said and she gasped.
“Take that back! My boobs are not that big!”

“Magnus stares at them all the time,” Raphael said and Magnus turned to him, shaking his head rapidly and miming for him to cut it out.

Isabelle turned to Magnus, hands on her boobs. “Hey!”

Magnus rolled his eyes, sighing. “I spend just as much time staring at Raphael’s ass, Isabelle. It’s nothing personal, I just can’t help where my eyes wander. Trust me, you’re not my type,” he said, then hesitated. “Actually you’re totally my type, but I’m not interested in you that way. Also you’re trying to set me up with your brother, so that would be really weird.” He turned back to Raphael. “You still don’t get out of explaining that you’ve been dating a man for almost a year and a half and you haven’t ever told me,” he said, pointing at him. “You’re a horrible friend.”

Raphael shrugged nonchalantly. “Who says we are friends?” he asked and Magnus glared. Raphael sighed. “Fine, I am sorry I don’t go around dancing around and making sappy faces every time I think about my boyfriend. I just don’t think it is appropriate to gush about relationship at work. Also, I do not feel the need to repeatedly talk about my boyfriend to my friends. What does me dating someone have to do with our friendship?” he asked simply.

Magnus just looked at Isabelle, who sighed, rolling her eyes. “I bet Simon is so happy with such an unemotional boyfriend. I bet the poor guy is starved for affection. Poor boy,” she said with a dramatic sniff. “Never sure whether he’s cared about or just convenient—”

“We live together, so I’m pretty sure he is aware he isn’t just a convenient piece of ass,” Raphael dismissed, seeming totally unbothered.

Magnus groaned, turning away. “I give up. You live with a man and none of us knew you even knew what a date was. This is just sad, Raphael. You’re a horrible friend. You make Ron Swanson look sappy.”

Raphael frowned. “Who?”

Isabelle threw her hands up, making a frustrated noise. “I give up! Raphael is inhuman. He has to be. Magnus, your friend is a robot. He goes home and powers down and plugs into a charging port. That’s the only answer.”

Magnus hummed. “I dunno. From what I remember, that Seamus kid is really weird. I wouldn’t really brag about him to my friends either.”

Raphael cleared his throat, giving him a look. “Do not take my lack of sharing with the class for being alright with you making fun of my boyfriend,” he warned.

Magnus clutched his chest dramatically. “Be still my heart, the most romantic thing Raphael Santiago can say about the man he lives with is that he isn’t totally cool with someone making fun of him. Catch me, Izzy, I’m going to swoon!”

“Did you just call her ‘Izzy’?” Raphael asked, and Magnus blushed. Raphael rolled his eyes. “Dios, what I do not have you make up for when it comes to being ridiculous about boys. You just met the man a week ago and already you are copying his speech patterns.”

“Shut it, you, Izzy is an adorable nickname!” he said, sucking his teeth. “Whatever, shut up, help me with this stuff,” he said, and Raphael just smirked at him as he went to sit down and help Magnus sort through the box of stuff.
After that, it seemed that Magnus saw Alec all over the place. If he didn’t know better, he would think Isabelle was setting it up, but he was pretty sure Isabelle couldn’t have arranged for Magnus to run into Alec at the crosswalk at the end of the block on his way to pick up lunch for them since the place they decided to order from that day didn’t deliver.

Alec’s eyes widened a bit and then his shy smile followed as he saw Magnus. “Oh hey,” he said, looking Magnus over. “Well that’s a different look,” he said, grinning playfully, which made Magnus fall a bit more head over heels for his pretty face.

Looking down at the extremely baggy jeans, bright pink tank top, and remembering his neon green cap, Magnus gave a bashful smile but shrugged. “Working on something the three of us and a friend of Isabelle’s are doing. This is my ‘stereotypical Asian B-Boy’ look,” he said with a wink.

The light turned and they instinctively fell into step, Alec clearly slowing down some since his long-legged gait would make Magnus have to run. “So what are you guys working on?” he asked. “Izzy doesn’t talk about dance much at home.”

Magnus smiled. “We’re working on this really fun hip-hop routine. I still don’t know for sure it’s gonna work out but mostly Raphael and Isabelle were just playing around one day and the song they were dancing too seemed really fun, and I was like, ‘we should work on something’ so we are. Most likely it’ll just end up being a youtube video somewhere, but it will look good on the website at least.”

“I’ll be sure to watch it, then,” Alec said and Magnus felt like such an idiot for how pleased he was at that.

At the next block, they both seemed to be going the same way, so Magnus decided to keep talking. “So you said ‘at home’. You and Isabelle live together?” he asked, and Alec nodded.

“Me, Izzy, and Jace all live together.” He chuckled. “Jace and I decided to get our own place when I won my first big fight and got enough money for the down payment on a condo, but Isabelle hated being at home without us, so she moved in with us.” He shrugged. “We’ve always been really close, so I like it. I can’t imagine not talking to her every day,” he said bashfully. “She’s my baby sister, you know?”

Magnus smiled fondly. “That’s actually really sweet,” he agreed. “I still find it amazing a sweet girl like Isabelle and a shy thing like you grew up with that cocky piece of work,” he said, shaking his head.

Alec laughed openly. “He’s a lot more like Isabelle than you realize. She comes across as ‘sassy’ more than cocky, but they say a lot of the same stuff. He just doesn’t know when to stop. Also, she’s more of a ‘leave them wanting more’ kind of person when she’s showing off, and Jace is more, ‘remind them what they just saw’ when he shows off.”

Magnus grinned up at him. “And what about you? Which are you more like when you show off?” he asked, but Alec just shrugged, ducking his head.

“I don’t really have anything to show off the way they do. Jace is a better fighter than me, and Isabelle is the only one graceful enough to be a dancer. Our little brother, Max, he’s the smart one. I’m just… Alec,” he dismissed.

Magnus bumped their shoulders (or more his shoulder into Alec’s upper arm) and smiled. “So you’re the nice big brother that supports and encourages them, then. That doesn’t seem like ‘just’ anything
to me, Alexander,” he said in a soft tone.

Alec ducked his head, glancing over at Magnus with a small smile. “What about you then?” he asked. “Any brothers and sisters?”

Magnus shook his head. “No, just me.” He flapped a hand. “Well, just me and my cat. I have a cat. He’s spoiled rotten.” He shrugged. “My parents kicked me out when I was sixteen, so I don’t really have any opinion either way about them. I was mad they kicked me out at first, but honestly? It was better for me in the end,” he explained. “I got a scholarship to a school in the city that had student housing because I had really good grades and my parents were more than happy to sign off on it, and then I just never went home for breaks and when I turned eighteen, I never had to worry about them again.” He blushed, cringing. “And that’s my ‘tragic backstory’. That I just dropped on you in a friendly conversation about siblings. Shit, I swear I’m usually smoother than this,” he said with a shameful pout.

Alec just shook his head, smiling. “It’s fine. I mean, you’re friends with my sister so you probably know most of our stories by now. Probably just fair to share something less-than-glamorous about yourself,” he said, giving him a teasing look. “Now we’re even.”

“You are something else,” Magnus said with a grateful smile. They reached the corner he needed to turn and he stopped. “Well, this is me, so I’ll see you later?” he asked, and Alec nodded, looking surprisingly eager.

“Sounds good.”

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When Magnus returned with food, he dropped the bags on the floor by the mirror and promptly fell to the floor, groaning into his hands. “Isabelle why does your brother make me stupid?!”

Raphael snorted as he came over, sitting down to grab a bag. “Siempre estás loco,” Raphael offered and Magnus scrunched up his face, rolling onto his side.

“He’s just so pretty and my mouth forgets to stop talking,” he whined. “This never happens to meeee,” he complained. “I spent my twenties being a giant slut, why can’t I be as smooth and charming now like I was back then?”

“Could be the fact you look like the lovechild of a pack of highlighters at the moment, which is not all that sexy.” Magnus was not expecting someone besides Raphael or Isabelle to be there, so when another voice chimed in he scrambled to sit up so gracelessly he was pretty sure he looked like a flopping fish.

He looked around and saw a young guy with glasses sitting beside the stereo in the corner with a textbook and binder laid out in front of him. “Who the hell are you and why are you in my studio?” Magnus asked, clutching his chest to try and soothe his impending heart attack.

The boy opened his mouth to answer but Isabelle walked out of the door beside him and gave Magnus a chastising look, Isabelle’s friend Clary following right behind her. “You know Simon, Magnus. Don’t be rude. You’ve met him more than once before.”

Magnus raised an eyebrow skeptically. “I thought Clary’s friend was Saffron? Also I thought he was a gangly fifteen year old nerd,” he said, looking the kid over again. “You look decently attractive and definitely not fifteen,” he nearly accused.

Simon gave Isabelle a confused look. “I’m… nineteen? Not fifteen?” he asked, and Isabelle just
shook her head.

“Ignore him, he’s having a crisis at the moment. It’s when he’s having personal problems that he gets really testy,” she explained. She stalked towards Magnus. “As you see, Clary is here, so we can begin after we eat.”

Clary and Isabelle joined him on the floor, legs crossed under them as they started digging through the bags. “Aw I wish you had told me Simon was coming,” Isabelle said to Clary. “I would’ve ordered him something, too.”

Clary waved a hand. “That’s fine, he can share with me and Raphael.”

Raphael rolled his eyes and scoffed as looked up from where he had unwrapped his sandwich. “I think not. He can go to the store if he’s hungry.”

“Or, you can let me share,” Simon said, sitting down between Clary and Magnus.

Raphael gave him a flat look. “I don’t share food.”

“Then I don’t share a bed,” Simon said simply, taking some chips from Clary’s bag.

Magnus turned with a scary smile. “Oh that’s right,” he said, eyeing Raphael. “This is the boyfriend you failed to tell us you had even though you’ve been together for a year,” he said slowly.

Clary gaped. “Raphael, you didn’t even tell your friends you had a boyfriend?! Holy crap, I should punch you in the face for doing that to Simon!” she cried in shock.

Simon, however, just shrugged. “I’m not surprised. Raphael thinks anything slightly affectionate in public is rude and he doesn’t talk about his feelings, ever, so why would they know? He definitely wouldn’t bring it up in conversation and any time I’ve stopped by with you, he just acts like I’m a person he vaguely knows.”

Raphael sighed. “Sometimes I wish you were a person I vaguely knew.”

“Awww, I love you, too, Buddy,” Simon said, making Raphael glower at him. “Now, share your food or you’ll start to only vaguely remember what I look like naked.” Raphael didn’t reply but handed over half of his sandwich wordlessly. “Thanks, Babe, you’re the best, you are allowed to sleep in your bed tonight.”

Magnus beamed. “Oh my God, I love Sirius! He’s so fun!” He reached over and patted Simon on the shoulder. “You’re cool, you can stay now.” He wiggled his eyebrows. “So, what is my dear old friend like at home? Does he sleep in a coffin? He’s so pale for a Mexican.”

“Uhm, I love you, too, Buddy,” Simon said, making Raphael glower at him. “Now, share your food or you’ll start to only vaguely remember what I look like naked.” Raphael didn’t reply but handed over half of his sandwich wordlessly. “Thanks, Babe, you’re the best, you are allowed to sleep in your bed tonight.”

Magnus pouted. “I ran into him at the crosswalk and then we walked the same way so we got to talking and he’s so adorable and I was a giant spaz!” He groaned in frustration. “WHY?!! I’m charming, dammit! Why did I have to embarrass myself?” He pouted at Isabelle. “Why is your brother so cute? Why?!” He took a grumpy bite of his burrito.
Clary leaned over. “Which brother? The really hot blond one?” she asked Isabelle, and Magnus choked, looking up at her in shock.

“Heathen!” he cried, clutching his chest in offense. “That one looks like some sort of ape or gorilla next to the beautiful Lightwood brother.” He shuddered. “I’d swear off men forever if I was attracted to Jace.” He perked up. “Alexander, however…” He sighed, eyes going a bit dazed. “I want to make him smile more. He is so pretty when he smiles. I’d do about anything to see that smile more. And we’ve had like two conversations really and you can just tell. He’s so *kind,*” he stressed. “He’s so self-less and nice and all of that wrapped up in a giant, towering pile of yum.” He smiled into the distance. “I want to listen to him talk about everything he likes while sitting on his lap naked—”

“Okay!” Isabelle jumped in, miming gagging. “Oh my God, why?!” she cried, giving him a scandalized look.

Magnus blushed slightly. “Sorry. My daydreams are vivid,” he said apologetically, shrugging weakly.

The next time Magnus saw Alec, Alec was actually looking through the front window. Magnus raised an eyebrow as he came out of the office and saw Alec making faces at Isabelle while she cleaned the mirror at the front of the room. She would turn around and stick her tongue out at him occasionally, so Magnus just stood by the stereo system watching them for the longest before walking over to the window. As soon as he got closer the glare on the glass obviously stopped blocking him from view, because Alec immediately straightened up and stared wide eyed as his cheeks showed a hint of pink. Magnus smiled at him and Alec rolled his eyes, scratching at the back of his hair with a shrug.

Magnus nodded towards the door and Alec tilted his head in confusion, so Magnus rolled his eyes and went to the door, unlocking it for the day and opening it for Alec. “Sorry about, you know,” Alec said in greeting and Magnus just smiled up at him, still shorter than Alec even though the sidewalk was about three inches lower than the studio entryway.

Magnus made a face, standing up on his toes. “Why are you so tall? What is that nonsense?” he asked, and Alec chuckled in amusement, standing on his toes to take him even further above Magnus’s height.

“That’s just not fair,” he said with a playful pout. “Do you know how *tall* I am?” he asked, stepping closer to the edge of the step down. “I’m tall for my ethnicity, I’ll have you know. Chinese men are rarely as tall as I am.” He made a face as he looked straight ahead at Alec’s chin. “Damn white people,” he said with a huff. “So damn tall.”

Alec snorted, unable to help it. “I’m only half-white, if you haven’t noticed, so I could’ve been short, too.”

“Yeah, but you look way whiter than Isabelle,” Magnus countered, waving a hand. “So, Mr. I’m So Tall,” he said, bouncing up on his toes again, trying to be as tall as Alec. “What’re you doing teasing your sister while she’s at work? Isn’t that pretty unprofessional?” he asked in a mock-stern voice.
“I punch people for a living,” Alec said with a shrug. “That’s not very traditionally professional. And from what I’ve seen, your job involves teaching children and then scandalizing their moms with your non-child-related dancing,” he said and Magnus smirked, narrowing his eyes.

He leaned closer, smiling up at Alec teasingly. “Why Alexander,” he started slowly. “Have you been creeping outside my windows?” He winked. “Like what you see?”

Alec’s eyes widened some and then ducked his head, but looked up again with a little shrug, shoulders hunched. “You’re a good dancer. I, um. I like how smoothly you move. It’s- I don’t even know how to explain it because I don’t know anything about dance really,” he rambled. “But I can tell you’re good at it. It looks really graceful.”

Magnus’s smile brightened into a more genuine one. “Thank you, Alexander. You should stop by sometime. Actually watch from the correct side of the room, not through a window.”

Alec nodded, smiling. “I’d like to. I don’t really have days off, but I’ll try and come by one night. You guys are always here later than we are at the gym.” Magnus perked up, bouncing on his toes some.

“If you come by late enough, I might teach you a little something,” he said flirtatiously. It was worth it to see Alec’s eyes widen and his ears grow bright red as he stuttered, looking away, blushing even worse every time he did meet Magnus’s eyes before looking away again.

“I- I-“ He cleared his throat. “I need to go to- to train.” He gestured towards the door next to them. “I’ve gotta, you know.” He rolled his eyes at his own stuttering. “Work. People to train, paperwork, all that stuff.”

Magnus just snickered and nodded. “Have a good day at work, Alexander,” he said as Alec started to take a few steps backwards, not turning away from Magnus just yet.

“You have a good day, too, Magnus,” he said with a soft sigh and roll of his eyes as he threw up his hand and turned around, walking to the next door down.

When Magnus let the door swing shut and headed back across the room with a big smile on his face, Isabelle just rolled her eyes and shook her head. “Pathetic, Bane. You’ve now had what, two conversations? Three?” she asked, and Magnus scoffed, rolling his eyes.

“Darling Isabelle, you don’t understand this because you’re his sister, but that man is quite possibly the most adorable thing I’ve ever seen with my own two eyes,” he gushed, making her laugh.

She shrugged. “Hey, I know my big brother’s an amazing guy. It’s just hilarious that you’re smitten. I’ve never seen you so much as look at anybody for more than a few glances in the time I’ve known you. And it’s Alec,” she said with a snicker.

Magnus joined her at the mirror, grabbing one of the mirror wipes as he sighed dreamily. “I got tired of inviting every pretty person who wanted to join me into my bed around the time I decided I really wanted to open my own place, and then I spent so much time and energy trying to get things going that, in the few years it took to get my shit in order, I stopped going out and partying and by the time I got this place open with Raphael, I guess I was just out of the game, and I was feeling more ‘grown up’, you know?” He shrugged, smiling sadly as he looked over at her. “I found myself not really wanting something ‘fun’ anymore. The last time I tried just having fun with someone was around the time we opened, and it lasted about two weeks before I realized that I just didn’t want to have ‘light and casual’ with the women I was seeing, I wanted something real,” he stressed. “And I don’t know, I just have been busy so I haven’t met anyone that made me feel the flutters before now.”
He hesitated wiping the mirror. “And this is probably just stupid anyways. I mean, not to put you in an awkward position,” he said, glancing over at her in the mirror. “But is this just going to make me hate myself? Your brother is closeted for shits sake. I think he likes me, but is it even worth my trouble to keep doing this flirting thing?” he asked uneasily. “Should I be trying to bury the butterflies and not talk to him whenever I get a chance?”

“I don’t really know,” she said honestly, voice soft as she turned to face him fully. “Alec likes you, that much is obvious. He never even attempts flirting and it may not seem like it, but that’s what he’s doing with you,” she said and he smiled, ducking his head bashfully. “But I don’t know. I do know he’s definitely not trying to just sleep with you and move on,” she said with a dramatic snort. He raised an eyebrow at her devious grin but she just shook her head. “Just take my word for it.”

“But is he going to respond if I ask him out?” Magnus asked softly. “Like, I’m good at going slow, I like this just talking and flirting thing, but if I ever ask him out would he freak out? I’m fine with the closeted thing,” he said quickly. “I know a lot of people look down on people who are too afraid to come out, but I know from experience it isn’t just fear, there’s plenty of reasons it’s perfectly fine to not be out. I mean, I don’t hide the fact that my parents kicked me out when I was still a child when I came out,” he said bluntly. “Your parents know, sure, but I fully understand he can’t like, introduce a boyfriend to his friends at work. I could be fine with that, but would he even risk that? I just…” He trailed off, smiling sadly. “I like him,” he said with a small shrug. “I haven’t liked anybody in a long time, but I don’t want to set myself up to just get hurt if his life isn’t conducive to even giving me a chance.”

Isabelle walked over and put her arm around his shoulders, smiling. “Hey, trust me,” she said softly. “I’m not saying it’s definitely worth the risk, but I can promise you that the fact my brother shows the slightest interest in you openly means something. He might not want to take the chance, but he is very shy, so the fact he’s even trying, in his own dorky way, suggests you can only try.” She winked. “Besides, if you turn out to be the one doing the heart-breaking, I’ll just kill you and run your business with Raphael. Remember, I grew up with the same fighter-training my brothers did and I’m very protective of my big brother.”

Magnus barked out a laugh, shoving her off playfully. “Wow, pep talk and shovel talk all in one go. I love it,” he said, going back to cleaning the mirror. “I’ll see where things go. Who knows, maybe he’ll change his mind about me altogether and all this is pointless because he never decides to speak to me again.”

“So what’s up with you?” Alec looked up at Jace, who just rolled his eyes from the doorway of the office. Jace walked over and flopped onto the couch, looking up at Alec with a searching look. “You keep staring into the distance and smiling,” he said, and Alec gave him a look.

“What’re you doing watching me close enough to notice that?” Alec asked, and Jace grinned. He wiggled his eyebrows. “You’ve been working on the same form for an hour,” he said, and Alec looked down between his elbows, which made Jace cackle. “See?! You believed me!” He got up and walked around the desk to look and whistled. “Nope, you’ve done three. In an hour.” He hopped up on the desk and Alec leaned back in his chair, looking up at him. “Soooo. What’s up, then?”

Alec sighed in frustration. “Nothing, Jace, we’ve just got some sponsors being pains in the ass.”

Jace smirked. “You don’t smile into the distance about annoying sponsors,” he teased. “You were later than usual this morning.” He wiggled his eyebrows. “Where’d you go, Alec?”
Alec gave him a flat look. “I came in ten minutes later than usual. I got coffee and stopped to make faces at Izzy through the window of Pandemonium, not have the world’s fastest hook-up,” he said and Jace winked.

“Maybe the coffee boy was cute—”

“Keep it down,” Alec reminded him, nodding to the open door.

Jace turned around and slid off the desk, going to shut the door and then turn back, grinning evilly. “No excuses now, Young Alec. Now!” He walked back over to the couch and flopped onto it with an ‘oof’. “So. Who is he?”

Alec chuckled, rolling his eyes. “I’m older than you, and he’s nobody.”

Jace’s grin grew wider. “But you admit there is a ‘he’!” He crossed his arms behind his head with a sigh. “It wouldn’t happen to be, oh, Izzy’s boss?”

“You mean the guy that gave you a black eye?” Alec asked and Jace shrugged.

“Maybe. Oooor the one that, when she mentions him, you suddenly pay attention to her talking about work,” Jace said, and Alec looked away, grumbling. “Really, Alec. Him?”

Alec narrowed his eyes. “What? You just don’t like him because he embarrassed you.”

Jace nodded. “That is true,” he said, smirking. “Hey, at least you like a guy that can throw a solid punch,” he said with a wink that made Alec groan.

“Jace.”


Alec groaned. “We just talk, Jace. I’ve talked to him a few times. That’s all.”

“But what about?” Jace asked curiously.

“You and Izzy,” Alec said, waving a hand in annoyance. “His dancing. We just talked a few times. That’s it.”

Jace looked over at him, smirking. “But you like him, don’t you?”


Jace threw his arms up. “Alec has a crush!” he cheered, sitting up on the couch. “Bro, you never show interest in anybody. Ever. You don’t even check out guys on the street.”

Alec rolled his eyes. “Yes I do, I’m just subtle, unlike you,” he accused. “I spent eighteen years of my life being the straight fighter Mom wanted, I learned really well in my teen years how to not openly stare at hot guys. Trust me, I look, you just don’t see.”

“And you don’t actually talk to them,” Jace argued. “But now you’re flirting with the annoying dude that punched me in the face. It’s … not that shocking, really,” he admitted. “I would probably be very impressed by a girl that knocked you out, too.”

Alec blushed, looking at his hands. “I had noticed him before that. I just… I didn’t really know how
to talk to him. Before the music thing. And then the punching you thing. I’ve seen him when I walk
with Izzy to work. He was always just interesting. He does that stuff to his hair, and he wears
makeup sometimes, so it’s hard to not notice him, and then he’s really attractive, so yeah.” He
shrugged. “I’d noticed him and just never had a reason to talk to him.”

“Well,” Jace said with a shrug. “Now you do.”

Alec nodded. “Yeah.” He looked up, slightly panicked. “I think he likes me. I mean. He seems to-
to flirt back. And he seems interested in me. What if he actually likes me?” he asked, and Jace laughed,
shaking his head.

“Don’t ask me, dude. Other than that weird dream I had about Leonardo DiCaprio in high school, I
don’t know a damn thing about romantic involvement with men. Ask Izzy,” he suggested, standing
up from the couch to go to the door. “Just stop smiling like a giant dork and finish those forms so we
can get you working out,” he said and Alec nodded, grabbing his pen again.

“Yeah, I’ll be done soon.”

~

It became something of a habit after that first time.

Alec would walk Isabelle to Pandemonium and Magnus would come either to the door or out onto
the sidewalk and they would talk for a little while, mostly just teasing and flirting, nothing of any real
substance. Sometimes Alec got stuck helping get things out of Raphael’s car and carry them inside
for Magnus, who always managed to proclaim Alec was his hero for carrying a cardboard box or
their morning coffees or whatever. Alec liked the way Magnus looked at him so he didn’t mind the
dramatics.

Honestly he didn’t mind the dramatics anyways. Magnus was over the top, but it was fun, not
annoying like some people could be.

Magnus never pushed, which Alec really liked, because Alec grew more confident and comfortable
with him every time they talked. Magnus seemed so understanding and nice, and for once, he wasn’t
afraid of a guy getting to know him. He had a thing with strangers, but Magnus was different. He
was sweet and funny and Alec adored Magnus’s smiles. They were so beautiful it made him feel like
he was going to float away from the joy he felt when seeing them.

Alec really wanted to try going forward, but Magnus never tried so much as hinting at more than
flirting, so to say he was nervous about his feelings was an understatement.

“What should I do?” he asked Isabelle, head on her lap while they watched a movie. He looked up at
her face.

“About what?” she asked, raising an eyebrow as she tugged at his hair playfully.

Alec rolled his eyes. “Have you not been listening to me?” he asked and she shrugged unashamedly.
He sighed. “I really like him, Izzy,” he said softly. “I- I just don’t really know if he wants something
or if he just likes flirting.”

Isabelle tugged his hair more sharply, making him glare up at her. “You’re so dumb,” she said
bluntly. “Magnus likes you. He likes you. I haven’t seen him go on about anybody the way he does
you.” She hummed. “I’m in an awkward position here, because you’re my brother and he’s my
boss.”
“Yeah, I’m sorry,” Alec said with a small smile. “I realize it’s awkward, I shouldn’t have asked.”

“I didn’t say that,” she argued. “Look. He likes you. I’m just saying, you should go for it.” She smiled at him. “He’s a nice guy, Alec. You could do a lot worse.”

Alec smiled, looking back at the TV, before glancing back at her. “Um, Izzy?” She hummed and he cleared his throat. “How- how do you ask somebody out?” he asked and she looked down at him with an amused grin. “Izzy,” he whined and she laughed, ruffling his hair.

“Awww, my big brother is growing up-“

“I’m older than you,” he argued and she just grinned, leaning over to press a kiss to his forehead. “Izyyyy,” he whined, making her giggle.

She looked at him seriously for a moment, a smile on her lips. “Really though, I’m happy for you. You deserve to date a fun guy for once. Even if you aren’t ashamed of yourself anymore, you still never put yourself out there. Going out on a date would probably do a world of good for how much you shut yourself into the ‘good fighter’ box.”

He smiled and rolled his eyes. “I like a guy, Izzy, I didn’t get a lobotomy,” he said, and she scoffed, shoving at him halfheartedly.

“Whatsoever, I’m just saying, you coming out of your shell is nice. You’re my favorite person in the whole world and it’s not fair to the world that Jace and I are the only people who get to see why.”

Alec smiled and leaned his head against her stomach. “I’m really not as great as you think I am, Iz,” he denied and she smacked him on the arm.

“Stop that and watch the movie,” she chastised, smiling down at him as he rolled his eyes and faced the TV again.

~

Magnus perked up when he saw Alec and Isabelle walking down the sidewalk ahead of him. He had just ran to the bodega to get some bottles of water to put in the mini-fridge in the office, so he sped up and called Isabelle’s name. “Isabelle, my dear employee!” he called, and she slowed, turning to let him catch up with them, stepping in between them. “Good morning, Lightwoods,” he greeted cheerfully, looking up at Alec, then back at Isabelle. “What’s up?”

“Hey, you need help with that?” Alec asked, holding out a hand for the bag of waters, Magnus had.

Magnus pretended to gasp, fluttering his eyelashes. “What a gentleman, Alexander,” he purred, but shook his head. “I’m fine carrying some water, thanks though.”

Isabelle snorted. “Smooth, Big Brother,” she said, then snagged the bag, skipping off ahead of them. “I’ll let you two talk for a bit while I start setting up with Raphael.”

Magnus huffed as she left them behind. “So rude,” he said, smiling up at Alec. “But hey, I get to walk the rest of the way with the cutest Lightwood, so that’s a score for me,” he joked, bouncing some. “How are you this morning, Alexander?”

Alec smiled, nodding. “Great. Jace got a fight yesterday so we’re starting his training. I’ll have way more time working out and less sitting at a desk since my brother’s the one training for the next few months.”
“Wow, few months?” Magnus asked. “I didn’t know you trained that far ahead of a fight. Is it really that much prep to go into a fight?” he asked, then cursed before Alec could answer because he saw a mom leading her kid up to the studio down the block. “Crap, it’s Thursday, I have a class like, right now. I’m sorry!” he said with a cringe. “I really do wish we could talk more, but I need to run.”

Alec nodded, then stopped walking. “Wait, uh, Magnus, I was wondering if—” Magnus frowned at the tips of Alec’s ears turning red, but stepped closer so that Alec didn’t have to worry he was going to run off.

“Yes, Alexander?” he asked patiently, and Alec gave him a small smile.

“Would you maybe like to have dinner with me? Tomorrow night maybe, if that’s not too soon,” he added with more confidence in his voice than Magnus was used to.

It was a very welcome confidence, though. Magnus actually was taken aback by Alec just asking him out like that. He realized he’d been staring with a goofy grin for far too long when Alec’s smile dimmed some and his shoulders drooped. “Oh, yes,” he said quickly, laughing at his own eagerness. He ducked his head, nodding before looking up, pretty sure his smile was ridiculous. “I’d really like to go to dinner with you, Alexander,” he said, and his heart lurched a little when Alec’s entire face seemed to brighten as he smiled.

“Really?” he asked, almost as if he hadn’t actually expected Magnus to say yes, which made Magnus want to smack everyone who had ever turned that man down before.

“Of course,” Magnus said, bouncing on his toes some. “I’m free tomorrow night after six, although I’d definitely need until seven to get home and get ready.”

Alec nodded, smiling bashfully. “Awesome, yeah, um.” He pushed his hair back. “Is it okay if I pick you up at eight?” he asked, and Magnus perked up, grinning.

“Wow, you’re going to pick me up at my place rather than ask to meet at the place?” he teased. “Very traditional. I like it.” He pulled out his phone, handing it to Alec. “Here, give me your number and I’ll text you my address,” he said, and Alec entered his number before handing it back to Magnus.

“I’ll see you tomorrow, then,” Alec said, and Magnus nodded.

He gestured over his shoulder. “I really need to go now—“

“Yeah, yeah,” Alec said. “Sure, I’ll talk to you later.”

Magnus turned and ran, seeing more kids arriving. He turned around, waiving at Alec. “Tomorrow night, Alexander!” he called, then turned back and ran the rest of the way to the studio.

~

Alec and Jace were just moving around in the cage, Jace getting some practice at trying to grab Alec and lock him down, but Alec was making it a little bit too easy. The third time in a row that Jace caught Alec in a chokehold and Alec tapped, Jace shoved him off and Alec stood up, already apologizing.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, dude,” Alec said, laughing as he shook his arms out. “I’m just gonna watch and call Hodge over to spar with you okay?”

Jace held up a hand to stop him. “Alec, what the hell is going on with you? You’re very distracted.”
He put a hand on his shoulder, stepping closer so their conversation would be private. “Is it about Mom finding me a fight instead of you?” Jace shook his head. “I told you, she’ll find you something, she just wants to go after some sponsors—”

“Oh no, no,” Alec waved a hand. “It’s totally fine. That’s cool,” he said with a small smile. “I’m just distracted.”

Jace shook his head, looking at him expectantly. “With what? If it’s not about the fight, what’s got you so thrown off? It should be really hard for me to get you locked up, but you’re barely even paying attention.”

Alec looked around and saw nobody near the cage and let out a little huff as he smiled and then ran his hands over his face and into his hair. “I didn’t tell you or Izzy because I’m sort of freaking out, but I’ve got a date tonight.”

He blushed some when Jace pushed his hair out of his face and smirked after a moment of surprise. “Alec Lightwood, you sly dog,” he said, wiggling his eyebrows. “Would it be incorrect to assume it’s a certain deceptively strong bisexual from next door?” he asked and Alec rolled his eyes.

“It would not,” he replied. “Honestly, it took me all this time to get up the nerve, you think I suddenly grew the balls to ask a random person out?” he asked bluntly.


Alec shrugged. “Dinner. I’m taking him to this place that someone recommended not far from his place so we don’t have far to walk since we’re going out after work. I’m picking him up at eight,” he added.

Jace snickered, rolling his eyes. “Aww, picking him up. That’s so old-fashioned.”

Alec ducked his head. “Is it dumb? I mean, do you think he’s gonna think I’m boring?”

“No way,” Jace said, shoving him playfully. “You’re a giant dork, he probably thinks it’s cute.” He nodded, patting Alec on the face playfully. “I’m proud of you, Alec. Seriously.”

Alec nodded, shaking his head. “Whatever, let’s just get you back to work,” he said, going over to the cage door. “Hodge! Come help Jace train. I want to watch for a while,” he shouted, and Jace grinned at him and started jumping around, loosening up after their break.

～

Magnus spent all day staring at the clock. He knew Isabelle and Raphael both had noticed his distraction, but he was excited about his date. He hadn’t gone on a date that resulted in a second date in forever, and he was fairly certain that Alec could be something special, even more than a second date. But to get there, they had to have a first date, and Magnus was just really excited.
When the last class ended, Magnus only waited, waving at the dancers on their way out, before running over to the corner to grab his Uggs. He ran over to the office, grabbed his bag with the clothes he’d shown up in that morning before changing into dance gear, and he snatched the keys off the desk. On the way back out, he tossed the keys to Raphael. “Lock up, I have to go!” he cried, practically power-walking to the front door.

“Whoa, wait a minute,” Isabelle shouted, and Magnus turned, walking backwards.

“Sorry, Isabelle, gotta run—”

“Yeah, for a date with my brother,” she said, and Raphael barked out a laugh, throwing his head back.

He pointed at Magnus. “All this flirting and you finally asked him out?”

Isabelle grinned, crossing her arms. “Actually, Jace texted me. Alec was holding out on us until after the date, apparently,” she said, winking at Raphael. “He asked Magnus out and they both decided not to tell anybody until after the date. But Magnus has sucked at paying attention to anything all day and Alec was so distracted that Jace got it out of him and texted me.”

The news that Alec was just as distracted as him made Magnus even more excited to get home and get ready to leave. “And that, my dearest Isabelle, is why I have to go! Your brother will be at my front door in two hours and it takes half an hour just to get there so bye!” he shouted, then turned and ran to the door.

Magnus ended up running all the way to the subway station.

~

The clock on Alec’s phone said he was ten minutes early when he got to Magnus’s address, so he decided to pace a little, more than a little, while waiting.

When it was finally not horrendously early, he went to hit the buzzer under M. Bane. He waited only a moment before Magnus pressed the intercom. “If this is my date, I’ll be down in just a second, and if it’s not my date, then go away!” he said, and Alec rolled his eyes.

“It’s Alec,” he replied and was rewarded with a quick ‘one minute’ from Magnus.

He was then rewarded once again when the door opened and Magnus stepped out, looking incredible. “Hi,” Magnus said, turning around from the door, only to blink and smile slowly as he looked Alec up and down. “Well don’t you clean up well?” he asked, reaching out to touch Alec’s denim button down. “You look so good in blue. It goes well with your dark hair.” Alec, however, was staring and he knew it, but he couldn’t take his eyes off of Magnus. Magnus finally looked up to meet his eyes, and he tilted his head curiously. “Alexander?”

Magnus was wearing a black, collarless button down with a burgundy blazer over it. He had dyed the usually blonde streaks at his bangs a vibrant pink. His eyes were ringed in black and silver eyeliner and his lips were shiny like he was wearing a subtle lip gloss. Alec had never really gone for guys in makeup before, but Magnus… “You look beautiful,” Alec said almost breathlessly before he could stop himself. Magnus’s eyes widened a bit. Alec blushed, stuttering. “I- I- that was—” He groaned, rolling his eyes. “Can I back up and start with, hi, Magnus?” he asked.

Magnus’s smile grew wider and he shook his head. “No, I think I prefer my date’s first words being compliments than greetings,” he decided and Alec nodded, smiling past his blush.
“Well I’m glad pass the test.” Alec nodded back towards the street. “So, you got everything.”

Magnus gestured to the left. “You lead the way.”

~

Alec thanked the waiter as he left with their drink orders and turned back to Magnus, who leaned forward, elbows on the table. “So. Alexander,” Magnus started. “Isabelle says I’m not the only one that got caught being distracted today.”

Alec groaned. “I was useless all day. I’ve been so nervous,” he admitted. “You’re way less intimidating in person than you are in my head.”

Magnus scoffed. “Yes, because a little dancer is intimidating.”

“You’re really not little. More importantly, a really attractive guy I somehow managed to ask out is intimidating,” Alec argued. “If you’ve never noticed,” he said with a chuckle. “I’m not the most confident person.”

Magnus hummed, looking at Alec. “You’re confident when you’re not thinking too hard. I’ve noticed that,” he clarified. “When you get to talking about things or when you’re listening, you come out of your shell. It’s one of my favorite things,” he admitted sheepishly. “You’re cute when you’re really into a conversation.”

“What about you?” Alec asked. “You said you were distracted, too. Going out with me can’t be that big of a deal,” he added. “I mean, you’re you.”

Magnus leaned back in his seat some, trying to decide what he wanted to say to answer that. When he spoke, he leaned forward again. “Well to be totally honest, it’s been a very long time since I went out with someone I really wanted to be on a date with,” he said simply. “Usually when I’ve got a date planned, it’s with someone I barely know anything about, or someone I haven’t even met sometimes, if it’s a blind date.” His smile softened as he looked at Alec. “But I know I like you already, and maybe it’s bad to admit this now, but I was less nervous than I was really excited. I wanted to ask you out earlier than this, but you’re so shy I was never sure if you would be comfortable with more than just mild flirting when we have conversations. A date has more romantic intent than just talking to someone and flirting a little bit.”

Alec smiled, seeming amazed as he shook his head slowly. “I don’t go on dates… ever. So asking you out made me think of all the things that could go horribly wrong all day. But once I saw you, it just got way less anxiety-inducing.”

Magnus nodded. “I would imagine you don’t go on dates often. You are at that gym so early and you stay later than we do at the studio, it seems. You work really hard for your sport, so I can imagine finding time to date would be hard even if you didn’t have to be so careful.” Magnus was interrupted by the waiter returning with their drinks and asking to take their orders.

Once the waiter had gone, Magnus turned back to Alec. “So, how long have you been training fighters? Or fighting? I haven’t really gotten clear on that.”

Alec nodded. “I do fight, and I train them, too.” He glanced up, clearly doing some mental math, before answering. “I’ve been training to be a fighter since I was twelve, but I didn’t start actually sparring with a live person until I was sixteen, and usually it was just Jace since there were no other teenagers around to fight. And then my mom started getting me fights as soon as I turned eighteen. I have been helping out at the gym since I was about fifteen or sixteen, though, so I end up training
other people more than taking fights.”

Magnus nodded. “Why don’t you take fights that much? Do you like training more than fighting?”

Alec shrugged. “I like both about the same, but Mom’s really been focusing on Jace since he’s smaller so his peak will be younger. I’ve got more time than he does.”

“What does size have to do with when a fighter peaks?” Magnus asked curiously.

“Speed,” Alec said simply. “The bigger you are, the less speed you fight with. Usually the older a fighter gets, the slower they get but the stronger they get. With smaller weight classes, speed is more important than raw power. Jace fights Lightweight and I fight Middleweight, so I’m the third biggest weight class and he’s two below me.”

Magnus scrunched up his nose. “I’m about to reveal exactly how little I know about your sport: What’s difference between weight classes?” he asked with a cringe and Alec rolled his eyes.

“I know next to nothing about dance, so it’s not surprising,” Alec dismissed. “And it depends on the weight class. Some have different gaps between them, but usually its fifteen to twenty pounds difference. Jace is a Lightweight, so he fights in a class that ranges from guys weighing one forty-five to one fifty-five, and I fight Middleweight, which is one seventy-five to one eighty-five.”

Magnus raised an eyebrow, looking him over. “There is no way you’re that light. I’m five inches shorter than you and less bulky and I weigh around one sixty.”

Alec shook his head, chuckling. “No, definitely not. My walking weight is usually closer to two ten. I have a hell of a cut every time I have a fight. Jace is usually around one eighty and he cuts down to one fifty-five so he is in the same boat.”

“How is that possible?” Magnus asked, leaning forward, intrigued. “That’s a lot of weight to lose when you’re training.”

Alec nodded. “You sweat it out, usually,” he said simply. “For people with big cuts like Jace and I, we have to fast for a few days before cut day, and then still cut a good fifteen pounds on cut day.” He grinned and Magnus knew it had to be at the grossed-out look on his face. “You wrap yourself up in this suit made of plastic, like a trash bag, and then you work out all day and sweat crazy amounts, and that night, usually right after you get down to the weight, you go to this big event where they weigh you and the guy you’re fighting to make sure you both fit in the class, and after that, usually by the time you get to the fight the next night, you’ve gained back most of what you lost, because it was dehydration more than real weight.”

Magnus shuddered. “Man, no wonder you guys peak faster the smaller you are. Probably the smaller you are, the more you have to cut all the time.”

Alec nodded. “Jace is younger than me by a year, but he will peak probably at twenty-nine, meaning he’s getting into his prime by now. I’m twenty-four, so I’ve got probably ten years before I peak. It’s better to get his name out there now at twenty-three so by the time he’s at his best, he’s a big star already. I’ve got a few years before I need to really start building my name. Mom suggests we focus on Jace for two years, and then when I’m twenty-six we’ll start really pushing me.”

Magnus stared at Alec and Alec frowned. Magnus could tell he was about to ask what was wrong, so he blurted it out before he could be asked. “You’re only twenty-four?” he asked, and Alec made a confused face.

“Uh… yes?”
Magnus snickered, shaking his head. “Wow, you’re the youngest person I’ve ever gone out with,” he said, and Alec raised an eyebrow.

“What, do you usually like guys older than you?”

“I’m thirty-three,” Magnus explained, and Alec nearly choked on his water.

“Whoa!” Alec gasped. “You look so young!” He flushed suddenly, stuttering. “Not- not that you’re not young, you are, I just mean- I- you look in your twenties,” Alec floundered. “I figured we were close to the same age.”

“I thought you were older,” Magnus said with a shrug. He smiled brightly. “You’re already training other fighters by yourself and you’re only twenty-four? That’s so amazing. You must be really great at what you do,” he said, and Alec smiled bashfully.

Magnus wanted to reach out and tip his chin up for him, because Alec had no reason to be shy, but he kept his hands to himself, because that would be weird. “I just know what I’m doing, I guess. I grew up in this lifestyle so I’ve been around it forever.”

“It’s still impressive,” Magnus said in a warm tone. “You’re definitely a successful guy to have so much going for you so young. It’s sort of incredible,” he gushed, unable to stop himself.

Alec’s smile was the best reward Magnus could imagine.

~

For all the conversations they had had over the past few weeks, Magnus couldn’t help but be disappointed when they turned the corner onto his block, meaning he was home and had to stop hanging out with Alec. He felt like he could spend forever just talking to Alec. He noticed as they got closer to his house, he wasn’t the only one slowing down so they walked slower.

Alec had taken his hand to help him stand up when they left the restaurant and he had held his hand the whole way home, so between the two of them holding hands to keep at the same pace, they were walking so slow it was clear neither of them were ready to be home yet.

When they got to Magnus’s door, Magnus turned around to face Alec as he got his keys out, and when he looked up to say goodnight, Alec was looking at him with such a warm look it made him want to grab that man and just cling to him so he didn’t have to let go of him yet. “Do you want to come up for a drink?” Magnus blurted out, smiling to cover how unplanned it was.

Alec, however, instantly flushed bright pink, ducking his head. “Uh, um. Do you mean actually come up for a drink or is that an innuendo? Because I- um-“

“Oh God, no!” Magnus cried, wincing at how loud he was. “Shit. I’m making a massive fool of myself right now.” He took a breath and let it out slowly, smiling bashfully. “I mean just a drink. Not- not like a ‘coffee’ innuendo. I just sort of don’t want tonight to end yet. I just want to talk to you some more, that’s all,” he said firmly.

Alec smiled, ears still red, but nodded. “Yeah, okay, I’d love to come up for a drink.”

Magnus deflated some. “Wow, you’re braver than I am. I would probably have run away from the shame by now if this wasn’t my house,” he said and Alec laughed at him as he turned to unlock the door.

When they got upstairs to Magnus’s apartment, Magnus locked the door and turned around to see
Alec looking around in surprise. Magnus grinned, walking past him with a little spin around him, arms out. “I own the building so I get to redecorate whenever I want,” he said, explaining the eastern influenced wall panels and decorations.

“You own the building?” Alec asked in surprise. “This place is really amazing.”

“Why thank you,” Magnus said, kicking his shoes off behind the couch as he went to pour Alec and himself drinks. “It’s really sort if embarrassing,” he admitted. “When Raphael was a teenager, he met me doing some show and we dance really well together, so he asked me if I’d do one of those talent contest show things that were really popular a while back, and we won a lot of money, so yeah.” He gestured around. “I could afford the down payment on my own building. It’s really small, just my place and the place downstairs, but I really like having the choice in decoration all to myself.”

When he walked back over, he handed Alec one of the drinks and then flopped onto the couch, gesturing for Alec to join him as he curled his feet under him, leaning against the back of the seat comfortably. Alec sat down and smiled nervously at him. “So you’ve known Raphael a long time?” he asked.

“Yep, since he was sixteen,” Magnus said, making a face. “So about ten years now. Man, I need to get new friends,” he joked. “Known him for ten years and he didn’t even tell me until very recently that he’s been dating someone for a year,” he said, dropping his head against the couch with a grumpy pout.

Alec raised an eyebrow. “Seriously? How does that not get mentioned?”

“I don’t even know!” Magnus cried in frustration. “I swear, he’s not human,” he joked. He could see how Alec still looked sort of uncomfortable and nervous, so he smiled apologetically. “Alexander, I’m sorry for making it sound like I was trying to get in your pants. I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable.” He winked. “I don’t put out on the first date. I’m not that kind of boy.”

Alec looked up, shaking his head. “No, I know you didn’t mean that, I’m just—” He hesitated, then groaned, rubbing a hand over his face. “I feel like I should probably be honest and upfront with you, because I really like you,” he said, looking like he was steeling himself to admit something horrible.

Magnus’s mind ran away, trying to think of what might be so bad. His first thought was maybe Alec was positive and wanted to be up front about it, but he quickly dismissed that because he could imagine fighters had to be tested for things like that since they got blood on each other all the time. His second thought was maybe Alec was asexual, which Magnus could see how Alec would want to be up front about that since a lot of people might think that was a deal breaker. Maybe he couldn’t have sex while he was training, which would be sort of a bummer, so Magnus could see how some people might not like that.

When Alec spoke, however, Magnus could honestly say that hadn’t been one of the thoughts he had. “I’m… I’ve never did that,” Alec said, looking down at the glass in his hands. “I’ve never had sex. I’m a virgin.”

Magnus was glad Alec wasn’t looking at him when his mouth dropped open, because it took a second to compose himself and get over the shock so that when Alec did look up, Magnus was just looking at him with mild surprise, not utter shock. “Oh,” Magnus said, feeling like he needed to reply but he wasn’t sure what to say. Alec leaned away from him a tiny bit and Magnus saw shame in his eyes as he flicked them away, looking at the window behind Magnus instead of at him.

He sighed, looking down at his lap. “Maybe this wasn’t the best idea—“
“Alexander,” Magnus said gently, reaching out to touch his forearm gently. “It’s okay. I’m just surprised.”

Alec rolled his eyes, grumbling. “It’s embarrassing, but it is what it is,” he said defensively and Magnus slid closer to him, urging Alec to look at him.

“You have nothing to be embarrassed about,” Magnus said firmly. Alec looked at him suspiciously and Magnus curled his hand around Alec’s wrist more firmly, smiling when Alec let go of his glass with that hand and allowed Magnus to slide his fingers into Alec’s. “It’s okay.”

“I’m a twenty-four year old virgin, how is that okay?” Alec asked in a small voice that made Magnus’s chest hurt a little bit.

Magnus shook his head, squeezing his hand. “You’re a very reserved man who is focused on a very intense sport that doesn’t really welcome your sexuality. It’s understandable,” he said, and honestly, it really was. When he thought about it, it was really not that surprising. Alec probably never allowed himself the chance to do anything selfish like hook up with men when he could be doing something for his family or his fighters or his own career. It was sad, because Alec had been depriving himself, but it wasn’t that shocking. “Is that why you were so flustered by my accidental innuendo?”

Alec chuckled, nodding. “Yeah, I was sort of panicky about the thought of having to explain that the reason I don’t want to have sex with you tonight is because I’ve never had sex at all.”

“Well, you’re in luck, because I don’t want to have sex with you tonight either,” Magnus joked. “You’re amazing and really gorgeous, but I grew out of sleeping with anybody I felt slightly attracted to right then and there ages ago.” He smiled at Alec, looking into his pretty, hazel eyes. “I really like you, Alexander,” he said like it was a secret. “I wouldn’t want to mess things up by having sex on the first date when you’re a pretty shy guy. I wouldn’t want to make you uncomfortable, and I wouldn’t want to make myself judge our first date on the sex.”

Alec smiled. “Before the whole embarrassing part, this has been a pretty amazing date, Magnus.”

“Definitely,” Magnus agreed with a small giggle. “You’re probably the best first date I’ve ever gone on,” he said honestly. “I’ve never dated someone so sweet, either.”

Alec rolled his eyes. “I’m going to just fully get the embarrassing things out of the way here,” he said, looking down at Magnus. “You’re the first guy I’ve ever gone out with. I’ve only ever gone out with the girls my mom would set me up with before I came out to my family. I’ve never kissed a guy either, only girls.” He shrugged. “I honestly just… I came out, but I mostly came out to make people stop expecting me to go after girls. I didn’t come out so I could live openly as a gay man. I never really found it in me to try before now.”

Magnus looked Alec in the eyes for a moment before smirking. “You really like me, huh?” he teased and Alec nodded, blushing some.

“You’re just… fun. You’re nice, and interesting, and attractive, and I just really have fun when I’m with you, even if it’s just talking for a few minutes,” Alec admitted. “I was sort of scared this date might show me some bad side of you since you weren’t at work in that mindset, but you’re just… you,” he finished lamely. “And I like who you are.”

Magnus couldn’t help the overwhelming feeling in the pit of his stomach, the one that was screaming at him that this was something special. “I like who I am around you,” Magnus admitted in a small voice, a bit surprised at how deeply he felt that. “I haven’t met anybody I’ve liked this much automatically in a really long time, and you make me sort of excited about life.” He quickly followed
with, “Not that I’m not happy with my life. I enjoy what I do and every day I get to do my favorite thing in the world and teach other people how to do it, too, but I just haven’t focused on myself much lately, and you make me excited about the days I get to see you because it’s something a little selfish for once.”

Taking a sip of his drink, Magnus tried to shut himself up so he stopped rambling, but when he looked up, Alec was smiling at him over the rim of his glass so he figured he must not be making too big of an idiot of himself. He took a bigger sip then set his glass on the coffee table, leaning back against the couch some. “So tell me something to keep me from rambling,” Magnus said, and Alec laughed, nodding.

“Okay, I think I can do that.”

~

There was an alarm going off somewhere that Alec wasn’t used to. He groaned, trying to roll over in his bed to get up and shut off the alarm, but when he tried to move, he met resistance both behind him and in front of him. He frowned as he opened his eyes, only to find his vision obscured by gray hair. He jerked back, sitting up quickly, only to have the gray hair yowl and scramble off of his face. He sat up all the way, looking around in panic, only to quickly grab Magnus before he fell off the couch.

“Wha- huh?!” Magnus yelped, startling awake. He swatted at Alec’s hands and slid off the couch more gently onto the carpet between the couch and coffee table, only to look around. “What? Alexander?” he asked, blinking blearily.

Alec looked around, and it finally registered what had happened. He and Magnus must’ve fallen asleep on his couch. He looked down at Magnus, who had grabbed his phone and shut off the alarm. “Do you have a cat?” he asked, and Magnus looked at the gray hairs on Alec’s shirt and he snorted, slapping a hand over his face.

“Oh God, did Chairman Meow sleep on your head?!” he asked, looking around for the cat, which was long gone.

Alec rubbed at his hair, making a face when he found cat hair in his hair. “You named our cat Chairman Meow?”

“Oh Alexander,” Magnus chuckled sitting up on his knees to lean in, helping Alec pick cat hair out of his hair. “I’m so sorry. He does that when I don’t shut him out of the bedroom.” He sat back, blushing. “Sooo I didn’t mean to keep you all night. We literally had a conversation about not doing that,” he said bashfully.

Alec laughed at his blush. “You’re so cute when you blush,” he said without thinking. He ducked his head and shrugged. “I guess we just fell asleep. I don’t remember. We were just talking and then I was waking up with a cat on my head.”

“Well.” Magnus smacked his palms on the couch and then stood up. “It appears I used you as a pillow, so I at least owe you a shower to de-cat-hair yourself. I think I have an extra toothbrush in the closet and some clothes you can wear,” he offered as he stretched and then rubbed his face. “Oh God, I didn’t take my makeup off,” he said, looking at his hands. He looked up and Alec snorted, slapping a hand over his face when he saw the black rings around Magnus’s eyes. “Stoooop,” Magnus whined, putting his hands over his face.

Alec stood up and grinned, grabbing Magus’s wrists, gently prizing them away from his face. He
looked up at him with an embarrassed pout and Alec just chuckled. “You make a very beautiful raccoon,” he said in a serious tone, making Magnus suck his teeth, roll his eyes, and smack Alec playfully on the chest.

“You’re just mean, Alexander. I see how it is,” he said, walking away. “Give me a minute to wash this crap off my face and then you can have the bathroom,” he said, and Alec nodded, looking around for his phone that had somehow escaped his pockets while Magnus left the room.

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Magnus grabbed Alec’s hand and yelled, “Run!” before Alec could even work out which train they were getting on, so he just did as he said, throwing himself through the closing doors right behind Magnus, who caught himself on the pole, swinging himself around it to face Alec with a grin. “And we made it!” he said, apologizing to the person he bumped into in her seat. Alec stepped over, hanging onto the rail above Magnus’s head.

“I’m trusting you that this is the right train and I’m not gonna be stuck walking twenty blocks,” he said, and Magnus shook his head.

“Nope. Forty, we’re going all the way uptown,” he joked and Alec leaned in with a grin.

“Great, I need to visit my parents anyways sometime soon,” he said and Magnus raised an eyebrow. He hummed. “Uptown boy, huh? Where did you grow up?” he asked, then made a face. “Actually I never asked where you live now.”

Alec grinned down at him. “Upper west side. My parents are loaded, if you haven’t noticed. My dad managed fighters and my mom won tons of purses in her day, and they did a good job investing.” His pulse quickened as the train swaying made him move further into Magnus’s space. “But now, Jace, Izzy and I live about six blocks from the gym.” He looked around comically. “A little less of a commute than yours,” he joked.

Magnus scrunched his nose. “It’s like thirty minutes, it’s not bad. When I lived in the City I walked for thirty minutes, it’s not that big of a deal.” He mimed gagging. “Not like Raphael, who drives. Why would you drive ever?”

“Jace has a car,” Alec said with a shrug. “He doesn’t drive, we all run to work, but he has one for occasions.”

Magnus wiggled his eyebrows. “Does ‘occasions’ mean taking girls out?”

Alec nodded with a laugh. “It usually does. He has a really nice sports car. Girls like it.” Magnus smiled up at him, nodding.

“And you don’t have fancy cars to impress the girls for everybody else’s sake?” he asked, and Alec shook his head.

“I’m not very flashy, if you never noticed.”

Magnus laughed. “Oh I noticed,” he said, reaching out to touch Alec’s shirt hem. “You look so out of place in my clothes because they’re a color,” he said with a faux gasp. “Red! How shocking!”

Alec shifted his shoulders some, flexing so that the shirt pulled tight across his chest. “If I don’t change soon, I’m gonna be out of your clothes again. Even what you described as a ‘baggy tee-shirt’ is really cutting off circulation to my arms,” he joked.
Magnus hummed, winking. “Maybe I picked a tight shirt on purpose,” he teased and Alec rolled his eyes.

He really did enjoy the way Magnus’s eyes kept straying to his chest, though.

When they got off the train, much to Alec’s surprise, the minute they were up on the street, Magnus shifted his bag to the other arm and slid his free hand into Alec’s with a hesitant look. Alec just squeezed his hand and tangled their fingers together more securely. He couldn’t stop smiling the whole walk to work.

As soon as they got to the end of the block, Magnus turned to look up at him. “You know, this should really be super weird,” he said and Alec nodded.

“Yeah, probably. Last night was definitely the strangest first date ever,” Alec replied.

Magnus looked ahead, worrying his bottom lip, and Alec was just about to ask what was wrong before he spoke up. “Good strange, though, right?” he asked, looking up at Alec hesitantly. “I mean, I know waking up with Chairman Meow on your face probably wasn’t the best thing ever, and I really did mean to let you, you know, go home. I’m sorry, again, for all of that. If it was too weird, I promise I’m not always so off on dates. I used to be pretty smooth once upon a time, I just get sort of nervous when it comes to you, and-” Alec’s chest swelled and he couldn’t help himself when he tugged Magnus to a stop. Magnus looked up at him. “I- what- mmph!”

Alec kissed him quickly, stopping his rambling and proving to Magnus he really didn’t have to worry the best way he could imagine at the moment. Magnus relaxed into the kiss, pressing into Alec a bit as Alec began to pull away, making him smile and continue the kiss now that Magnus was on board with it. It was just a small, sweet kiss, but when Alec pulled away for real this time, his lips were tingling and his fingers twitched where he had grabbed the side of Magnus’s shirt. He pulled back just far enough to watch Magnus’s eyes flutter open, and Magnus stared up at him in wonder. “Definitely good strange,” Alec replied softly.

Magnus’s eyebrows scrunched together in confusion. “Huh?” he asked, and Alec smiled brightly. Magnus seemed to catch up and he opened his eyes wider. “Oh, good strange. I get it now,” he said, glancing back down at Alec’s lips. “Maybe you should shut me up more often,” he said, and Alec ducked his head.

Alec could feel his ears burning and he hated his pale skin right then. “You’re just too cute when you’re nervous over me,” he admitted, glancing up through his bangs at Magnus. “You shouldn’t be. I kind of think you’re amazing.”

Magnus let out a stuttered breath, eyes crinkling at the edges as his smile grew. “Oh man, I’m so happy I met you, Alexander,” he said, pulling away and turning so that they could walk the rest of the way to the gym without people seeing them holding hands.

Alec watched him walk ahead a few steps and thought to himself that, yeah, he was really just as happy he met Magnus as well, and twice as lucky.

~

Magnus had expected some sort of reaction, but he didn’t expect to walk into the studio and for Isabelle to scramble up from where she and Raphael were stretching looking worried. “Oh my God, Magnus! Have you heard from Alec?!” she asked quickly. “He didn’t come home last night and he didn’t reply to our texts and calls, we’re getting really worried,” she said, eyes frantic.
“Oh man,” he said, feeling like a total shit. Alec had noticed his phone had died while they were asleep, but he hadn’t seemed worried and Magnus had cleared his notifications without checking them when he turned off the alarm that morning and shoved his phone in his bag without looking when they left. “Shit, no, Isabelle, he’s fine,” he said quickly. “You can call Jace now, Alec’s over at the gym, he’s totally okay. I’m so sorry I didn’t look at my phone this morning and I had the ringer on silent ever since we left my place last night,” he rambled. “But no, he’s fine.”

Isabelle relaxed. “Oh thank God,” she said, ruffling her hair. “Jace was really freaking out when he didn’t answer his phone last night and when we woke up and he wasn’t home he was ready to call the cops, I think. He might’ve even called Mom, I’m not sure.”

Magnus shook his head. “Alexander’s phone just died sometime in the night, he was never in any danger,” he comforted. “He didn’t even seem that worried when he realized it had died, so I didn’t think anything about calling you,” he said as he rubbed her shoulder and passed her to go put his bag in the office.

“Wait.” He stopped, turning back only to see Isabelle looking at him with wide eyes. “Wait, Alec spent the night,” she realized, gasping. “Whoa!” She laughed suddenly. “Holy crap, Magnus Bane, you must have some moves if you got my repressed big brother to put out on a first date,” she said, and Magnus could feel the heat flooding his face as he realized when she thought had happened. “Isabelle!” he cried in shock. “Oh my God, don’t talk about your own brother that way,” he chastised, hands on his hips, but she just snorted.

“Oh please, we’re adults who live together,” she dismissed.

Magnus crossed his arms with a huff. “Not that it’s any of your business what your brother and I do or do not do, for the record, I would never rush things with Alexander. I really like him and the last thing I ever want to do is rush things and mess things up with him,” he said in a clipped, embarrassed tone. “So no, what you think happened did most decidedly not happen.” He rolled his eyes. “It’s just even more embarrassingly ridiculous, actually. I invited him up for a drink because I didn’t want him to leave yet, because he’s kind of amazing, and we ended up talking until we both fell asleep on the couch and didn’t wake up until my alarm went off this morning.”

Even Raphael, who had been studiously ignoring them, turned around and gave him a look that clearly said, ‘what the hell?’ before raising a hand. “Wait, hold on.” He gave Magnus an amused grin. “You literally slept together, not ‘slept together’?” he asked, snickering when Magnus nodded embarrassedly. “Dios, that’s hilarious.”

Magnus poked his tongue out at him but Isabelle smiled suddenly. “Awwww, but that’s so sweet! You didn’t want him to go,” she practically cooed. “Oh my God, you’re totally smitten! With Alec!” She laughed, her hair bouncing some with the force of it. “That’s so cute. Oh man, did you guys fall asleep cuddled up on the couch together? That’s the cutest story ever!”

“Eh,” Magnus said, scrunching up his nose. “He woke up with my cat asleep on his face and when he flailed awake he knocked me off the couch, so it wasn’t that adorable,” he admitted. “And I rubbed my eyes when I got up and forgot I hadn’t taken my makeup off last night so he saw me with raccoon eyes.” He thought for a moment and winced. “And he looks sort of ridiculous wearing my baggy workout clothes and his boots from last night since my cat shed all over him and he had to take a shower.” He held up a finger. “But! That doesn’t count as part of our first date, that ended when we fell asleep last night, so officially an amazing first date, this morning notwithstanding,” he said brightly. Raphael snorted and Magnus scoffed. “Oh like you don’t have anything embarrassing in your first date history. I bet you’ve had tons of embarrassing things happen.”
Isabelle nodded, before Raphael could speak, and answered for him. “Yeah, after we found out about the Simon thing, I asked Clary to give me the dirt, and she told me about how Simon’s mom walked in on them having sex.”

“We were not having sex!” Raphael argued vehemently. “We were just kissing!”

She smirked evilly. “In his bed? Naked?”

He narrowed his eyes. “We had had sex the night before, but we had just woken up when she came in.”

Magnus snorted. “Not only did I not know you were dating Stephan, but you were doin’ it in his childhood bedroom. I had no idea you were such a lecherous creepy, preying on young boys,” he teased.

Raphael shrugged. “I’m not ashamed that he’s young. Though I will admit, I did not realize when he asked me back to his place the night we first went out that it was his bedroom in his mother’s house,” he admitted, chuckling. “I was very surprised when a woman walked into the room complaining about him leaving his guitar in the living room.”

Isabelle winced. “That would be humiliating. There’s a reason I never had sex in my parents’ house. Jace and Alec know how to knock at least,” she added.

Magnus shook his head. “You and your brothers have a weirdly comfortable relationship is all I can say. I don’t have any siblings, but I’m almost certain if my brother or sister came home with a dude and disappeared into their room with him, I’d have to jump out of the window and end myself before I accidentally heard something.”

Raphael nodded. “I do have brothers and I never, ever want to know a single detail about their sex lives.”

Isabelle and Magnus both turned to look at Raphael in shock. “Hold on, brothers?!” Magnus asked, and Isabelle groaned in frustration, turning to walk away. “Jesus Christ, Raphael, I’ve known you for a decade and I don’t even know you!” he accused, stalking away to the office to get changed. “Twenty-questions, every day this week, Santiago. I’m gonna know so much about you by the time this week is up that your mother would lose in trivia competition with me!” he demanded as he stormed off.

Raphael just laughed to himself from the studio after Magnus left.

~

Lydia and Jace were already in the cage moving around when Alec snuck past to the locker room. When he came back out, changed into his training gear, Jace spotted him and shoved Lydia’s training pad covered hands out of the way. “Alec! You little shit!” He shoved open the cage door and jumped down the steps, coming to intercept Alec. “What the fuck, man?! Izzy and I thought you had been mugged and left to die in an alley somewhere!” he said, smacking him in the shoulder before pushing his hair out of his eyes. “You just sneak in like you didn’t turn off your phone?!”

Alec shook his head “It died while I was asleep and Magnus must not have turned his back on for Izzy to call him either. It’s not a big deal.”

Jace raised both eyebrows in surprise. “Wait, asleep? You didn’t just stay out all night-“ He stopped, then laughed. “Holy shit! Dude, did you go home with Magnus?” he asked.
Alec blushed, shoving him out of the way. “Jace, c’mon-“

“Whoa, whoa, hold up, hold up,” Jace said, turning him back around with a smirk. “Did you, Alexander Lightwood, get some?” he teased.

Alec groaned, dropping his head back. “Jace, please, stop-“

“MY BROTHER IS FINALLY A MAN!” Jace shouted out loud and Alec panicked, slapping a hand over his mouth and dragging him behind a column – as if that blocked either of them from anybody’s view at all – and shushed him.

“Jace!”

“Oh man, Isabelle will flip!” Jace cackled and Alec groaned, turning to bang his head against the column. “Dude, c’mon, what happened? Was it sorta planned or did you just decided to go for it?” he asked. “Oh my God, what the fuck is it like to sleep with a dude,” he said in a lower voice so nobody else heard.

Without even looking up, Alec shrugged. “I wouldn’t know,” he said offhandedly. “Because nothing happened.”

Jace scoffed. “Yeah, because you just had a sleepover,” he said, and Alec shrugged, giving him a long look. Jace frowned. “Wow. Really?” He sighed heavily, shoulders heaving with it. “Aaaaaaaaa, you slept over at Magnus’s place. Really? Oh my God you’re going to be a virgin until you die,” he accused. “That was totally the hint, you dumb ass! If he let you come upstairs, he was totally looking for something-“

“Oh my God.” Alec threw his hands up, knocking Jace away from him. “He really wasn’t! Jace, seriously, he made a point of making it very clear ‘come up for a drink’ didn’t mean sex! He just also didn’t mean ‘fall asleep on my couch’ but we both sort of sucked at that part,” he said with finality. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you guys where I was, but it’s not a big deal at all.” Alec gestured to the cage. “Would you like to train now? You’ve got a fight coming up.”

Jace pointed at him as he backed away from Alec. “We’re talking about this later, Alec!” He hopped back up into the cage and Alec rolled his eyes but followed him.

~

Over the next week, Magnus wanted to ask Alec out on a second date so badly that he was really starting to hate his own success with his business because he never had a chance. He knew that Alec was just as busy, but he felt like it was definitely his turn to do the asking out so Alec having to say no because he was busy with Jace was still better than Magnus not asking him at all.

Most of all, he wanted to have more than one date to justify the things he was feeling.

Magnus hadn’t had a boyfriend since he was a teenager. He had hadn’t had a girlfriend since the last one broke his heart in a really shitty way, which had been the end of his partying phase for sure. He knew that Alec wasn’t his boyfriend yet, they had only gone on one date, but he felt more for Alec than he had for anyone in a very long time. He wanted Alec to be his boyfriend. He wanted things with Alec to work out because they had something and he liked that something. It was a really nice something.

Even if they couldn’t go out, they still talked almost every day. And even more than that, they texted constantly. Magnus was used to checking his phone between lessons and practicing and finding messages from Alec about how annoying Jace was when he was training.
From: Alexander

We’re not even close to cutting weight and Jace is already being a diva. Save me!

Magnus laughed as he rolled out of his frog-stretch and moved into a side split, leaning on his elbows so he could reply with a frowny face, a heart, and a kissy face.

“Well now, what’s got you all cute and smiley?” Magnus looked up, brightening up when Clary came out of the office.

“Clary! What’s up?” he asked, stretching his arms out straight to lay down before moving out of the split to get to his knees. He saw Simon leaning against the office doorway, talking to someone inside. “Susan!” he called, and Simon looked over and then rolled his eyes.

“I know you know my name isn’t Susan,” he called and Magnus just winked at him as he stood up

Clary nodded to Magnus’s phone as she stretched her arms over her head to limber up. “So, what’s with the dorky smile?” she asked, wiggling her eyebrows. “Does it have to do with Isabelle’s brother?”

“Is Magnus flirting with Alec on the phone again?” Isabelle’s voice echoed from the office, and Magnus huffed.

He went to put his phone in the office and narrowed his eyes at her. “It’s Jace’s fault I’m like this. If he hadn’t made me punch him Alexander would’ve never patched up my wrist and I would never have ended up spending half my day thinking of things to tell him later.” Magnus plugged up his phone – another side effect of texting Alec whenever he had free time – and slugged Raphael in the shoulder on the way past. “Come on, guys! The sooner we get this rehearsed the sooner I can call Alexander.”

Simon gave him a genuinely kind smile as he passed through the doorway Simon was lingering in. “I totally remember that feeling, Man. Totally a great part of any relationship.”

Magnus scoffed. “Somehow I can’t imagine anybody ever smiling at their phone over Raphael Santiago,” he accused.

Simon looked into the office towards Raphael and then back to Magnus with a shrug. “Well, not at the beginning, but eventually he warmed up to me.”

Magnus lowered his voice, tugging Simon out of the office fully. “No, but really, is he so stingy with any personal details at home the same he is with me?! I’ve known him ten years and only just found out he has siblings!” he hissed.

Simon laughed out loud, startling Magnus. “Oh man, no, that’s just Raphael,” he said with a grin. “I genuinely thought he hated me when we first met, but then when I asked him out anyways, he agreed and then I thought he hated me on the date, and yet he came home with me, and then after that I thought he was pulling a hit it and quit it thing, because he barely responded to calls and texts and I resigned myself to being a ‘when he’s bored’ booty call occasionally, and very rarely going out and doing stuff, and boom!” he swiped a hand through the air in front of them, palm down. “He says ‘I love you’ to me! Like, here I am pretty sure I’m just a convenient fuck that doesn’t say no to a gorgeous man wanting some, and the asshole was falling in love with me.” He shook his head seriously. “You just can’t tell with him, dude. I mean, after living together I get him more, so I’m not at all shocked that you didn’t know basic things about him. I only know so much about his past because his mother likes to brag.”
Magnus smirked. “His mom really is a proud mom,” he agreed. “I haven’t met her but a few times, but she acts like Raphael is the best thing to happen to the earth.”

“Because I am, you just don’t believe me,” Raphael said as he came out, swinging his arms. “My Mama is just a smart lady,” he said with a wink Magnus’s way. “And yes, I hear you talking about me, Simon.”

Simon shrugged. “So? I talk about you all the time. You’re weird, Buddy,” he said with a small smile.

Isabelle came out of the back room, clapping her hands. “Alright, Bitches! Let’s get to work so I can go kick my brother’s ass sooner.”

“Jace?” Magnus asked, and Isabelle nodded seriously. “Alexander was just bitching about him to me.” He walked over to the stereo and hit the music so they could start dancing. “Alright where were we last time?” he asked Raphael, who obligingly went stepped in front of Magnus, Isabelle, and Clary so he could remind them what he’d changed last time.

Dancing with his friends at the end of a long day teaching little kids and old people was always nice for Magnus. He had always enjoyed teaching, but it was nice to dance with people he didn’t have to teach and just have some fun with their art form. Raphael was one of the best choreographers that Magnus had ever met. He was humble enough to admit that Raphael was better than he was and always had been. Isabelle was one of the most graceful dancers he’d ever met to be so large. Not to say she was fat in the least, she was tiny, but she was nearly as tall as he was and almost as broad across the shoulders, which was genuinely the only reason he thought she wasn’t dancing professionally. She also had muscles that a lot of dancers would be envious of, so he could only say it was their loss that no dance company had hired her.

Clary was a different story. She was a tiny little thing that had actually never tried to dance professionally. She and Isabelle were friends because they went to dance class together as little girls and had met up again at a coffee shop as teenagers. Clary didn’t attend any of their classes, but rather Magnus let her come in to use the studio when he didn’t have any classes going on. She just liked to dance for fun and to de-stress from college. She was pretty good, honestly. Magnus would probably hire her to help teach if he could afford it. For now, Magnus just enjoyed having her around to dance with them.

… because of that he felt pretty bad when the door opened while he was holding her against his side and, as soon as he saw Alec, he sort of dropped her. A little. She landed on her feet, but he still felt bad, jumping back to grab her and help her not fall over.

“Magnus!” She cried and he grabbed at her waist.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry!” he said quickly, and everybody else stopped to look at them. Simon cut the music and Raphael turned to look at Magnus and Clary, but then saw Alec standing by the door and rolled his eyes at Magnus. “Don’t do that, it wasn’t on purpose!” Magnus argued, pointing at Raphael.

“Dios, fine. We’ll take a break,” Raphael said, and Magnus apologized to Clary again before skipping over to Alec.

Alec gave him a sheepish look. “I’m sorry about that. I really didn’t mean to mess you guys up.”

Magnus waved a hand dismissively. “No, its fine;” he said, smiling up at him. “I didn’t know you were coming over.”
Alec shrugged. “Jace was getting on my last nerve and I thought I’d come see if you and Izzy were
done for the day.” He looked at them all with a small smile. “You guys are all really good.”

Isabelle saluted playfully. “Why thank you, Big Brother. Nice of you to see me dance for once.” She
rolled her eyes. “Even if really you came to see Magnus.”

Alec blushed some, but smiled at Magnus anyways. Magnus just grabbed his hand, tugging him out
of the doorway. “Come on, you can sit and watch us finish up and then we can go do something so
you don’t have to go back to Jace and end up killing your brother,” he suggested.

“Oh, Alec said, following where Magnus pointed to go sit beside Simon, sharing a nod before
Simon hit the music again.

Magnus ran back to the mirror and let Raphael count them in again.

~

Magnus lost track of how much time they spent dancing, so when Clary’s phone rang and her step
dad asked if she was coming home for dinner, they all decided to call it quits so Clary could get
home. Magnus grabbed his towel, patting at the sweat on his face after so long dancing such a fast-
paced routine, making a face when he tugged his shirt and patted at his chest as well. “Man, it’s been
a long time since just dancing for fun made me get all gross and sweaty,” he said, voice muffled by
his shirt. “Leave it to Mr. Santiago to remind me how out of shape I’m getting.”

Raphael just snorted at him as he pulled his shirt up to wipe at his face. “You’re just old,” he said
simply.

Simon huffed where he was turning off the stereo. “You should try living with him. If you feel out of
shape, just picture being me,” he said, gesturing to his skinny figure.

“You know you like it, Baby,” Raphael teased as he walked over to get his water bottle from Simon.

Magnus actually gaped at the look on Raphael’s face when he flirted with his boyfriend. “Holy shit,
did you, Raphael Luis Santiago, just call someone ‘Baby’?!”

Raphael rolled his eyes, standing with his hip cocked while Simon finished shutting everything off.
Simon popped up with a little grin. “He’s always called me ‘Baby’. Or ‘Nene’ or some other Spanish
pet name.” He stepped up behind Raphael to hug him and kiss his cheek. “Raphael’s secretly the
sweetest guy I’ve ever met,” Simon said and Raphael made a face at his words.

“Simon-“

“What?! Magnus is your oldest friend and he didn’t even know about me,” Simon said, shoving him
playfully as he went to grab his bag. “I’m totally telling them every secret you have, Rafa, and it
would seem that ‘Raphael is actually ridiculously sweet’ is your biggest secret,” he said with a wink.

“I won’t be after you make Magnus and Isabelle tease me constantly,” Raphael warned but Simon
just smiled indifferently. “Simon. Simon, really. Don’t you dare-“

“Tell them that you sing and dance while you’re cooking?” Simon asked, and Magnus’s eyes
widened.

“Oh. My. God.” He cackled, head thrown back. “Raphael dances around the kitchen?! That’s
amazing!”
Raphael turned to glare at Simon. “Well I hope you’re having fun, because now I have to break up with you.”

Simon just walked over and kissed his forehead. “Of course you are.”

“I’m definitely kicking you out of the house,” Raphael said with a slight blush that Simon just smiled at.

Magnus saw the curiosity with which Alec was watching Simon and Raphael and realized that, most likely, Alec had never see two men in a relationship acting so open and carefree in person like this. It was a little upsetting to see the wistfulness in Alec’s eyes as he watched Simon and Raphael bickering playfully, because it was so unfair that someone as wonderful as Alec had never had that before. However, if it was up to Magnus, he would really, really like to change that.

“So Alexander,” he said, walking over to him. “Do you need to get home with Isabelle, or do you feel like maybe going to grab something to eat with me?” he asked, trying to make sure he kept his tone casual so as not to freak Alec out.

Alec, however, smiled and gave a carefree nod, seeming to be pretty comfortable, in spite of Magnus’s fears. “Yeah, I could eat.”

“Great!” Magnus nodded to the back room. “I need to change, but I’ll be right back!” he said, touching Alec’s arm lightly before turning to run to get changed.

~

Alec was pretty sure he had never had a bigger crush on anyone than he did on Magnus. It was even better because Magnus definitely liked him back instead of didn’t know about it. Sitting across from him at the diner down the street from the studio, Alec was pretty much mesmerized just watching Magnus gesture with his French fries while telling a story about a student they had had earlier that day that was only ten but was already getting parts on Broadway.

“He’s just so adorable, too,” Magnus finished. “The cutest little kid you can imagine. All big blue eyes and curly blonde hair. No wonder they like him, you know?”

Alec rolled his eyes. “Sounds like Jace, minus the curls.” He sipped his water and then leaned forward a bit. “My parents adopted him when he was nine and I was ten, so it was funny how everybody reacted to this cute little blond boy with big blue eyes with me and Izzy being tall, scrawny dark-haired kids that were all gangly.” He laughed. “Also, having Jace makes everybody think I’m just white,” he added, and Magnus ducked his head sheepishly, which made Alec’s insides squirm so pleasantly.

“I admit, you look pretty white,” Magnus admitted. “You’ve got pale skin and those pretty, light eyes. If I didn’t know your sister I’d never think you were mixed.”

Alec grinned and shrugged. “Doesn’t really matter that much now, anyways. Max came out with sandy hair, so clearly Jace isn’t the only weird one in the family.”

Magnus leaned forward a bit. “Tell me more about Max. I’ve heard both you and Isabelle mention him before.”

“Alec sighed, shaking his head. “Max is so weird but we all love him so much,” he said and Magnus let out an ‘awwww’. “He’s twelve, so he’s way younger than the rest of us, and he’s like an actual genius. He’s a big nerd and he’s smarter than everybody at school and he is hilarious, so funny for a little kid. He makes the best smartass remarks and it pisses Mom off so much,” Alec
praised. “He’s just the best. He’d love you,” he said and he really did mean it. Magnus’s excitable personality and his sass and his glittery lifestyle would appeal so much to Max. “He actually is the only one of us that has nothing to do with the MMA lifestyle,” he added. “He told Mom early on that he didn’t like violence. He doesn’t want to be a fighter, he doesn’t want to be around the gym, he doesn’t even watch fights on TV if UFC is on or something.” He shook his head. “He’s just not into it. I mean, Izzy went into dance not fighting, but she still trained with us and stuff until she was an adult. But Max just doesn’t want anything to do with any of it.”

Magnus hummed, looking at Alec for a while before speaking. “Don’t take this the wrong way, because I know you’re really proud of your sport, but you have never struck me as the kind to be a fighter,” he said with a little twitch of his lips. “You’re just so gentle if that makes sense,” he said, scrunching up his nose. “You seem like the type that would hate hurting anybody too much to be as good of a fighter as you have to be to train fighters as well.”

Alec hesitated, looking down before answering. “I don’t…” He looked up, sliding down in his seat some. “I don’t like violence. But fighting is different,” he explained. “Yeah, it’s beating each other up and the winner is the one who beats the other up the most, but it doesn’t feel like just being violent. Fighters train and they know what’s going on. They welcome the pain and the possible injuries for the fun of the sport.” He shrugged. “But no, I don’t like actual violence. And some of the fighters out there, they really get into it. There’s a lot of fighters that are so aggressive all the time. There’s some that beat their kids or their wives or whatever, but that happens in any sport.” He bristled some, moving in his seat uncomfortably. “At the gym, we don’t work with fighters with anger issues. There’s this belief that a fighter with anger issues is a better fighter, but no.” He shook his head. “This is the worst possible job for somebody with anger issues. This is a job for the most zen people out there, or else things go bad. Really bad.”

“Like what?” Magnus asked. “I mean besides beating your wife or whatever, is there a big problem with other stuff when it comes to fighters?”

Alec nodded. “Oh yeah. There’s a lot of illegal shit that goes on in this lifestyle. I mean, most fighters aren’t like me and Jace who come from affluent families. Most fighters grew up in bad situations and suddenly they have all this money from winning and they go off the rails on drugs and then get in debt when they don’t keep winning fights so they start getting into gambling and then they owe a lot of people money so they start getting into crime… it gets really bad really fast,” he said with a cringe. “The partying is the biggest part of it all. We drug test at the gym because if a fighter pops that’s a big legal shitstorm, so there’s never been a chance Jace or I would end up in it all, but for a lot of people, fighting goes hand in hand with this ‘what happens in Vegas’ lifestyle but in everyday life.”

Magnus wiggled his eyebrows. “Sounds like fighting is a lot more dramatic than I ever figured it would be.” He slid his hands to the side. “But once again, sounds very not you. You’re a disciplined, very focused guy.”

Alec grinned. “Well I did say those make the best fighters.”

“Touché,” Magnus said with a smile. He reached over and stole one of Alec’s fries, having already finished off his own, and Alec shook his head, looking at Magnus with an amused quirk to his lips.

“You eat so much to be so skinny,” he said and Magnus winked.

“Dancing is nothing but cardio.” He patted his tummy. “I just danced my ass off, I can have some carbs.” He looked at Alec, going from his face to his chest to his arms in a way that made Alec’s ears burn. He could see the look in Magnus’s eyes and it was flattering and a little intimidating to be checked out by someone as hot as Magnus. “Besides, you look like you work off this many calories just sitting there with all those muscles. I’m pretty sure your chest is bigger than Clary’s and she’s got
pretty decent boobs.”

Alec laughed in shock, crossing his arms over his chest. “Hey, my eyes are up here,” he joked and Magnus grinned as he looked up at him, sliding closer to the table with a playful look.

“Your eyes are almost more beautiful than your sweet rack, so that isn’t at all a hardship—”

“Magnus,” Alec whined, pouting playfully. “Stop, I’m uncomfortable with my appearance as it is, don’t tease.”

Magnus’s playful smile grew more gentle and Alec once again was taken aback by how someone like Magnus ever liked him. “You’re incredible, Alexander. From your messy hair to your insanely long legs, you’re gorgeous. Don’t let anybody tell you different. And if they do, let me know, I’ll beat them up for you,” he joked with a wink.

Alec’s cheeks were starting to hurt from how much Magnus made him smile, but it seemed like everything Magnus did made him happy and that was such a good feeling. “Well you did give Jace a black eye, so there’s no telling, you might could do that.”

~

Alec wasn’t ready to let Magnus leave yet and he felt like this was becoming a habit. Magnus walked him home, since they were only a few blocks from his place, and when they got to his building. Magnus convinced him to sit on the stoop a little while with him. When he shivered, Alec wrapped his arm around Magnus’s shoulders and, in return, Magnus cuddled into his side with his hands between his knees while they talked some more.

“I can’t believe you don’t watch TV ever,” Magnus said and Alec groaned again. They had been at this on and off since they left the diner. Magnus seemed mortally offended Alec didn’t watch any television so he kept trying to catch him in a lie, supposing that he did, in fact, watch TV sometimes but was too ashamed to admit it.

“I don’t have time,” Alec said for the hundredth time. “I get up early, run to the gym, train people all day and train some myself, then I come home and have dinner and maybe read some because I love books, watch some fights my mom has sent me the tapes of, check prospective fighters, and then I go to bed pretty early, too.”

Magnus hummed pensively, looking up at Alec with narrowed eyes. “Know what we should do?” he asked, and Alec raised an eyebrow. Magnus’s smile grew sneaky and Alec already had a feeling Magnus had a fun idea planned for them. “You take off early some days, right? You should plan your early day off on a day I’m not at work and then you can come over and we can spend all day watching Netflix and educating you on television!” He bounced his knees some. “Oh man, we can order Chinese and pizza and stuff and just pig out and watch TV and have a lazy night in together!” He smacked Alec lightly with the back of his hand repeatedly. “Pleeeeeease, Alexander? Doesn’t that sound fun?! We could totally watch an entire season of something on Netflix and only get up to pay the delivery person! We already found out we can both cuddle on my couch with plenty of room, so it’s even better!”

Alec laughed at how excited Magnus sounded. “Of all the date things there are, you want to be lazy and watch tv for hours and hours?”

Magnus nodded seriously. “And this,” he said, leaning back into Alec’s arm with a smile. “You’re one of the only guys I’ve ever dated that’s bigger than me, so you’d be fun to snuggle with.”
Alec tightened his arm around Magnus, leaning closer to bump their heads together. “It actually does sound pretty great,” he admitted softly.

Magnus’s eyes crinkled a bit at the edges as he leaned even closer. “Yeah?”

“Yep,” Alec agreed, just before Magnus kissed him. He let his eyes fall shut as he pulled Magnus even closer, putting his free hand on Magnus’s knee. Magnus sighed into the slow, comfortable kiss, raising one cold hand to put to Alec’s cheek.

Alec got lost in kissing Magnus. Neither of them pushed the kiss into something frantic or lustful, so he just enjoyed it. The warmth of Magnus’s body alongside his, the contrast of his warm cheeks and Magnus’s cold fingers, the soft, plush feeling of Magnus’s lips against his. Even when the kiss grew deeper and he felt Magnus’s tongue tracing the inside of his upper lip, it was just something so comfortable and stress-free that Alec had never expected from Magnus. Kissing a man had been a scary thought in the past, but when it was Magnus he was kissing, he felt totally right. There was no nerves and he wasn’t feeling lingering self-hatred, instead he just felt happy. Kissing him made him feel like, for once in his life, he had no reason to be unhappy with himself.

Magnus made Alec happy. That was all that mattered.

Magnus’s free hand was tangled in Alec’s shirt just enough that he could feel Magnus’s fingertips tracing his abs through his shirt when the door behind them opened loudly, shattering the little bubble-world they had fallen into while they sat on the stoop kissing. Magnus jerked back, already turning to apologize to whoever they were in the way of, but before Alec could even turn around, nonetheless stand up, he heard a snicker that was very familiar. “Jace,” he sighed.

“Well, well, well.” Alec stood up, turning to look at Jace while Magnus scrambled to his feet as well. “Isabelle asked me to come see if you were ever coming upstairs, but she said you guys were out here talking.” He winked at Alec, then glanced at Magnus. “You have a very strange way of talking there, Bane. Not one I’m familiar with.”

Magnus gave a mocking ‘awww’, putting his hands over his chest. “Oh wow, I didn’t realize nobody had ever kissed you before, you poor thing. No wonder you’re such a pain in the ass. I’d be sad too if nobody wanted me.” Magnus reached out and patted him on the arm. “It’s alright, Jace. Take it from ‘the bisexual next door’, boobs are awesome, but they’re not what’s important in life. Just be you and whether or not you ever feel the touch of a woman doesn’t matter.”

Alec burst out laughing at the look on Jace’s face, tugging Magnus into a hug that clearly surprised Magnus as well. “Oh man, that was so good,” he said, pecking Magnus’s lips.

Jace spluttered. “You told him I called him ‘the bisexual next door’?!?” he hissed, and Alec nodded, beaming.

“Yeah? He deserved to know you were being a dick. And you deserved that, you really did,” he said, smiling down at Magnus when he laughed into Alec’s chest.

Jace grumbled. “Whatever, just come on up. Isabelle wants to lock up and we can’t lock the chain if you’re still out.”

Magnus pulled away and Alec frowned. “He’s right, Alexander. I need to get home,” he said with a sad little smile, as if he didn’t want to leave Alec either. “I’ll talk to you tomorrow?” he asked, and Alec nodded. Magnus stood on his toes to kiss him sweetly, lingering for a few more pecks before finally pulling away. “Goodnight, Alexander.”
“Bye,” he said, and he could feel a ghost of a smile on his lips as he watched Magnus walk away. Jace punched him in the arm and Alec turned back, giving him a glare. “Alright, alright, I’m coming,” he said, stomping up the steps to follow Jace inside.

Alec knew that he’d be dreaming about the taste of Magnus’s lips for days after that.

~

When Alec arrived at Magnus’s apartment, he was amused the moment Magnus opened the door while wearing bright blue silk pajamas and fuzzy socks with kittens on them. “Alexander!” He swept back with a flourish, ushering Alec in.

Alec had dressed ‘lazy’ as Magnus had requested by wearing gray sweatpants and a The Institute shirt he’d cut the sleeves out of. He kicked off his shoes by the door before following Magnus, and he had to admit, Magnus’s white shag pile rug in the living room area was very comfy under his bare feet. “So, what’re we doing tonight?” Alec asked, flopping onto the couch, looking up at Magnus as he grabbed his TV remote off the table under the TV and came over to hop on to the couch and land on his knees beside Alec with an excited look on his face.

“Well, we have options!” Magnus said, curling his arms around the big throw pillow between him and Alec as he turned on the TV and got Netflix going. “Do you feel like… engrossing high school sports drama, addictive reality TV about an angry chef who swears a lot, badass superhero with a slow burn romance, or a teenage girl who slays vampires?” he asked excitedly.

Alec stretched his arms over his head and hummed, thinking. He dropped his arms along the back of the couch and turned to look at Magnus, who was eagerly awaiting his answer. “You know, I’ve always been curious about reality TV,” he said. “I’ve never watched a single episode of a single reality TV show.”

Magnus threw his head back dramatically. “Alexandeeerrrr,” he whined, making Alec laugh at how cute he was. “Alright. We’re gonna introduce you to the hilarious smartass that is Gordon Ramsay!” he declared, scrolling down to hit play on something called ‘Kitchen Nightmares’. Alec had no idea what to expect, but Magnus seemed excited so he was happy just to make Magnus keep smiling like that. He especially liked it when Magnus leaned his head against the arm behind him on the couch, getting comfortable beside Alec.

~

It only took four episodes before Alec’s stomach started growling. “I mean, most of this stuff looks really disgusting, but in the end it always looks really good,” he said and Magnus nodded, leaning his head on Alec’s arm. “I’m so hungry,” Alec said, and Magnus nodded seriously.

“Know what I think?” he asked Alec, who raised an eyebrow. “We should order food.”

Alec thought for a moment and then grinned at Magnus. “Oooor I can cook us something.”

He loved the shocked look on Magnus’s face that was there for a split second before he sat up and shoved Alec. “You can cook?!” He waved his hands dramatically, making Alec laugh at how adorable he was. “You cook and you’ve never told me?! In ALL this time?!” He pouted at Alec. “How long have I known you for you to deceive me like this, Alexander?”

Alec laughed, rolling his eyes. “You never asked me, so is that really deception?” he asked playfully. “But really, we should cook something.”

Magnus glanced towards his kitchen and made a face. “Weeeellll I probably have some Lucky
Charms and coffee?” he suggested and Alec snickered.

“You live in hipster central, I’m pretty sure there’s a place to buy stuff to cook with on this street,” Alec pointed out.

Magnus glanced at his pajamas. “But… clothes,” he said, sighing dramatically.

Alec shrugged. “It’s hipster central, as I said. I doubt anybody will think we are the ones dressed funny, even with your silky pajamas.” He saw the look Magnus gave him and stood up. “Alright, I’ll be back, you stay here and text me what you want me to get,” he suggested, chuckling when Magnus smiled brightly.

“I’ll go see what all staples I have and decide what I want you to cook me,” Magnus promised.

Alec couldn’t help but lean down to kiss Magnus goodbye before he left. He was just too damn cute to not kiss at that moment.

~

Magnus ate the last bite of the amazing pasta with a lemony, garlicky, buttery sauce and shrimp that Alec had cooked with a heavy sigh, eyes closed as he savored the last bite. Alec laughed and he held up a finger while he swallowed. “Don’t laugh at me, Alexander,” he said, opening his eyes only to see Alec watching him with a playful smile on his beautiful lips. “Seriously, I haven’t had homemade food that good in… ever.”

Alec stood up, picking up his plate from the coffee table and holding out his hand for Magnus’s empty plate. Magnus handed it over and then hopped up, following Alec to the kitchen. Alec put the dishes in the sink and then moved to start putting the leftovers in Tupperware containers. As Magnus hopped up onto the counter beside him, Alec said, “You know I’d cook for you whenever if you ask me to,” he said as he poured the sauce into a container.

Magnus couldn’t help when he blurted out, “You’re the best boyfriend ever, Alexander.”

Alec stilled, looking up at him hesitantly. “Oh… I’m your boyfriend?” he asked before going back to scraping the rest of the sauce out of the pan, and Magnus’s stomach dropped.

He smiled uneasily. “Well, if you don’t want to be, I guess not, but I sort of thought that’s what we were doing.” He tried to hide his hurt as he waited for Alec to say something. He should’ve known he was getting in too deep, too fast.

When Alec looked up, though, he had a bashfully excited look on his face. “No, I- I want that.” he said, then shrugged, looking down at his hands as he slowly sealed the container. “I just didn’t think it really counted since we’re not having sex yet.”

Magnus had never wanted to punch someone more than he did when he saw shame in Alec’s face. He hated so much that someone as wonderful as Alec had never been loved before. It made him angry that someone made Alec so uncomfortable with himself that he had never even tried to be with anyone. But while that upset him, he had never thought poorly of Alec for having never had sex, and he definitely didn’t have a problem with them not having had sex. The fact that Alec had genuinely thought that they didn’t count as boyfriends because they weren’t having sex made him want to strangle someone for giving someone like Alec so much doubt in himself.

Alec put the pan in the sink and started to fill it up, but Magnus hopped off the counter and walked over, turning off the water. “Alec,” he said softly, tugging on his hand so that he turned and faced him. Magnus leaned against the sink, looking up at Alec. “You know I really don’t care about the
sex thing, right?” Alec looked down at him and Magnus slid his hands to rest on Alec’s middle, looking right up into his eyes.

“Yeah, I know, I do believe you,” Alec muttered. “I just never had a boyfriend so I just thought-“

Magnus gave him a confused smile. “What? That you have to have sex to be someone’s boyfriend?”

Alec gave him a pointed look. “Well have you ever had a boyfriend you hadn’t had sex with?”

Magnus hesitated. “Well, no,” he admitted. “But I’m not you, Alexander. And I’ve never dated you before. So that isn’t relevant,” he stressed. Alec gave him a nervous look and Magnus smiled. “Do you want us to be boyfriends, or do you want this to stay something casual, just ‘hanging out’?” he asked him in a slow, level tone. He wanted it clear to Alec that either way he chose, Magnus wouldn’t be upset with him. He might be sad that Alec wasn’t as into it as he was, but he respected Alec’s choices.

Alec slid his hands to Magnus’s waist, nodding. “I want to be your boyfriend. I want to know that this is more than just something casual, Magnus.”

Magnus nodded. “Then that’s all it takes to be in a relationship. You and me, deciding we want to be in one.”

Magnus held Alec’s gaze, trying to understand the look on his face. He looked happy but nervous, and not a good nervous. He slid his hands up to rest on Alec’s chest, pushing back into Alec’s hands on his waist patiently. Alec finally met his eyes and licked his lips before speaking. “It just doesn’t seem fair to you.”

Magnus groaned, leaning his head against Alec’s shoulder. “You want to know something?” Magnus lifted his head and leaned back, poking Alec in the chest, leaving his finger there. “I haven’t had sex in two years, Alexander,” he said in a light tone. “Long before I met you, I stopped going out and then the last time I tried casually dating was around the time I opened Pandemonium and that lasted a few weeks before I decided I didn’t want to do that crap, and since then I’ve been single and not going out to pick anybody up.” He shook his head. “I’ve gone two years without sex, so being ‘unfair’ to me isn’t even a problem.” He slid his finger across the logo on Alec’s shirt before flattening both hands on Alec’s chest. “I promise you, I’m not going to suddenly go sex-crazed after two years of being totally fine without.”

Alec raised an eyebrow. “Two years? Really?”

Magnus narrowed his eyes. “You’ve gone twenty-four years, don’t judge me.”

Alec finally, finally, cracked a smile. “You swear it doesn’t bother you that much?”

Magnus slid his hands up to curl around Alec’s neck, sighing. “My darling, Alexander,” he started, sliding a hand into Alec’s hair. “I haven’t felt like this about anybody in a very long time.”

Alec exhaled, shoulders finally losing some of that tension. He leaned his forehead against Magnus’s, hugging him close. “I haven’t ever felt anything for someone like I feel for you, Magnus.” Magnus smiled, tipping his chin up to kiss him sweetly. Alec pushed Magnus back against the counter, hands sliding up his sides slowly as he deepened the kiss. Magnus shivered as Alec’s fingertips skated along his ribs, moaning softly at the feeling. Alec might’ve never had sex, but someone damn sure taught him how to kiss. Magnus had kissed a lot of people in his life, and only a few had ever kissed as well as Alec did. They had only kissed a few times, but Magnus was pretty sure Alec could make him forget everything around him if he tried.
Eventually, Alec pulled away and Magnus let him, sliding his hands to rest on Alec’s arms, a little bit breathless as he looked up at Alec. Alec pecked his lips one more time. “Just after this, I’ll stop talking about it, but I just want to clear this whole thing up,” he said, and Magnus nodded, waiting patiently for Alec to speak. “I do want to have sex with you,” he said bluntly. “It’s not like I don’t see that happening or anything. And it isn’t something you have or haven’t done or something like that. I’m not waiting for anything in particular, there’s not like some goal we have to meet or some deadline or whatever for me.” Alec shrugged slightly. “It just hasn’t felt right yet. And there’s nothing you can do to make me feel like it is right—”

“Alec, we’ve been alone together approximately twice, I’m not surprised it hasn’t felt right, yet,” Magnus interrupted, but Alec gave him an annoyed look so he shut his mouth again, giving him an apologetic pat on the bicep.

Alec continued again. “I know that, but a lot of people would make spending more time alone together a priority, or would have already had sex in the few times we’ve been alone together. I don’t have some ‘third date’ rule and I’m not scared of sex just because I’ve never done it. I just haven’t felt it yet, and I have no idea how long it will take for me to feel like it’s the right time. I’m really hoping not that long, because I’ve had some really nice thoughts about what you have to look like under those clothes,” he said and Magnus giggled, winking at him. Alec’s smile grew more confident and he bumped their foreheads together again. “The best I can do is tell you that whenever it feels right, I’ll be sure to let you know.”

Magnus nodded. “And I am incredibly okay with that plan, Alexander.” He slid his hands to Alec’s middle, pushing him away some. “Know what an even better plan is?” he asked, and Alec tilted his head expectantly. “Getting back in there and finishing this season of Kitchen Nightmares now that we’re not hungry.”

“Now that I can agree with,” Alec said, tugging at Magnus’s hand, leading the way back to the couch. Alec sat down with a huff, tugging Magnus down with him so that he landed right beside Alec and Alec could curl his arm around him.

Magnus loved how happy Alec was with snuggling, because a man as big as Alec was the best snuggle buddy ever, Magnus felt. He pulled his knees up and leaned fully into Alec’s side, resting one hand on Alec’s leg while he grabbed the remote with the other. Once he had it in hand, he curled into Alec’s chest, head on his shoulder, only pressing play on the next episode after they got comfy. Alec seemed fully content to hold Magnus while they watched TV and Magnus was more than happy enough with that. He hadn’t been bullshitting when he told Alec he didn’t mind waiting for sex, because unlike anyone Magnus had liked in an incredibly long time, he wanted something lasting with Alec.

He could fuck somebody if he wanted to, but he didn’t want that. He wanted to fall in love for the first time in a very, very long time, and he thought that maybe, just maybe, Alec could be the person he could fall in love with.

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There was something oddly freeing about hanging out at the studio on nights Magnus and the others stayed late to practice and tweak their dance routine, Alec thought. He wasn’t at home, and he wasn’t at the gym, but it was still a private enough place where he could just sit and watch his boyfriend and his sister and their friends having fun.

He had also realized that Raphael’s boyfriend, Simon, was a kinda weird dude.

Alec didn’t mind him much, even though he never seemed to shut up while they sat in the corner
with the stereo equipment, watching the others dance in front of the mirror, but sometimes he went off on tangents about really weird things.

Currently, Simon had randomly decided to tell Alec all about his love life for whatever reason that Alec could not begin to fathom. So far, Alec learned that Simon had been in love with Clary since they were about six years old, but had grown out of that when they graduated high school after his high school girlfriend dumped him for being into the girl that was practically his sister. Alec found it sort of odd that Simon needed someone to point out that Clary was like his sister before he realized that he thought of her as a sister more than a love interest, but Alec found a lot of things sort of odd about Simon.

He then proceeded to tell Alec all about how, when Clary first brought him when she was meeting up with Isabelle when they were juniors in high school, he had a massive crush on Isabelle for the next few years. “She’s just really hot, and I was seventeen and had never seen a girl with an ass like that, you know?”

Alec gave him a flat look. “You are aware that’s my baby sister you’re talking about, right?”

Simon shrugged. “Yeah but you guys live together, she says you guys are all very comfortable about that kind of stuff-”

“I still do not need someone to detail why they think my baby sister’s ass is great,” he said incredulously. “What if I started talking about your mom’s tits?”

Simon snickered. “I’d question your claim to gayness over that, my friend,” he said and Alec just let it go, shaking his head as he turned his face skyward. “But yeah, then about a year and a half ago, Izzy got the job here, and Clary met Magnus and he started letting her dance here in the free time they had in exchange for designing his sign, and I came with her mostly to see Izzy, because I was still sorta into her, but then I met Raphael,” he said, sending a dopey look across the room at his boyfriend dancing.

Alec was actually sort of intrigued by Simon and Raphael. They were the first couple of men he’d ever actually had a chance to get to know, even if they didn’t really know each other. He’d seen the way that, even though they weren’t very affectionate all the time like he and Magnus were, they had flirted a few times and when they didn’t flirt, they still seemed comfortable around each other in that way only family or couples could be. “Did you always know you liked men?” Alec asked him, genuinely curious about the answer.

Simon made a shaking gesture with his and. “Somewhat? I’d never dated a guy before him, but I’d noticed guys were attractive. I just didn’t ever really think about it that much because between Clary and Isabelle and Maureen, I didn’t need to. I never didn’t have an object of my affections that was female, so why really think that hard on the ‘guys are sorta hot’ part.”

Alec nodded, sort of getting it, but not really, since he had only ever found guys attractive. He never really had the choice of ignoring it. He did ignore it, but it just left him really repressed and afraid of who he really was. “So how did you end up with Raphael, then?”

Simon gestured to the dancers in general. “Because he’s insanely hot,” he said, and Alec had to glance over at Raphael because, honestly, he pretty much agreed. He wasn’t Magnus levels of beautiful, but Raphael was a very hot guy. “I always feel sort of shallow, because crazy hot was basically all I knew about or cared about him for a while. I had only spoken to him a few times after Izzy got the job before I asked him out, and honestly I never expected him to agree because he seemed so annoyed by me.” He gave a sheepish grin. “I sort of just was joking when I asked him out. I was having a bad day and was like, ‘well shit, I may as well be rejected by the insanely hot
guy while we’re at it’ but he said yes.” He shook his head. “And then we went out and I was sorta just trying my luck when I asked if he wanted to come back to my place, but he said yes to that, too.”

Alec lowered his voice, leaning closer so Simon didn’t have to speak up. “You didn’t even really plan on sleeping with him?” he asked, and Simon snorted.

“Dude, I didn’t even have condoms on hand, I was so not planning on it. It was pretty awkward getting him back to my room and going, ‘so hey, we sort of can’t fuck’, but thankfully he was cool with just a hand job so things didn’t get that awkward,” he said and Alec had a horrible mental image he might never recover from at that little detail.

“I really didn’t need to know that much, Man,” he said, grimacing a little.

Simon shrugged. “Dude, even when my mom walked in on us kissing right after we’d woke up the next day, he still didn’t run screaming and forget he ever met me. I still don’t get it,” he said seriously, shaking his head. “We didn’t have much in common, I was the weirdest ever at the start, and it was all just so awkward, but honestly? After only a few months, when we really sort of connected and figured things out, I just knew.” He smiled over at Raphael. “He asked me to move in with him after so short of a time together and my mom thought I was insane, and I still don’t get it. He doesn’t have to want to be sappy and couple-y in public. I don’t mind that he treats me like a guy he knows when we’re in public together, because at home he is sweeter than I ever thought I’d get.”

Alec thought about the way he and Magnus were very careful around people who knew Alec, and the guilt he had had about that sometimes. “It’s worth it to you, though? Being more like friends in public if you can be really in love at home?”

“I’m always in love with him,” Simon said simply. “I just get to have a best friend in public and the most romantic person ever at home, so that that side of him is all mine.” He smiled some. “I kinda like it. I used to be really sappy with girls in public, and that’s all cool, but it’s sort of nice having that part of Raphael be just for me, you know?”

Alec rubbed his fingertips together nervously, watching Magnus in the mirror. He really hoped that Magnus had similar thoughts about them, because while they did hold hands when they went out and were sure to not run into anybody Alec knew, Alec treated Magnus like he was ‘just a friend’ whenever they were anywhere within five blocks of the gym. Magnus said he got it, and Alec believed him, but it still didn’t feel fair to Magnus, no matter how much of a necessity it was if Alec ever wanted to fight again.

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Alec wasn’t even sure how it was possible to be so tired yet have his heart beating as rapidly as it was now, making out with Magnus.

He and Magnus had gone shopping for stuff to cook and then came back to Magnus’s place so Alec could cook dinner for them. After dinner, he had stayed to watch a movie – Magnus had moved from TV shows to movies Alec needed to watch – and have a drink, but they had barely made it through the first act of the movie and half a glass of wine each before they gave up on the movie, too distracted by each other.

Alec didn’t really remember when things had gotten horizontal, but from where he lay pretty much
on top of Magnus, he couldn’t say that was a problem. He had worried he was too heavy to lay like that, but because of his height, his entire lower half was on the couch between Magnus’s legs and he was able to hold his weight on his elbows so that not all of it was resting on Magnus’s slight frame. Now, however, getting sleepier by the minute, Alec was pretty sure Magnus’s breath had to be getting labored.

His kisses and light nips at Magnus’s collarbone where his shirt was half-unbuttoned grew sloppier and sloppier and he groaned, finally giving up. He shifted up onto his hands and Magnus opened his eyes, looking up at him in concern. “What’s wrong?” he panted slightly, and Alec felt pride for a moment at how flushed and turned on Magnus looked.

Alec gave him an apologetic shrug. “I’m so sorry, I swear it’s not you, but I’m actually on the verge of falling asleep on you right now,” he said and Magnus smiled slowly.

“Well good to know I’m that exciting,” he joked, then lifted up some to kiss Alec sweetly. “I don’t blame you. Isabelle told me about how early you’ve been starting with Jace this week.”

Alec nodded, pressing another tiny kiss to Magnus’s lips, unable to stop even though he was the one who was too tired to keep going. “His fight is a week out so he knows cut day is coming and it gets him antsy.”

Magnus slid his fingers into Alec’s hair, kissing his jaw. “Stay with me,” he suggested and Alec shook his head, pulling back some.

“I need to get home,” he said.

“You’re falling asleep on me, you’re just gonna pass out on the train and miss your stop,” Magnus countered. He slid a hand along the strip of skin revealed by Alec’s rucked up shirt. “Stay with me instead.”

Alec hesitated. “I have to be up really early. Like five in the morning,” he said, and Magnus shrugged, smiling some as he saw Alec’s resolve breaking.

“We can go straight to bed, which is more than you can say for going all the way home.” He gave Alec a serious look, holding his gaze. “I promise, all I’m asking you to do is sleep over. I’m not trying to tempt you into my bed for anything else, Alexander. I would never-“

“No, I know that,” Alec said, pecking his lips. He gave him a playful glare. “Although, thanks for putting that thought in my head. Nothing will help me fall asleep as fast as being hyper aware that I’m in my really hot boyfriend’s bed.”

Magnus wiggled his eyebrows. “Maybe next time,” he said, pecking Alec’s lips again before finally letting Alec go so he could get up. “I never did throw out the toothbrush you used last time, so it’s still in the cabinet.” He looked a little embarrassed as he sat up. “I just figured, who knows, maybe you would come back again some time. Or hoped, rather.”

Alec thought back to their very odd first date incident and laughed at Magnus’s embarrassment. “Trust me, you weren’t the only one pretty hopeful after that first night. It was a fun ‘first date’ story, that’s for sure. Better than any of my other first dates, for sure.”

Magnus snickered. “Those were all with girls anyways and you don’t like girls, so I can’t imagine any of them were very fun.” Alec shrugged, agreeing. “C’mon. We can go to bed since you have to be up super early.”

After letting Magnus get ready for bed first, Alec finished up about the time he realized he didn’t
have any clothes to wear to sleep in. He came back out, smiling in amusement as he saw Magnus dancing around the bed, fluffing up the pillows while wearing bright yellow, silky pajamas, talking to his cat. “You have to go out for the night, Chairman, because Daddy has a guest staying this evening, and you already slept on his face once. That’s enough times to sleep on a guest’s face. Yes it is,” he said in a baby voice before leaning down to pick Chairman Meow up. He kissed his face. “I know, you don’t like going out, you like sleeping with Daddy, but Daddy likes Alexander and Alexander needs to sleep good, not be woken up by a cat slapping him cause he’s bored.”

“He slaps you when he’s bored?” Alec asked, and Magnus jumped some, smiling in surprise when he saw him.

“Yeah, he smacks me in the nose all the time,” Magnus said, kissing Chairman Meow again before taking him to the door. He put him out of the bedroom and then shut the door behind him, turning around. “Sorry, that was embarrassing, I swear I don’t baby-talk to him all the time,” he said and Alec just grinned.

“Of course not,” he teased. He gestured to himself. “Are you fine with me sleeping in my underwear? I don’t really have other clothes besides these, and yours, as we discovered, are a little on the small side.”

Magnus made a frustrated sound and flopped face first on the bed. “Alexander, you’re killing me,” he said, then lifted his head, blowing his bangs out of his eyes. “Fine, but if you wake up with my hands on your chest, it’s your own fault. I can’t help how hot you are and how much I like a man with a big, sexy chest, especially not while I’m asleep.”

Alec chuckled and shook his head, walking around to the other side of the bed as he watched Magnus crawl up the bed and crawl under the covers on the left side of the bed. Alec tugged his shirt off and then unbuttoned his jeans, kicking them off before folding his clothes to lay on the window seat. When he came back to the bed, Magnus was buried under all the fluffy covers, with just his head and his hands holding his phone poking out. Alec crawled into the bed and Magnus reached over to put his phone on the bedside table. “Alarm set for five o’clock. You better realize how much I like you to be willing to get up at five o’clock,” he teased, rolling over to face Alec with a smile.

Alec turned off the lamp on his side and then lay down, facing Magnus as well. Magnus gave him a silly look and Alec chuckled. “Don’t make this weird,” he chastised and Magnus just scooted closer, leaning in to kiss Alec.

“I am weird, I can’t help it.” He curled his arm around Alec’s middle, sighing as he shifted his head onto the pillow beside Alec’s. “So unfair. So much skin at my fingertips and me all covered up in neck to toe pajamas.”

Alec kissed Magnus’s hair, resting his own hand on Magnus’s hip as he relaxed, closing his eyes. “Next time, maybe I won’t be in your bed because I’m exhausted,” he joked and Magnus made an intrigued hum as he settled down, yawning against Alec’s jaw.

“Maybe,” he mumbled sleepily. “Goodnight, Alexander.”

Alec squeezed his hip affectionately, already drifting off in the warm, comfortable embrace of Magnus’s multitude of pillows, fluffy covers, and soft, warm body tucked up against his. “Night, Magnus.”

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Magnus slowly woke up to the sound of his alarm going off. He knew, instinctively, that it was too
early to be alive, so he whimpered, digging his head under the pillow. “Nooo,” he whined softly. He felt movement and immediately remembered Alexander was in his bed with him. He decided to let Alec deal with it and leave him asleep. Alec leaned over him and he heard fumbling with the phone before the alarm was shut off. Magnus relaxed again, only to have the pillow tugged off of his head, making him whimper grumpily. “Aleeeeeeec.”

“Wow, you’re so attractive when you wake up,” Alec said mockingly. Magnus flipped him off without opening his eyes, only to have Alec chuckle right beside his ear. He hadn’t felt him moving, but he did feel it when Alec pressed a kiss to his throat, right beneath his ear. “At least look at me?” he asked, chest rumbling against Magnus’s body as he spoke in a low, sleepy voice that did wonders to Magnus’s insides. He tilted his head invitingly, sighing when Alec kissed further down his throat. He reached a spot that made Magnus gasp, eyes flying open as a jolt of pleasure shot through his body. “Sorry,” Alec whispered, clearly having the wrong idea. “I seem to have given you a hickey last night,” he said and, yep, that made sense.

Magnus yawned, rolling around the bit he could with Alec pretty much pinning him down, and opened his eyes, looking up at Alec through sleepy eyes, only to blink a few times in surprise. Leaning over him, with the early morning sunlight from the window shining through Alec’s dark hair, catching his face at just the angle to make his pretty, light brown eyes positively glow, Magnus was struck by how angelic Alec looked. He smiled slowly, unable to help the glowing happiness he felt growing inside of him as he thought about how this sweet, beautiful, wonderful man was his boyfriend. He was even more surprised by the way Alec’s breath seemed to catch in his throat as he looked down at him, looking from his eyes to his lips. He opened his mouth to ask what was wrong, but Alec cut him off, speaking before he could.

“You’re so beautiful.” Magnus smiled in surprise and Alec seemed to like that even more, because a moment later Alec kissed him. Magnus moaned softly, freeing his hands from the covers to slide his fingers through Alec’s hair. Alec shifted over him, nudging Magnus’s knee with his. Magnus thoughtlessly parted his legs, letting Alec settle between them. Alec settled and Magnus hummed happily at the warmth of Alec’s solid body against his. Alec stroked his cheek before kissing across his face and down the other side of his neck. Magnus sighed and turned his head, tangling his fingers loosely in Alec’s hair as he guided him lower until he found Magnus’s pulse point, sending a jolt through his body.

“Mmmm, this is my new favorite wakeup call,” he declared breathily.

Alec chuckled against his skin, pulling back enough to kiss him slowly. “Better than Chairman Meow sitting on your head?” he teased, making Magnus chuckle, voice warbling as Alec’s leg shifted, pressing against his crotch. If Magnus hadn’t already been on his way to arousal, that sure helped the situation along. After a few more minutes of lazily making out with Alec, he was pretty much half-hard, and he could feel that Alec was, too.

But he didn’t expect Alec to reach between them and slowly slide his hand up the front of Magnus’s top. He stilled slightly, and Alec pulled back to look at him, lips swollen and red. “Can I?” Alec asked, tugging lightly at the bottom button of Magnus’s top.

Magnus raised an eyebrow, but when Alec smiled a tiny bit, he just nodded, not bothering to ask Alec if he was sure. He trusted Alec to only go as far as he wanted to go. He sucked in a breath when Alec began unbuttoning his shirt, slowly pushing it apart as he undid the buttons all the way up to his chest. Magnus shivered as the cool air of the bedroom hit his chest as his shirt fell open and he sat up just far enough to pull his arms out of the sleeves. Alec dropped his shirt aside and leaned down to kiss him again, a slow, sweet kiss. Alec moaned against his mouth, shuddering some as their bare skin slid together. Magnus slid his hands up the long, sloping plane of Alec’s back, fingertips...
feeling of every ripple of muscle beneath Alec’s smooth skin. Alec pulled away and kissed his chin and then his Adams apple and then his chest. “Oh,” Magnus moaned softly, gasping and arching when Alec moved to mouth at his nipple. He tugged lightly at Alec’s hair, making him pull away and look up at him. “Darling, I would love nothing more than to let you do that to your heart’s content, but I like it a little too much,” he said, stroking Alec’s messy hair comfortably.

Alec raised an eyebrow at him. “That’s sort of the point, Magnus,” he said, shifting so that Magnus’s leg pressed against his crotch, making sure Magnus was very aware how hard Alec was in nothing but his boxers. Magnus bit his lip to keep from whimpering at the implication. Alec smiled and ducked his head down, kissing Magnus’s sternum. “Okay?” he asked, and Magnus let out a huff of laughter.

“Yeah, okay,” he agreed with a grin, and Alec just ducked his head again, putting his mouth back on Magnus’s nipple. Magnus gasped, arching his back with a moan as Alec’s teeth scraped his nipple, almost hard enough to hurt but not quite. He really gasped, stomach clenching as Alec kissed further down his body, fingers trailing along his ribs. Magnus had always been oddly sensitive along his ribs. It was just like having Alec kissing and sucking at his neck, as far as how hard it made him.

“Alexander,” he purred as Alec trailed kisses down his abs, fingers stroking every ridge of muscle.

“Fuck, I had felt how solid your stomach was, but shit,” Alec murmured against his belly. “Your abs are amazing. Just saying,” Alec said, looking up at him.

Magnus scoffed. “Have you seen your body?! Last night when you took off your shit, I almost fainted,” he said, sliding his hand along Alec’s abs. “I’ve always looooved your big arms.”

Alec lifted himself up on one elbow, flexing the other arm for Magnus. “Like that?” he asked, teasingly, and Magnus reached out, touching his arm with a reverent sigh.

“I didn’t even know I had a thing for muscles,” he added, tugging Alec up to kiss him. Alec smiled against his mouth, sliding a hand along Magnus’s flank. He rolled his hips against Magnus’s slowly, making Magnus sigh, eyes falling shut. He licked his lip, curling his hands around Alec’s arms, tugging him until he rested his full weight on Magnus, hips nestled between Magnus’s legs.

Alec slid a hand to the top of Magnus’s pants, pulling back to look at him. He slowly tugged at the strings to Magnus’s pajamas, holding his gaze to be sure Magnus was okay with it. Magnus saw the look in Alec’s eyes that reassured him Alec was not doing it just for Magnus, but because he wanted it. And Magnus definitely wanted it. When Alec tugged the string undone and Magnus didn’t stop him, Alec gave him a small smile and slowly pulled his pants down. Magnus lifted his hips for Alec and tried not to give away just how nervous he was that this was happening.

It might be Alec’s first time ever, but it was still their first time, so Magnus had a few nerves fluttering around.

Alec crawled back up his body and kissed him in a way that made Magnus more than reassured that, yes, Alec wanted this just as much as he did. Alec taking charge was honestly not what Magnus had expected of their first time, but it was really hot, so he was entirely okay with that. Alec slid his hand slowly up the inside of Magnus’s leg, making Magnus give a stuttered breath against his lips, breaking the kiss. Alec watched his face as he touched him, and Magnus was almost positive that simply being touched wasn’t supposed to feel so intense. When Alec finally looked away, it was to look down between them and curl his hand around Magnus’s erection. Magnus bit his bottom lip to keep from making an embarrassing noise as Alec stroked him lightly, just testing out how it felt in his hands from the looks of it.

“Do you have-“
“Lube? Yeah,” Magnus said, sitting up some, only to have Alec kiss him and push him back down, hand on his chest. Magnus flapped his hand towards the bedside table and Alec leaned over, opening the drawer. Magnus used Alec’s distraction to curl his legs around Alec’s middle, shoving at his boxers with his toes. “Do you wanna take these off, Alexander?” he asked, giving him a little smirk.

Alec looked down at his boxers and chuckled. “Oh, yeah.” He moved to push them down and then kicked them off the bed, giving Magnus quite the eyeful. He hadn’t been wrong in presuming Alec would be big, that was for sure. “How do you even get this open?” Alec asked, looking frustrated.

Magnus laughed, plucking the bottle from his hand. “Here,” he said, twisting the cap off before handing it back. “Don’t use too much or it gets sticky,” he reminded him, knowing from experience that it took practice to know how much lube was too much and how much was just enough.

When Alec did get things figured out, however, Magnus had no reason to complain at all. Alec above him, kissing him while he slowly jerked him off was pretty much everything Magnus had dreamed it would be to be intimate with Alec. Alec seemed to be pretty content to take the wheel, because there was shockingly little nervousness in Alec’s movements. His kisses and his touches were exploratory, clearly trying to find out what made Magnus feel good, and the way he rolled his hips against Magnus’s thigh while stroking him made it very clear that he was definitely enjoying the series of events, too.

However, to have just woken up, and for Alec to have never had sex before, in reality it only took a couple minutes before Alec gave up jerking him off and held his hip while their hips rolled together, cocks sliding past one another. Magnus curled his arms around Alec, kissing along his shoulder and neck, using the leg wrapped around Alec to thrust up against him as well. Magnus was actually pretty surprised that he ended up coming before Alec did. It had just been so long, and he was so into Alec, and Alec was so hot that he couldn’t help it. When he felt that he was going to come, he tightened his hand in Alec’s hair, pulling him back so that he could kiss him hard and sloppy.

“Alexander, ung, Alexander, I’m so close,” he moaned, kissing along his face. “Yes, yes, right there,” he gasped, tightening his knees so that Alec couldn’t move to either side, having to thrust against him in just the way that he got the best friction between their bodies. “Oh, oh,” he moaned, head falling back as he hesitated right on the edge. “Alec, please-“

“Fuck you’re so hot,” Alec gasped against his lips, nose pressing into Magnus’s cheek as he chased his lips but couldn’t really focus on kissing him. “Magnus,” he whined, voice breaking at the end, and for some reason, that was all it took for Magnus. He came with a small gasp, body shuddering in Alec’s arms as he added to the wetness between their bellies. After relaxing with a heavy sigh, Alec’s movements started to be too much for his oversensitive skin, so he reached between them, pushing Alec off of him just enough so that he could curl his hand around Alec’s erection, reaching his other hand up to push Alec’s bangs out of his face, giving him an orgasm-drunk smile as he watched him.

“Come for me, Darling,” he purred, sliding his hand along Alec’s hair, down his neck, and across his shoulder. “You’re so beautiful, Alexander, I just want to see how you look when you come,” he murmured in a rough, post-sex-haze voice. He wanted to see if Alec was as hot during orgasm as he thought he would be.

Alec didn’t disappoint. He gave a choked sound, body locking up as he came. His muscles stood out, every muscle in his chest and arms flexed, his mouth dropped open, highlighting his red, kiss-swollen lips Magnus loved so much, and his eyes fell shut, fanning his thick, long, black lashes across his pale cheeks so beautifully. Magnus stroked him through it and then sighed with a smile when Alec slumped against him, head curling into the side of his neck. He curled his arms around Alec, careful to not rest his dirty hand on Alec’s bare back. He turned and kissed his earlobe, making
Alec twitch a little. “Magnus,” he moaned, and Magnus grinned, closing his eyes and getting comfortable under Alec’s broad, warm body as his weight pinned him down.

After catching his breath, Alec lifted himself up on his elbows to kiss Magnus, slow and comfortably, allowing Magnus to luxuriate in how warm, and soft, and relaxed he felt. Sadly, only a few moments later, Alec lifted up, smiling apologetically at Magnus when he pouted. “Sorry,” he whispered as he crawled over Magnus and hopped out of bed. He went to the bathroom, presumably to clean up, and Magnus thought about how he really should do the same, but the bed was just sooo comfy.

Being the amazing boyfriend he was, Alec came back with a wet cloth for him. Magnus thanked him with a kiss and cleaned himself up, throwing the cloth across the room and into his hamper, making a little ‘woo’ sound when he made it. Alec laughed and when Magnus turned to look at him, he made a dramatically grumpy face when he saw Alec had pulled his boxers on and was going to the rest of his clothes. “Aaawww,” he whined, flopping over onto his belly, looking at Alec as he stood on the other side of the bed, shaking out his folded clothes from last night. He sat up on his elbows suddenly, raising an eyebrow at Alec. “Oh yeah, whatever happened to ‘can’t be late to work’?”

Alec smiled brightly, chuckling softly as he pulled his jeans on. “Yeah, I love my job, but a pissy Jace versus sex with you is not much of a difficult choice.”

Magnus felt a small pang of regret, giving Alec a little crooked smile. “You know, on the other side of it, I feel kinda bad that I didn’t stop you so that I could do your first time right. You know, nice date, glass of wine, candles in the bedroom, that sort of thing. Somebody’s first time is supposed to be special.”

Alec shrugged, finishing buckling his belt, and smiled over at Magnus nonchalantly. “I told you before, I didn’t need a big production, I just needed it to feel right. And this did.” He tugged his shirt down over his head and walked over, leaning down to peck Magnus’s lips. “Besides, it was special, it was with you.”

Magnus’s breath caught in his chest and he felt, with some alarm, a lump growing in his throat. He blinked when his eyes started to sting a bit and he gave a breathless little laugh. “Oh Alexander.” Alec looked at him closely, smile slipping. “Are you gonna cry?” he asked in confusion, and Magnus swatted at his arm, laughing a bit wetly.

“Fuck off, it’s before six in the morning, I just had sex for the first time in years, and you just said something insanely sweet. You don’t get to judge me,” he said, voice warbling though he kept himself from actually tearing up and sniffling.

Alec gave him an amused look. “It’s just true, I’m not trying to be sweet.”

“I know that’s why it’s so sweet!” Magnus cried, letting his face fall into the plush covers, half-heartedly flopping a bit. “How are you real and how were you single when I met you? How? You’re just ridiculous, Alexander Lightwood.” He shook his head with finality. “It’s unnatural. You’re gorgeous and sweet and basically perfect, and that’s not possible,” he accused, wagging a finger at him.

Alec just chuckled and kissed him sweetly, lips lingering, before he pulled away, pressing a peck to Magnus’s forehead. “I really have to go now, okay?”

Magnus nodded, star-fishing out on the bed. “Yeah, okay. I’m going back to sleep for at least
another hour or two. I might call in and make it a late morning. Not really sure I can feel my legs yet anyways,” he said, wiggling his fingers at Alec as he got ready to go.

“Well, don’t forget to lock up behind me.” Alec stopped for one more kiss. “I’ll see you later,” he whispered, and Magnus nodded, smiling at him as he left.

“See you then, Darling.”

Once Alexander was gone, Magnus crawled back under the covers, wrapped his arms around a pillow, and relaxed, pretending he still had his incredibly boyfriend in his arms, not a dumb pillow.

~

When Alec got to the gym, he knew he was late, but he couldn’t find it in him to care. He went to the locker room to change quickly and then headed to find Jace, who should’ve been already in the cage, getting warmed up. When he rounded the corner, he slowed his steps a bit, surprised to see Izzy in there with him with the pads on her hands and legs. “Izzy, what are you doing here?” he asked, climbing the stairs into the cage.

Jace turned around and Isabelle glared at him. “You didn’t call. Again,” she said, walking over, undoing the Velcro of the pads.

Alec groaned. “Shit, I’m sorry. I was falling asleep so Magnus suggested I just say the night. I was half-asleep so I didn’t even think about it.”

Jace raised an eyebrow. “And being late to work?”

Isabelle nodded, handing Alec the pads. “Lydia said she would kill Jace if she had to deal with him this early, so I got up early to take your place since Diva Jace is something I’m used to.”

Jace glared. “For the last time, I’m not being a diva, cutting weight just sucks!” He pointed at her. “You’ve never cut weight, you don’t know shit.”

Alec rolled his eyes. “She’s a girl, Jace, half their life is cutting weight,” he said and Isabelle laughed, tossing her ponytail over her shoulder.

“It’s not quite that bad, Alec, but really, Jace, you’re a diva,” she said with finality. She poked Alec in the chest. “Now, why were you so late?”

Alec blushed. “Didn’t feel like getting up when the alarm went off.” Isabelle raised an eyebrow and Alec glanced around to see if anybody had come in, then ducked his head looking at his hands while he strapped on the pads. “We, uh, we sort of, you know. Did it.”

“Did what?” Isabelle asked, and he glanced up with a small grin. She gave him a slow grin. “Wait, what?” He shrugged, feeling his cheeks burn with a blush. “So that’s why you’re late.” She punched him in the arm. “You go, Alec!”

Jace frowned. “What is ‘it’? I don’t get it?” he asked and Alec rolled his eyes while Isabelle turned and scoffed.

“What could our blushing big brother mean by ‘we did it’ in correlation to ‘why he’s late to work’?” she hinted, and Jace frowned again only to blink, looking up at Alec in surprise.

“Whoa, you had sex? Woo!” He shoved Alec playfully. “Look who’s finally a man!” he cheered loudly, making Alec shush him and Isabelle give him a dark look. He cackled. “Oh man, so that’s
what is up with your neck! I figured you just got punched training yesterday,” he said, and Alec felt his neck, blushing when he felt the beginnings of a bruise.

Isabelle leaned around to look at him from the other side and laughed. “Aww, man, you gotta get Magnus to ease up. Only teenagers walk around with hickeys.”

Alec cleared his throat, gesturing to his neck. “Have you got anything to cover this up?”

Isabelle laughed, grabbing his arm. “Yeah, come with me. Jace! I’m stealing him for just a second.” She winked at Alec. “Nobody will see your sexy, sexy war wounds.”

~

Magnus didn’t actually bother coming in until a bit after ten. Raphael had the first class of the day at nine, so he didn’t feel too guilty. When he finally showed up, he brought coffee for the other two to make up for leaving them alone for an hour and a half. “Gooood morning,” he sing-songed, offering the try of coffees to Raphael and Isabelle. “Names are on the cups.”

Raphael raised an eyebrow as he took his. “Oh, I see you finally decided to grace us with your presence,” he mocked.

Magnus shrugged. “I woke up really early and decided to go back to bed, but I forgot to set a second alarm. You’re lucky the ‘hungry cat trying to attack my bedroom door’ alarm woke me up this early.”

Raphael gave him an incredulous look. “What on earth got you up before eight? Are you ill?”

As Isabelle took her coffee from the tray, she gave Magnus a knowing look and he stilled instinctively. “He was deflowering my big brother,” she said matter-of-factly, and Raphael choked on his coffee, slapping a hand over his mouth.

“Isabelle!” Magnus whined. He gestured to Raphael. “Great, you killed Raphael.”

Raphael coughed. “Why do you know this?!” he asked Isabelle, who laughed at his coughing.

“Oh come on, we’re adults,” she said, rolling her eyes. “Alec tells me everything, so when he came in late this morning and I asked why, he told me and Jace he lost his virginity. We’re totally happy for him like adults, not going all ‘ew’ like you children,” she said bluntly.

Raphael just cringed. “Whatever you say. Neither of them are my brother and I never needed to hear about Magnus’s sex life.”

Isabelle just turned and skipped away with her coffee. “Just lay off the hickeys next time. You’re not teenagers, you’re professional adults. That just looks bad.” Magnus slapped a hand to his neck before he remembered he had put makeup over his, and Isabelle laughed at him. “I meant Alec, you too? That’s so bad, seriously, you’re a real grown up, you should know better.”

“Yeah, well.” Magnus grumpily sipped his coffee. “It’s hard to care in the moment. Shut it.” He ignored their teasing as he went to the office to get ready for the day.

~

Since the next day was Jace’s actual cut day, where he’d lose the rest of the weight he hadn’t slowly lost during the week, Magnus didn’t get to even talk to Alec. He was too busy focusing on Jace. Magnus had asked once what ‘cut day’ was even like because the thought of losing upwards of
twenty pounds in a week sounded physically impossible to him, and from Alec’s description, it still didn’t sound physically possible, honestly.

The night after the weigh in, however, Alec called him and asked if he wanted to come to Jace’s fight with them. “I mean,” Alec said. “I’m sort of nervous about you meeting my mom, but she’ll be really distracted with Jace and the press and stuff, so it won’t be as bad as if you met her outside of this for the first time. She will probably just be like ‘oh hey’ and go on since she can’t hint that I’m gay around promoters.”

Magnus hummed, petting Chairman Meow. “Yeah, okay,” he said, stomach tightening. “I’m curious about what a fight is like in person. It’s not really my thing usually, but I want to see what you guys do.”

“Great,” Alec said excitedly. “Um, I have to go to the venue with Jace and my mom, since I’m in his corner, but I’ll leave you a pass at Will Call and you can meet Izzy inside with my dad,” he explained and Magnus perked up some.

“Awesome. Side note, what does one wear to a fight?” he asked curiously.

Alec laughed. “Well, I’m always there either with the gym or with my mom or dad promoting the gym for networking stuff, so I wear black jeans and a tee-shirt for the gym, but most people dress up a bit, but not too much. Dress like you’re going out for dinner, but not like you’re going to a club. Izzy usually wears a tee-shirt for the gym and a mini-skirt and heels. Sort of mixing it up.”

“Alright, I’ll see what I’ve got,” Magnus said excitedly. “It’ll be an experience for sure,” he said, and Alec hummed.

“Just don’t dress too sexy or I’ll accidentally out myself staring at you the whole time,” he joked and Magnus grinned to himself.

“I’ve got some leather pants I’ve been dying to wear-“

“Oh my God, do not do that, I would actually have to kill myself,” Alec groaned. “Okay, now I’m going to go, with that mental image, thanks.”

Magnus smirked, lowering his voice to a sexy purr. “Make sure you moan my name when you jerk off to that thought later,” he teased and Alec huffed.

“Okay, I’m going now, I’m going to hang up on you.”

Magnus gave up and laughed. “Goodnight, Alexander. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“By Magnus,” Alec said before hanging up.

Magnus looked at Chairman Meow, then towards his bedroom. “C’mon, Chairman,” he said, scooping him up to take with him. “Daddy has to pick out an outfit for tomorrow night! Yes he does,” he cooed, cuddling his cat as he danced into his bedroom excitedly.

~

When he arrived at the hotel where the fight was happening, Magnus got to the front of the line to get his pass and was directed to the VIP area. He was still looking at the pass he’d been handed to hang around his neck when he heard his name. “Magnus! Over here.” He looked up and spotted Isabelle, just like Alec had told him.
“Well look at you,” he said, taking in her stilettos, her hot pink mini skirt, and a The Institute tee-shirt she’d cut into a crop top. “I thought I was gonna be overdressed for a minute,” he joked, gesturing to the skin tight leather pants he’d promised Alec, combat boots, and – as a joke for Jace after the fight – a Pandemonium tee-shirt he’d ripped the sleeves out of so that half of his sides showed. He had forgone the makeup he had been so tempted to wear simply because he figured the crowd at a fight might not be the most welcoming to glitter eye makeup and lipstick.

Isabelle took his hand, grinning. “You look so good Alec might faint after the fight,” she said, linking their fingers together loosely as she guided him through the crowd. They approached a VIP area with tables set up ringside rather than folding chairs further back and they flashed their badges to the guy standing by the velvet rope. Magnus’s stomach tightened when they approached a table where a woman who could really only be Isabelle’s mother sat next to a man with nobody else at the table. “Mom,” Isabelle called, and Magnus went a bit wide-eyed when the woman stood.

She was nearly as tall as Magnus even without her heels, so when they stopped in front of her, she towered a bit. She was also large. To be a middle aged woman, her arms were still pretty muscled. He also noticed the same sort of tattoos that Jace and Alec had on her arms. “Isabelle, I was beginning to worry you would be late,” she said in greeting.

Isabelle tugged on Magnus’s hand, smiling over at him. “Mom, this is Magnus Bane. My boss and Alec’s… friend,” she said, very aware of their surroundings.

Magnus could see the dislike in her eyes the minute they met his, but he fixed a big smile anyways. “Hello. Alexander’s told me a lot about you.”

She smiled coolly. “Maryse Lightwood.” She gestured to her husband, who had stood as well. “My husband, Robert.”

Magnus offered his hand to Robert, who shook it. “Alec told us you were coming tonight to see Jace fight. Can’t say I expected a dance teacher to be interested in fighting, but I guess Alec changes things some,” he said with a far more polite smile.

“I’ve actually never seen a fight in my life,” Magnus admitted, shrugging. “But I was curious about what you guys do next door. I’ve been neighbor to the gym for two years, so it’s about time I get to know more about your sport since I’ve stolen your daughter to teach mine.”

Robert chuckled. “Well it’s nice to finally meet you, Magnus. Hopefully you’ll enjoy the fight. There are a few before Jace’s and a big title fight after. Should be a good night.”

Isabelle grinned. “I saw the cards, it’s gonna be great! Jace is gonna totally win his fight, that guy’s record sucks. It’s gonna be easy.”

Maryse nodded. “I can’t wait to see this one,” she said, gesturing for Magnus and Isabelle to sit. Magnus followed Isabelle and sat on her other side, across from her parents. He didn’t miss the way that Maryse was pretending he didn’t exist even though Robert was kind enough to try and involve him in the conversation.

He was sort of looking forward to the violence just to kill the awkwardness.

~

Magnus had expected to be a little bit freaked out by the violence, and there were a few points where he really jumped in fear while Isabelle – who he had never seen so fired up – jumped from her seat, shouting with the loudest voices in the crowd. For the most part, however, it was actually really
exciting. There was a lot more skill and athleticism involved than in straight up boxing, in Magnus’s opinion. There was something very graceful about some of the fights that night.

Jace’s fight was pretty harsh, really. It was a hell of a fight. Magnus really felt like that was the most violent fight of the night. Jace throwing powerhouse punches was sort of beautiful and graceful, but also kind of alarming. They really beat the hell out of each other. By the time the fight ended – Jace only winning in the third round by catching the guy’s head with his leg and choking him out – there was more blood on the mat than Magnus had ever imagined to come from something that wasn’t either ending a life or bringing one into the world.

When the guy tapped and the bell rang, Jace staggered to his feet with a cocky grin in spite of the blood pouring down his face from a cut near his hairline, and Alec and Lydia immediately ran over to drag him to his corner to try and stop the bleeding. When he got back into the middle of the cage with a towel held to his forehead, he took the mic and started the standard ‘thanking their coach and parents and God’ speeches the fighters before had done, but Magnus was actually really surprised when Jace turned to the guy he’d nearly murdered in front of them (at least it had seemed a lot like that to Magnus) and pointed at him with a big grin. “And Julio, man, you are fucking incredible. Give it up for this guy, because that was probably the hardest fight I’ve ever been in, and you deserve so much credit for giving me a good one.”

Magnus wouldn’t have ever thought Jace the Cocky Asshole had a humble bone in his body, but he was the first fighter of the night to say anything nice about their opponent they had just beaten. He looked across the table and saw the pride in Maryse’s eyes as she stood, clapping for Jace with all the rest of the crowd.

It was a hell of a way to meet Alec’s parents, he had been right about that part, for sure.

~

After Jace’s fight, they didn’t stick around for the big title fight. Isabelle and Magnus had been told they were welcome to stay, but when Isabelle asked Magnus if he wanted to stay or go to Jace’s press conference, it wasn’t really even a question. He had handled the violence better than he thought he would, but after Jace’s fight, he had had his fill.

It wasn’t a big set-up like Magnus had seen while flipping sports channels before, no massive long table with dozens of reporters, there was just a small stage in front of sponsor logo plastered paneling with a microphone stand to with about fifteen people milling around it. Isabelle went up on the stage with her mom and dad, leaving Magnus to stand awkwardly near the edge of the stage, near some reporters. When the voices picked up, he followed some gazes and saw Alec, Lydia, and Jace coming out of the hall to get up on the stage. Jace hugged Maryse when he got to her, smiling brightly when she praised him.

One of the only people Magnus didn’t know on the stage was an older man who stepped forward to the microphone. “Alright, to start things off, I’m Jared Sturm, from Sturm Promotions. We’re going to start off with the winner and his team. Come on up here, Jace,” he said, waving Jace over. “Jace Lightwood, ladies and gentlemen.” Jace stepped up and Sturm slapped him on the shoulder. “Start by stating your name and publication, and then you can ask your questions,” he said before stepping back out of the way to let Jace stand at the microphone.

There was some applause before Sturm pointed to someone in the crowd. “Cat Sanders, Powerhouse Magazine,” a woman’s voice spoke up. “Jace, this is your first win of any real consequence so far. For someone so early in their career, what does this fight mean for your future?”

Jace perked up. “Yeah, good question.” He reached back, grabbing Alec’s shoulder. “It means so
much to me to have a good win on my record against a great fighter, and it’s all down to my brother, Alec. He kicked my ass into shape when I pissed my other trainer, Lydia Branwell, off too much to get her to work with me,” he said, winking at Lydia. “We’ve got big goals for my future that were really weighing on this match’s outcome, and him pushing me and pushing me is what really got me here.” Magnus smiled when he saw the sheepish way Alec ducked his head. Even in his element he was still adorable. “My parents, Robert and Maryse, really put a lot into The Institute and they push me and Alec to be better fighters every day, and it paid off this time.”

The next question went to a man whose name Magnus couldn’t hear, and he asked, “How difficult was it to get down to your weight class after so long since your last sanctioned fight? You’re known for cutting a lot of weight to fight, and after so long without an upcoming fight, that had to be rough.”

Jace smirked, glancing over at Isabelle. “Well it was helped along by my sister being a terrible cook. We let her take over cooking dinner lately and Izzy’s cooking can help anybody cut a lot of weight real quick,” he teased and Isabelle rolled her eyes at him as a small amount of laughter went around the crowd.

As the questions continued, Magnus zoned out a little more, but all in all, he was really surprised how civil the post-fight conference went. More than anything, he was surprised by how often Alec’s eyes kept straying to him, and how Alec’s lips twitched every time Magnus smiled up at him. He knew it would be a while before they could talk, but just having Alec smile at him made him feel a lot more comfortable in the middle of a crowd at a big fight night.

~

They had to go to the after party for Alec to let his mother introduce him to people and try and get some talk drummed up about his potential, but Magnus only had a few drinks all night because the way Alec had been eyeing him up, he had a feeling Alec wanted to come home with him and he didn’t a damn thing dulling that experience later on.

Finally, after about an hour of networking, Alec finally came to Isabelle and Magnus and leaned against Isabelle. “So, is it cool if I steal Magnus from you?” he asked her and she smirked.

“Oh? And where do you think you’re going?” she asked teasingly.

Magnus winked at her. “You guys got to keep him all day, it’s only fair I get to have him all night.”

Isabelle snickered, then shook her head. “Have fun, boys,” she teased and Alec leaned in to kiss her head, hugging her.

“You get to tell Mom for me,” he said, and Magnus cringed because he had just spotted Maryse walking up behind Isabelle.

“Tell me what?” she asked, and Alec stood up straight, pulling slowly out of the hug with his sister. Alec cleared his throat. “I’m heading out. It’s been a long day.”

She gave him a smile. “Alec, you get the day off tomorrow. You’re allowed to stay out and have some fun! Your brother won his fight! Have a drink and celebrate. No need to get up too early to justify staying at the party a while longer.”

“Um,” Alec said, giving an awkward shift in his shoulders some as he glanced at Magnus. “I wasn’t really talking about going home so I can get up early. I’m going to Magnus’s tonight and he lives in Brooklyn, so we should probably head out.”
Magnus held his smile though he cringed internally at the way Maryse’s smile dropped into something of an unhappy sneer before she forced her face to be placid. “Very well.” She looked to Magnus, her eyes still pretty unhappy though she remained civil. “It was nice of you to come to the fight, Magnus.”

Magnus nodded with a nearly panicked smile. “I had a lot of fun, thanks for having me, but Alexander’s right. It’s a long train ride from here, so we should get going.” He leaned over and kissed Isabelle’s cheek. “I’ll see you Monday,” he said, and then, with a glance to Alec, he turned and walked way. Alec followed along behind him without hesitation.

When they finally got out onto the street, Alec sighed heavily. “Wow, she does not like you,” he realized, and Magnus gave him reassuring smile and a shrug.

“It’s okay. I had a feeling before we met it wouldn’t be as welcoming as your siblings.”

Alec rubbed a hand through his hair with a slow exhale. “It’s been a long day,” he said in reply.

Magnus bumped their arms together. “You know you don’t have to come over if you’re not up to it, Alexander. If you’re that tired, maybe you should go home and get some rest. I can go two whole days apart, especially since I did get to see you a little bit tonight.”

Alec gave him a sneaky grin, shaking his head some. “I meant it’s been too long of a day to bother with the trains,” he said as he walked backward, then turned around, stepping off the curb to hail a cab.

Magnus gave him an incredulous look, arms crossed over his middle. “You know you don’t have to come over if you’re not up to it, Alexander. If you’re that tired, maybe you should go home and get some rest. I can go two whole days apart, especially since I did get to see you a little bit tonight.”

When the cab pulled up, Alec just opened the door, nodding for Magnus to get in. “Magnus, I know it doesn’t come up much, but you do remember that I’m kind of rich, right?” he asked, and Magnus hesitated.

“Actually, I had forgot that part,” he said, then shrugged. “Eh, as long as you’re paying,” he said, winking at Alec as he slid into the cab ahead of Alec. He could tell by the way Alec’s fingers twitched that he wasn’t the only one who was ready to be away from all the prying eyes so that he could finally touch his boyfriend without fear of repercussions.

~

As soon as they got into the building, even before they headed up to Magnus’s apartment, Alec caught him around the waist and kissed him, right there on the stairs. Magnus moaned in relief, relaxing into Alec’s body. “I’ve wanted to do that since I left your house the other morning,” Alec admitted with a happy smile.

Magnus grinned, tugging at his hands as he backed up the stairs. “Darling, I feel exactly the same way.” He winked and turned on his heel, swaying his hips a bit more as he headed up the stairs ahead of Alec, putting his ass right in Alec’s line of vision. “I even wore those pants you sounded so interested in,” he teased.

Alec groaned behind him. “Oh trust me, I noticed. Several times. Basically all night.” As soon as they went into Magnus’s apartment, Magnus turned around after kicking off his boots, intending on teasing Alec for his straying eyes, but he was surprised instead by Alec grabbing him by hips and picking him up.

“Ahhh! Oh my God, Alec!” he cried in alarm, squeaking when Alec hefted him higher, hands under
his ass while he scrambled to get a grip with leather-clad thighs around Alec. Magnus laughed breathlessly, looking down at him. “Oh, that’s cheating. Also, this is really high-“

“My blood pressure is probably really high after these pants,” Alec stressed, hands squeezing slightly at his ass.

Magnus hummed with interest, wrapping his arms tighter around Alec’s shoulders. “So, tight leather pants do it for you, huh? Never pictured you to be into leather,” he teased and Alec growled teasingly, tugging him into a kiss. Magnus moaned, nails tugging at Alec’s tee-shirt. “Mmmm, Darling.” Alec kissed him again. “Darling, not that I don’t- Mmm- don’t like this.” Alec kissed him again, making him chuckle. “But I know I’m not light.”

Alec hefted him some, grinning. “I’m pretty strong, Magnus.”

“Oh I believe you,” Magnus said, his smile turning into a downright tempting grin. “But maybe you should find somewhere to put me instead.” He used his hold around Alec to rock against him some. “Maybe somewhere horizontal. Where you can get me out of these pants.” He leaned in, lips just barely brushing Alec’s earlobe. “And get inside of me.”

Alec’s breath hitched in shock, and for a moment Magnus worried he may have pushed Alec’s boundaries, but almost immediately Alec pushed him back far enough to catch his mouth and kiss the daylights out of him. Magnus moaned in shock, having not been expecting Alec to devour him so completely. He was vaguely aware of Alec carrying him somewhere, right up until he was dropped onto his bed. He grinned up at Alec, knees falling apart so he could look at him where he stood beside the bed, eyes full of lust. He wasted no time tugging his shirt off, body stretching and muscles rippling as he stripped it off over his head and dropped the tee-shirt to the floor.

The sight of Alexander’s heaving chest framed by his own parted knees was probably the best vision ever to enter Magnus’s life, if he was realistic.

Alec leaned over him, hands going to Magnus’s shirt. He pushed it up and Magnus didn’t bother waiting, he helped by ripping it over his head, tossing it behind him. Alec kissed his chest, hands stroking over his abs and sides, and he basically went straight towards driving Magnus wild with his hands and mouth. “That shirt showing off your side muscles and your arms, it was killing me,” Alec admitted out loud as he explored Magnus’s body with his lips, teeth, tongue, and fingertips.

He kissed down Magnus’s belly to the button of his leather pants, making Magnus gasp, whimpering at the feeling of Alec’s tongue tracing the V-shaped muscles as they disappeared into his pants. “Alexander, please,” he panted and Alec stood up, not hesitating to unbutton Magnus’s pants. Magnus helped him shove them down over his hips, taking over when Alec’s hands stuttered as he realized Magnus hadn’t been wearing underwear all night. Magnus just winked. “Can’t fit anything under pants that tight.” He sat up, kicking his pants off and leaning forward, tugging Alec in by his jeans. He bit at Alec’s stomach lightly before he pulled away, looking up at Alec while he pushed his jeans down. “Help me out, Sweetheart,” he said, and Alec pushed his jeans and boxers down in one go.

Magnus crawled backwards on the bed, chuckling some when Alec had to pause to kick off his sneakers, but once he was free of his pants, he stepped out of them and crawled up the bed to kiss Magnus, pushing him into the pillows beneath him. “While you kissing my stomach- mmmm,” Alec kissed I’m again, unable to even finish is sentence without kissing Magnus more. “While that gave me really great ideas about your mouth that close to my dick, I think I remember a request in the living room,” he said, pinning Magnus to the bed with his body, touching him and rocking against him in all the right ways.
The very idea of Alec inside of him was enough to make Magnus shiver in anticipation. He grabbed Alec’s forearms and rolled them over, grinning when Alec was clearly surprised at his strength.

“Mmmm, right where I want you,” he said, kissing him a few more times before leaning over to dig around for lube and a condom in the side table. “Do you have the patience to do this, or shall I just get myself ready?” he asked, hesitating. “Honestly I have no preference either way. If I do it, the faster I get this,” he groaned, wrapping his hand reverently around Alec’s cock, stroking him slowly, getting him all the way hard. “But… your hands have always made me hot,” he admitted with a little teasing wink.

Alec took the lube from him with a heated look. “Well if you like my hands,” he said, and Magnus grinned, earning an amused little smile from Alec. Magnus lay down on top of Alec, chests and stomachs together, so that he could kiss that adorable smile off of Alec’s face.

He was so engrossed in slow, playful kisses that the touch of Alec’s hands grabbing his ass made him hum in surprise. He pulled back just far enough to look at Alec. His breath grew a bit shallow when he felt Alec’s slick finger teasing his entrance, but he just nodded a little bit, telling Alec it was okay. Alec’s fingers were thicker than his, that much was immediately obvious, but more than that, they were longer, because Alec had no trouble at all reaching his prostate. Magnus gasped, pressing back against his hand with a groan. “Oh, right there,” he murmured. Alec was able to find that angle again every time he added a finger so by the time he had three thick, long fingers inside of Magnus, Magnus was already sweating and moaning softly from pleasure. “I need you,” he gasped, reluctantly pulling off of Alec’s fingers.

Alec scrambled beside him for the condom Magnus had dropped on the bed, and when he found it, Magnus plucked it out of his fingers with a flourish. He tore the package open and slid back down Alec’s legs a bit so he could roll the condom onto his erection properly. He stole the lube from Alec as well and winked at him before slowly stroking his cock, spreading lube over his length. Alec’s pupils went wide, nostrils flaring as his breath stuttered when Magnus started so slowly sink down onto him. Magnus’s eyes fluttered but he fought to keep eye contact with Alec as he pushed past the twinge of pain. It had been years for him and Alec was big, so it still hurt a little.

But it also felt indescribable.

Looking into Alec’s eyes the whole time he took Alec into him made it hard to breathe, but the reverent way that, every time he so much as winced, Alec stopped his hips, letting him get used to the feeling before letting him keep going, it made Magnus feel something he hadn’t felt in forever. The connection during sex he already felt with Alec was only intensified by how careful Alec was being with him even though he knew Alec had to be dying to just take by now. When he finally felt the pressure relaxing and the pain abating, he let out a soft whoosh of breath. “Oh Alexander.”

Alec rubbed his thighs comfortingly. “You okay?” he asked, voice strained, and Magnus was impressed by how Alec was managing to control himself and make sure Magnus was okay.

Magnus gave an experimental roll of his hips and positively purred. “I’m great.” He scraped his nails lightly across Alec’s pecs as he began to slowly work himself on Alec’s cock. “You feel so good,” he moaned, head tossed back in pleasure. “Goddamn, you’re big,” he said as he tried to relax so that the little twinges of pain would stop.

“If it’s too much, it’s okay, we can stop,” Alec reassured, and Magnus looked down at him again,
giving him an incredulous look, though he didn’t stop slowly riding Alec.

“Alexander, trust me, I have zero desire to stop.”

After a little while longer, he could tell Alec was not up to keeping up such a slow pace, but he never once pushed Magnus until he was ready to ride him with more vigor, hanging onto Alec’s shoulders as Alec helped him move, hands on his hips.

Magnus was sort of annoyed at his body for being so unused to sex that, even though it was enough for Alec, Magnus couldn’t get what he wanted without it hurting. When Alec came, hands digging into Magnus’s thighs, Magnus was nowhere near coming. He worked Alec through his orgasm and then let out a sigh when Alec relaxed beneath him, tugging him into a warm, comfortable embrace.

Magnus kissed him, smiling at how pliant Alec was in his arms. “You good?” he asked softly. Alec nodded, smiling up at him.

Alec kissed him slowly, exploring his mouth in a way that made Magnus let out a happy moan. He carefully pulled off of Alec, shifting up onto his hands and knees without breaking the kiss. When he moved to get off of Alec, Alec made an annoyed sound, curling an arm around his waist as they rolled to the side. “Wait,” Alec murmured against his lips. “You didn’t-“

“It’s okay,” Magnus said, grinning as he pecked Alec’s lips again. Alec looked at him and he winked. “I’m not done with you tonight. I can wait.”

Alec gave him an embarrassed wince. “Sorry I’m not, that I didn’t-“

“Shhh,” Magnus shushed him with a finger on his lips. “Darling, as long as it’s been since I’ve been fucked by anything other than my own fingers, and as big as you are, and for your sexual experience being numbered at one, it’s nothing bad that you didn’t get me off. I’m surprised you lasted as long as you did, and I’m surprised it didn’t hurt more than it did. This was great,” he reassured, smiling as he looked into Alec’s big, pretty eyes. “And you’re young,” he purred, moving his finger out of the way to kiss him again. “I bet in twenty minutes you can fuck me again.”

Alec rolled his eyes but chuckled. “Yeah, probably,” he admitted. He pressed a kiss to Magnus’s shoulder and smiled against his skin.

Magnus ran a hand through his hair as he rolled onto his back and grimaced at the feeling of the gel in his hair. He glanced over at Alec and smiled suddenly. “Want to take a shower with me?” he asked, reaching out to trail his fingers down Alec’s abs. “Seeing you all wet sounds incredible.”

Alec laughed but nodded. “Sure, sounds fun.”

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There was something freeing about walking around naked, Alec thought. He and Magnus both walked around the room, picking up clothes and picking up the condom that had missed the trash can, and when Alec joined Magnus in the bathroom, Magnus was just casually standing naked by the shower, waiting for the water to warm up. Alec stood in the doorway watching him for a moment, because he was just so beautiful. Magnus’s body was long and lean and though he looked skinny clothed, out of them he was rippled all over with tight, lean muscle definition. His narrow hips and long legs as he stood with his weight on one foot was something so elegant to look at. His skin was still shimmering with sweat, making it glow golden, and his hair was messy from their activities.

“You’re probably the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen.” Alec was surprised by his own words, not
because they weren’t true, but because he hadn’t been planning on saying it out loud.

Magnus turned and looked at him with a surprised look and then smiled, his ears a bit red.
“Alexander,” he said in a bashful tone. He rolled his eyes and held out his hand. Alec took it and stepped closer, curling his arms around Magnus, looking down at him to take in every line of his face. He leaned down, kissing Magnus tenderly. Magnus grinned against his lips as the kiss broke. “C’mon.”

Alec let Magnus loosely tangle their fingers together and turn, giving him a coy look before stepping into the shower and letting go of Alec’s hand. When Alec followed him, he watched Magnus step directly under the shower, tipping his head back so the water washed over his face and hair. He turned around, pushing his hair back from his face to soak it entirely, and Alec leaned back against the shower wall, just smiling as he watched the water pour over Magnus’s naked body.

“Don’t just stare, Alexander,” Magnus chastised without looking. “Hand me the shampoo.”

Alec grabbed the shampoo and walked over, stepping up behind Magnus. He curled a hand around his middle, kissing the side of his neck as he moved under the stream of water with Magnus. “Can I?” he asked, and Magnus hummed, leaning back against his chest.

“A handsome man washing my hair for me? Go for it.”

Alec couldn’t say he’d ever washed someone’s hair for them before, but it felt oddly nice to be so close together and feel so intimate without it being inherently sexual. It was really strange, because Magnus obviously had a plan for things to become sexual, but for the moment, it was just a different sort of intimate. Magnus moaned softly as Alec massaged the shampoo into his hair, scrubbing to make sure he got all the product out of Magnus’s hair. “Like that?” he asked softly.

“Mmmm, Alexander, you have the strongest hands. I bet you give a hell of a massage,” he teased and Alec smiled, nails scratching some as he scrubbed at the nape of Magnus’s neck, making him shiver.

“Turn around,” Alec directed, and Magnus turned, tipping his head back so Alec could run his fingers through his hair, rinsing the shampoo out. “Now,” he said with a soft chuckle. “Which one of these bottles is conditioner?”

Magnus opened his eyes and grinned up at him. “You’re the cutest,” he said, reaching behind Alec to grab the right bottle. “I’ve got this,” he said and Alec nodded, curling his arms around Magnus’s middle loosely, kissing his neck and across his shoulder sweetly while Magnus conditioned his hair. He trailed his hands over Magnus’s chest and stomach and down his sides, teasingly touching him just enough to make goosebumps cover his skin. “Alexandeeeerrr,” he said in a warning tone, making Alec grin against his shoulder. “You’re distracting me.”

“You distracted me all night in those leather pants, so you don’t get to complain.” He reached down, fingers slowly edging down Magnus’s back to cup his ass in both hands. Magnus gave a light sound of interest as Alec kissed his neck this time and trailed a fingertip between Magnus’s cheeks. Magnus pressed his ass into Alec’s hands, breath stuttering when Alec’s finger pressed against his entrance. “Yeah?” Alec asked, and Magnus nodded, lips parting a bit. Alec slowly pressed his finger into Magnus, just barely passing inside of him, and Magnus’s breath picked up. He pressed his finger deeper, moving in and out, which made Magnus give a soft huff of frustration at only one finger only halfway inside of him. He pulled it back and then pressed back in with two fingers, adding a third when he felt how loose Magnus still was. Magnus made a pleased sound, pressing against his hand as he fucked him slowly with his fingers. He could tell when he found Magnus’s prostate because Magnus jerked, giving up with his hair to grab hold of Alec’s shoulders, bracing himself. He whined
between breaths, meeting Alec’s movements with his own. “Like that?” Alec asked teasingly and Magnus gave a laugh that sounded like a whimper. “Maybe I can do a better job? Make up for being pretty bad earlier,” he suggested, moving his hips so that Magnus could feel how Magnus’s noises were affecting him.

“Let me- let me rinse my hair,” Magnus said, and Alec pulled his fingers out, letting Magnus turn around to step under the water. Alec pressed firmly against his back, sliding a hand down Magnus’s front to reach between his legs. He grabbed Magnus’s length, stroking him until he hardened all the way. “Shit,” Magnus hissed, sticking his head under the stream of water to rinse his hair as fast as he could. Alec just grinned against his skin, stroking him slowly, thumb catching on the head teasingly every few strokes.

“I want to learn how to be good for you,” Alec whispered against his earlobe, tongue flickering against the earring still in Magnus’s ear. “I want to be able to make you come so I can watch how beautiful you are during orgasm again. The other morning, you looked so hot it was like you weren’t even human, you were something far too beautiful to be so mundane.”

Magnus huffed out a laugh. “Keep talking like that and you won’t have a problem making me come at all,” he teased. Once he had his hair rinsed, he turned around and kissed Alec hard, reaching behind him to shut off the water, hand scrabbling too find the knob. Alec reached over and pulled open the curtain, reaching out blindly to find a towel. They both stepped out, trying not to let go of each other as they half-assed drying each other off. Once they weren’t still completely dripping, Magnus shoved Alec towards the door. “Good enough, bed, bed now.”

Alec laughed as they both stumbled over to the bed and fell onto it. Magnus grinned, reaching over to grab another condom while Alec found the bottle of lube with his knee, lying abandoned on the bed. When they came together again, Alec kissed Magnus, rolling them onto their sides. Magnus hitched his leg up over Alec’s hip, grabbing Alec’s hand to guide towards his ass. Alec grabbed the lube, and squirted some on his fingers, moving to press them into Magnus. “Are you okay like this?” he asked, elbow knocking against Magnus’s knee over his hip.

Magnus nodded, kissing him quickly with a moan as Alec pressed his fingers into him. “Yeah. Really, you don’t even have to do that, if you don’t want to. I’m still good,” he said, but Alec shook his head, foreheads bumping together.

“I want to be better, and if you weren’t able to get used to me earlier, you won’t magically be able to take it now without it just hurting again. I want this to be good for you,” Alec said firmly.

Magnus sighed, eyes shutting pleasantly as Alec did a thorough job of fingering him. “Darling, it wasn’t bad before, I just wanted more than I was ready for. It’s not your fault I’m impatient when I’m horny.”

“Doesn’t matter if it wasn’t my fault, I still want to be good for you, whether you want to wait for it or not,” Alec teased. “I’ll remember in the future that making you wait for it isn’t teasing, it’s ensuring you actually can come,” he whispered against his skin.

Magnus pouted. “Aaleeeeec, that’s mean,” he accused. “Besides, unnecessary, I won’t have gone two years with nothing bigger than my fingers in the future, I’ll remember how much prep I need—”

“Yeah, because I make you,” Alec joked, grinning at Magnus’s pout. His grin grew dirtier when he curled his fingers and Magnus jerked, whining at the pleasure. “I’m totally figuring out how to make you feel good,” he said proudly and Magnus just grumbled, trying to chase his fingers when he pulled them out some. “You think you’re good or do I need to keep this up for a while?”
Magnus nodded eagerly. “I’m good. I’m really good.” When Alec’s hand came away from him he rolled off of him, grabbing the condom he’d dropped and coming back. Alec took it from him and rolled it on while Magnus stroked himself slowly, watching Alec with wide eyes.

“Where do you wanna-“

“Just like this,” Magnus said, grabbing a pillow to put under his hips as he lay on his back. “If you let me be on top again, I might forget to pace myself. I’ve been horny for so long I might make this end way too fast,” he admitted with a little shrug.

Alec just grinned. “See? Can’t trust you when you’re horny,” he joked, crawling to kneel between his legs. He slid his hands down Magnus’s inner thighs as he leaned over to kiss him and Magnus shivered, the fine hairs on his inner thighs standing on end under Alec’s touch.

When Alec entered Magnus this time, from his position covering Magnus’s entire body with his own, it felt different than earlier when Magnus was riding him. Not the hot, tight feeling of being inside of Magnus, but it felt like there was more pressure on him to make Magnus feel good. He knew a little better what would be good for Magnus and what wouldn’t now, and he was the one setting the pace, so he felt like this time, he was tasked to give something to Magnus rather than let Magnus give something to him. He knew that it was all mental, since all they did was roll over, pretty much, but earlier they had both been so keyed up and so eager that they just went for it. This time, Magnus was nearly desperate but Alec was more focused and understood better how to move and touch and use his body to give Magnus the pleasure he wanted.

It was a very intense feeling to have someone he felt so much passion and tenderness for falling apart under him.

When Alec found the right angle to make Magnus cry out and arch against him, he did his best to keep that angle every single time, making Magnus lose himself one thrust at a time. Alec was still new to this pleasure, and he started to get close far quicker than he wanted, but this time, Magnus was right there with him. “Fuck, Alexander, if you don’t slow down I won’t last,” he panted, hand moving towards his cock before he seemed to catch himself and put his hand back on Alec’s arm.

Alec kissed him as he slowed just a bit, but the urge to go faster was driving him mad. He had an idea and he took Magnus’s hands in his, pinning Magnus’s hands on either side of his head. He laced their fingers together, looking into Magnus’s eyes to make sure it was okay, but Magnus just moaned, surging up to kiss him. He did his best to find and keep the right angle to drive Magnus crazy, and Magnus whined against his lips, pulling away with a gasp of his name. “Alec!”

Alec kissed his face, missing his lips, and then kissed along his jaw, sloppy, wet kisses as he panted. “Magnus, you- you’re so amazing.”

Magnus panted, whimpering when Alec sucked on the shell of his ear. “Alexander, my Alexander,” he moaned, and that possessive little ‘my’ made Alec groan, fucking him a little harder without even noticing. “Yes, yes you are mine,” Magnus gasped, crying out softly. “You make me feel so good, in so many ways, oh Alexander, yes, right there, please!” he begged, whining softly. “Please, please don’t stop, Alec, please.”

“Never,” Alec swore, gasping against his skin. “I’m yours, I’m all yours,” he breathed. He kissed Magnus, moaning into his mouth as he fucked him harder and faster, sucking on Magnus’s tongue as he did so. When he had to break away to breathe, he panted, looking down at his face, taking in Magnus’s furrowed brow and parted lips. “You look so good,” he breathed, squeezing Magnus’s hands where he held them, hips changing angles just slightly and, with that, Magnus arched his back, crying out.
“Oh God, don’t stop, don’t stop, oh my God I’m gonna come, just like that, Alec, Alec, Alec,” he cried, and Alec watched with wide eyes as Magnus’s body bowed beneath him, head digging into the pillow, and he positively stopped breathing, nails digging into Alec’s hands for one, two, three, four more thrusts and then he let out a loud cry. “ALEXANDER!” he screamed, eyes flying wide as he came, body shuddering beneath Alec, his legs so tight around Alec’s hips as he fucked him.

Alec barely felt Magnus’s shuddering jolts relax before he followed, groaning hoarsely as he fucked into Magnus and held himself there, body jerking as he came. He panted roughly, a mixture of curses and Magnus’s name as his system was flooded with pleasure. “Fuck, Magnus, shit. Oh shit, Magnus.”

When he came down some, he released Magnus’s hands, immediately tangling one of them in Magnus’s hair, tilting his head so he could kiss him sloppily, the other moving to Magnus’s leg around his hips, fingers digging into Magnus’s thigh as he continued slowly rocking into him as he came down. Magnus curled his arms around Alec’s body, hands sweeping over his broad, muscled back as he moaned and whimpered into the kiss.

It was only when they were both too sensitive to keep it up that Alec finally lifted off of him and pulled out, soothing Magnus as he whimpered at the overstimulation. He sat back on his heels with a huff, rubbing a hand over his face, trying to catch his breath as he swayed. Magnus pulled his legs together again, sliding a hand over his thighs, massaging the soreness in his muscles from how tightly they were locked around Alec’s body. “Oh Alexander, the things you do to me,” Magnus groaned, laughing breathlessly as he continued to shiver. He ran a hand into his hair, opening his eyes to look down at Alec. “Oh my God, I’m not sure I’ve ever came that hard,” he laughed weakly. “I thought I was definitely too old to come without even touching my dick. That hardly ever happened even when I was in my early twenties.”

Alec just grinned at him, still panting where he sat. He reached out and patted Magnus’s knee with a weak flop of his hand. “Well, there’s your reminder that you’re still just as young as you look,” he suggested and Magnus laughed again. Alec disposed of the condom – hoping it landed in the trashcan but not really caring if it didn’t – before crawling up to flop beside Magnus, moaning tiredly as he finally let his muscles stop working. “At least I don’t feel bad about not being able to get you off earlier,” he joked and Magnus rolled his head to the side to smile at him.

“Totally worth the second round, there’s no way I could’ve done that the first time,” he laughed. He reached out and curled his hand around Alec’s, lifting it to his lips to kiss Alec’s palm. Alec smiled at him, feeling oddly comfortable in spite of the suspicious fluttering of butterflies in his belly. Here, looking at Magnus’s smile, after what he was pretty sure was really great sex, he felt truly like himself for the first time in a long time.

Naked beside Magnus, both of them still catching their breath, just smiling at one another after exploring the most intimate nature of each other they could and being so open and honest together, Alec, ironically, felt less exposed than he ever had in his life. Magnus was something safe, and something good, and even though he had let Magnus see him at his most vulnerable, he felt entirely confident that that was a good thing, and that he could trust Magnus with every bit of him. He suddenly had the urge to tell Magnus every dream he had ever had and share every fear he had ever felt, because the comfort he felt with Magnus was something he had never felt with another human being.

He had already given Magnus his heart a while back, but as he lay beside him now, he felt like he could give Magnus every piece of his soul and trust him to keep it safe.

And he just knew in his heart that Magnus felt the exact same way.
Magnus was pretty sure he had found nirvana in the form of spending an entire Sunday with Alexander and without any clothes. He could honestly say that when he first met Alec, he thought he was special and hoped he could have something with him, but he never thought it was going to be this wonderful to be with him.

They slept late the morning after the fight, after a night of passion, and spent another hour in bed leisurely exploring each other’s bodies and sharing something more comfortable and less passionate, much like their first time. They pulled themselves out of bed just around lunch time, going only as far as to the living room where they ordered takeout and cuddled up together on the couch, content to watch TV while naked except for the blanket they wrapped around themselves.

Magnus even answered the door and paid the takeout man only wearing the blanket wrapped around himself like a cape, ignoring the way Alec was laughing at him from just beyond the delivery man’s line of sight. They ended up eating lunch on the floor at the coffee table, feeding each other and laughing when they missed and spilled food.

After lunch they curled up together on the couch again with the TV on in the background, but they mostly just talked and enjoyed their care-free time together, making out a little bit between conversation topics shifting. It was probably one of the nicest afternoons Magnus had had in years if he was honest with himself. He had forgotten what it was like to have someone in his home like this. He had never been lonely, really, but having a boyfriend after so long made him realize how much more he could have in his life.

When, later in the afternoon, Alec lay curled against his chest with one of Magnus’s books in his hand and Chairman meow asleep in the middle of his back, Magnus found himself taking in how happy and carefree that moment felt and hoping for the first time possibly in his entire life that he could hold onto this man and keep him forever. Magnus had never met someone that he just knew, deep down, he wanted to spend his life with. He wanted to come home to his cat sleeping on Alec while he read. He wanted to have Alec’s books lying around since he knew Alec loved to read. He wanted to walk into the bedroom and see Alec’s The Institute tee-shirts hanging in the closet, and he wanted to smell Alec cooking in his kitchen, and he wanted to feel this lightness that he felt knowing that even when they didn’t see each other for a few days, Alec was out there in the world somewhere, being Alec.

He didn’t voice any of the thoughts he was having because he didn’t want to scare Alec, but deep down, he really felt like Alec felt the same for him, and it was the best feeling in the world.

Alec cooked them dinner – with what he could find in the kitchen so he settled on eggs in a basket – and afterwards, when Alec tried to wash dishes even though Magnus told him it wasn’t fair to him to cook and clean up, Magnus decided to distract him by blowing him right there in the kitchen while he held onto the countertop to keep himself on his feet.

Alec then dragged Magnus to the couch and demanded he let him learn how to give a blowjob, which was a lot harder than Magnus made it seem, but Alec still succeeded at making Magnus come, so he considered it a good start. Later that night, Magnus decided to keep up the ‘lessons’ and taught Alec a few things he hadn’t even thought about experiencing before involving Magnus’s mouth and his body. Alec also got to learn exactly why the initial pain was worth it when bottoming, because while he had explored his own body before, it definitely wasn’t the same at all.

By the end of the night, as they lay in bed completely wrung out and utterly happy about that, Alec
found himself not wanting to fall asleep because that would mean he had to wake up and go to work in the morning and leave their little bubble of just them. Magnus didn’t seem to be looking forward to letting Alec go either, which only made Alec a little bit giddy.

Magnus traced the line of one of Alec’s tattoos on the arm that was holding Magnus around the waist as they lay face to face, whispering secrets to each other to stave off sleepiness. “I’ve been meaning to ask for a while now, but what’s with these? I saw them on Jace and Lydia when I first came to the gym, and then they were on you, too, but then I realized your mom has them too when I saw her the other night.”

Alec held up his arm, looking at his tattoos. “It’s sort of something my mom’s family came up with. Her dad was a boxer, and I think his dad before that was a warrior of some sort in his tribe, it’s something like that, but basically her grandfather found this book that I think was just made up examples of what ancient symbols looked like, because I remember Jace looking once and none of these are real things, but basically they all mean some word, like a trait or something.” He pointed to the one on his forearm. “Like this one is supposed to be ‘speed’,,” he said with a chuckle. “But the point of them is that we get them when we overcome some obstacle or win a really big fight, and we get them hand-poked the way they did traditionally.”

Magnus looked at the one on Alec’s neck with a horrified look. “Like the one where they have just a pointy stick and stab you repeatedly?!?” he asked, and Alec shrugged.

“Sort of. They use like a stick with a needle and another stick to hit it with to drive it in. My mom got almost all of hers done by actual traditional tattoo artists in Asia, but she found someone here that does them when we started training.” He looked over his arm. “That’s why some of them are sorta faded. They don’t hold color as well as modern tattoos. But that’s also sort of the point. It’s not about decoration as much as meaning.”

Magnus grinned, touching the one on his chest. “I think they’re really cool. I thought they were before now, but that’s even cooler. Although it sounds insanely painful,” he stressed.

Alec nodded. “Yeah, they really do hurt, but we’re fighters. We have to learn to handle pain. Most people who get punched in the face tend to try and avoid that ever again, but we welcome it repeatedly, so you develop a really high pain tolerance, and the tattooing is sort of a nod to that.” He curled his arm back around Magnus, kissing his nose playfully. “Actually, Izzy has one, too.”

Magnus pulled back, narrowing his eyes. “Where the hell does she have a tattoo? I’ve seen a lot of her body in various outfits and costumes before. Basically everything that isn’t nudity.”

Alec grinned, nodding. “Yeah, and it’s almost there. She has one right above her vagina. Unless she’s in a really low-cut bikini, any pants she wears covers it up because otherwise they would fall off. If you’ve ever noticed, she tends to favor higher-waisted bottoms anyways, just because of her hips, so unless she’s walking around the house in just a tee-shirt and panties, you just can’t see it.”

“Wow, that sounds painful, too,” Magnus said, putting a hand on his lower stomach. “Why on earth did she get one?”

Alec remembered asking her the same thing and felt a surge of pride towards his sister when he told Magnus. “When she decided to tell mom she didn’t want to be a fighter and wanted to be a dancer.” He grinned. “And before you ask, yes, she was underage. Technically it’s illegal, but the woman that does our tattoos only breaks the law for my mom because she knows the story behind it all. I got my first tattoo when I was fifteen and started training other fighters. Isabelle was seventeen when she got hers because until then, she hadn’t really told Mom she was never going to be a fighter, I think Mom thought she’d grow out of dancing since she still trained with me and Jace, but then Isabelle told her
and the next day Jace and I went with her to talk to our tattoo artist about her getting one.” He grinned. “Hers means ‘Defiance’. Which is fitting.”

Magnus reached out and traced the one on Alec’s neck, his biggest tattoo. “What does this mean?” he asked and Alec’s insides tightened for a moment at the memory of having to lie about why he wanted it. He still didn’t regret it, even though his life had changed so much since then, because it served as a reminder of that time in his life and the obstacle that he overcame by getting to where he was now, lying in bed with his boyfriend.

Alec took a breath and let out a small sigh. “It means ‘Deflect’. The story I told her when I asked for it was that I was struggling to block punches and thought that having it would make me feel more capable mentally.”

Magnus looked at him with a little frown, touching his tattoo gently. “And what’s the real story?”

Alec slid down some, curling himself so that he could tuck his head under Magnus’s chin, hugging him closer. “I wanted so desperately to not be gay,” he admitted quietly. “I was so angry at everything because I was a good fighter, I was better than anybody I trained and I knew it, and I was a good brother and a good son, and even if I wasn’t outspoken about how good I knew I was, I was just really proud of myself privately, except for the fact that in spite of all of that, I still couldn’t like girls. I tried so hard to want to go out with the girls my mom introduced me to. I tried so much to feel something when I kissed them. I just hated having this huge flaw. Fighters just can’t be gay. No promoter would touch me and I knew that and I was so afraid of what my mom would do or say if she knew, so I hoped that the whole ‘mentally capable’ thing would happen if I got the Deflect tattoo but for my own sexuality. I hoped I could block the way I looked at men. I hoped I could deflect the desire for men. I was so full of self-hatred because of such a huge character flaw.” He closed his eyes, letting Magnus holding him comfort him.

What he never expected, however, as Magnus stroked his hair soothingly, was for Magnus to ask, “Do you still feel self-hatred because of your sexuality?”

Alec smiled against Magnus’s skin and shook his head. “Not at all. When I did come out to my mom and my family and decided that facing their judgement would be better than continuing to hold such a big secret, their acceptance helped lift so much of that guilt and self-hatred off my shoulders. My mother does not like it. At all,” he said bluntly. “She is not okay with me being gay and she doesn’t want to think about it, but she didn’t push me away. She still loves me even if she doesn’t embrace that part of me. She still lets me train and she still pushes me to be a better fighter, and with everybody else embracing me and encouraging me to be who I am, it’s still so much better.” He squeezed Magnus around the middle some. “Besides, if I hated myself for being gay, I would be having some serious mental breakdowns over the past few days with you,” he teased and Magnus chuckled.

“I’m happy you don’t hate yourself anymore,” Magnus whispered. “Because that would break my heart. You’re so amazing. The thought of you not realizing that would kill me.”

Alec turned his head and kissed Magnus’s chest under his lips. “Nothing that feels this right could ever be wrong, and I’m so happy I overcame my self-hatred before I met you, because I could’ve missed out on this, and this might be the best thing that ever happened to me.”

Magnus didn’t say anything back, but the way he held Alec told him all he needed to know about how Magnus felt about that declaration. And as they lost their battle to sleep, Alec drifted off in the arms of the most amazing person he had ever met. That said all that mattered about how far Alec had come in learning to love himself and open his heart to loving someone else.
Alec was sore in places he didn’t even know he had muscles, which was an impressive feat for a fighter, by the time he got to work Monday morning. He walked into the office with his bag after he changed in the locker room and flopped face first onto the couch, making Jace and Lydia both stop their conversation behind the desk to look at him.

“Well look who is still alive even if he didn’t contact anybody at all for the past thirty-six hours,” Jace said in a teasing tone. “Are you hungover?” he asked and Alec shook his head, turning his face from the couch cushion to look over at Jace and Lydia. “Then why are you dead on my couch?” Jace asked.

Alec smirked. “Because when a dancer and a fighter have sex, it apparently utilizes muscles that were previously undiscovered, and having sex too many times to count in that thirty-six hour period you mentioned definitely takes its toll on a body.”

Lydia snickered at the way Jace scrunched up his face. “Damn, Alec, go you,” she cheered jokingly. “I didn’t even know you were with him this weekend. I thought Saturday’s fight had taken up your weekend.”

Jace huffed. “Yeah, so much concern for me. You didn’t even help me out the day after a fight like usual,” he accused.

Alec shrugged. “The doctor said you didn’t have a concussion and Isabelle can bring you ice while you lay on the couch.” He giggled some. “I love you, Bro, but I put up with you all through cut day and fight day, even if it meant ignoring Magnus for two full days immediately after the first time I spent the night with him. After the post-fight stuff was finished, I deserved some time off to spend with my boyfriend and without any clothes at all. I mean none.” He couldn’t stop laughing at how incredible his weekend had been and how crazy it sounded now. “We got naked the minute we got to his place Saturday night and I didn’t put so much as a sock on again until this morning when I left. I have a new record for nudity.”

Lydia mock sighed, shaking her head slowly. “Poor Magnus. Having to be blinded by your white ass for so long.” She slapped a hand on the desktop before standing. “Anyways. Now that you’re here, your mom can finally talk to you.”

Alec lost his joking demeanor and he sat up quickly. “Wait, what? Why is Mom here?” he asked in surprise.

Jace shrugged. “She wouldn’t talk to me about it before she saw you,” he said, absently poking at the swelling under his black eye. “Maybe she’s selling your pale skin as ad space for promoters,” he suggested and Alec gave him a flat look.

“Yes, that’s definitely it, how did I not guess it?” Alec asked before standing up, wincing at the weird twinge in his abs. He rubbed his stomach. “Dude, my abs hurt. How do my abs hurt. I work those all the time in training.”

Jace just wiggled his eyebrows. “Your deprived body just doesn’t know how to do sex yet. Now go talk to Mom with that thought in your head,” he teased making Alec flip him off as he left the office to go find their mother.

Magnus breezed into the studio with a skip to his step, bouncing past Raphael to the office. He
dropped his bag and came back out, heading over to the stereo where, to his surprise, Simon was curled up in the corner, on the floor, wrapped in a big hoodie with the hood pulled over his head. “Why is there a dead boy beside my stereo?” he asked out loud, then turned around. “Raphael, did you kill your underage boyfriend and stash his body here, because that’s not cool, man.”

Raphael rolled his eyes from where he lay on the floor, stretching. “No, my not underage boyfriend spent all night with Isabelle and Clary drinking and partying and Isabelle brought him to work with her.”

Simon moaned weakly beside Magnus’s leg, falling over with a flump. “I’m too young to drink. Why did I do it? This is why that law exists,” he whispered miserably.

Magnus snorted. “You’re too cute, Sherbert,” he teased. “I wish I could sympathize, but the only reason I’m sore in muscles I had forgotten existed is because I spent two nights and a day making wild, passionate love to a man who is even more athletic than I am.”

Simon made a whimpery sound. “Sounds fun. Wish I’d decided to do that instead of drink so much. Also Alec is really hot—”

“Hey no,” Magnus chastised. “My boyfriend, you little shit. Fuck your own monstrosity over there.”

Raphael made a derisive noise from where he was stretching. “Not when he doesn’t come home or call to tell me he’s even alive until my coworker brings him to work with her,” he said and Simon made a pathetic whimper from his corner.

Magnus just grinned. “Oooh, drama. Are you guys gonna fight? I haven’t been watching as much reality TV lately so feel free as long as you’re done yelling before the first class starts.” He put on some music and went to stretch with Raphael. “Speaking of first class, where’s Isabelle?”

Raphael shrugged. “She had to run next door. Her brother called her. Something about their mother having big news for Alec.”

“Ooohh, I can’t wait to hear what it is later,” Magnus said, trying to imagine what might pull Isabelle away. “Hopefully she hasn’t arranged a marriage for him or anything,” he joked.

~

Alec sat against the table with a huff of surprise, eyes wide. He couldn’t even “But I haven’t- I haven’t done anything but train fighters in the past year.”

Maryse nodded with a small smile. “Yes, but they have a really great card, and it’s a title fight, Alec. This is an amazing score for you.”

Alec smiled slowly. “But why would they want me for a title match? I haven’t shown anybody what I can do in a year.” He put his hands in his hair. “This is-“

“It’s amazing!” Isabelle gushed, rushing past Maryse to hug Alec. He hugged her tight, pressing his face into her hair. “Alec, this is a shot to get back into it in a big way.”

Alec nodded, smiling down at her. “I know!” He turned to his mom. “How did you even get this for me? How did their card fall apart that badly? And at the Barclays center?!” he asked, arm still around Isabelle’s shoulders.

Maryse shook her head with a smile. “Their Middleweight up against the current champion was in a car accident. Concussion protocol has him out until after the fight.”
Alec’s smile fell slightly. “Concussion protocol is forty-five days,” he said hesitantly. She glanced away and his smile completely fell. “When is the fight?”

Maryse took a slow breath and he felt his heart stop even before she spoke. He knew her mannerisms. “It’s in four and a half weeks—”

Isabelle was the one who jumped, even before Alec could. “Four and a half weeks?! Mom!” she cried in shock. “He hasn’t been training himself, he’s been training other people! There is no way he can be ready for a title fight in less than six weeks!”

Maryse held up her hands. “Hold on,” she said sternly. “We can get this done. Hodge and Lydia can work exclusively with Alec. It’s our gym so he gets priority on everything, no questions asked. If he starts today, this is doable. Alec has the most discipline of any fighter we have—”

“And the least practice,” Alec said hollowly. “Mom you chose to prioritize Jace and I was okay with that, but why did you accept a title fight for me only four and a half weeks out after prioritizing Jace? You had to see that this would be bad. If I lose a title fight in my first fight in a year—”

Isabelle interrupted, crossing her arms as she glared at her mother. “It will still be promotion for the gym. That’s what this really is about, isn’t it? Having one of your fighters in a title fight at the Barclays center looks good for the gym, win or lose.”

Alec put a hand on Isabelle’s shoulder, shaking his head with a sigh. “It doesn’t matter now.” He looked at his mom for a long time, trying to understand her point of view, but honestly, he knew that, once again, he was her golden ticket and she was cashing in. He didn’t doubt his mother loved him, but he had long become used to her using him all the same. “What’s done is done. If I’ve only got four and a half weeks, I’ve got to start training immediately, so the longer we argue the less hours I can log in.”

Isabelle glared at their mother but turned to look up at Alec, hand on his shoulder. “Just don’t overdo yourself. You know the rules. No more than six hours per day no matter what. Do ruin your future just for one fight, Alec.”

Alec nodded, smiling tightly. “I won’t.” He pulled her into a hug, kissing her hair. “Do me a favor and let Magnus know I can’t meet him for lunch?” he asked.

She laughed, rolling her eyes as she looked up at him. “Oh my God, you just spent a whole weekend with him and you were going to go get lunch together, too? Man, if you’re that set into the honeymoon phase, he’s not gonna be happy with your training, that’s for sure,” she teased.

After Isabelle left, Alec turned to leave and go get dressed, but Maryse stopped him. “Alec.” He turned around and she nodded at the door. “Speaking of that,” she started and he steeled himself against whatever horrible thing she was about to say to him. “That man.” She gave him a long look that made him squirm. “With this fight coming up, you won’t be able to spend much time with him anyways. Maybe, just to make sure nobody finds out about you, you should call things off.”

It wasn’t a surprise for her to suggest it, but Alec wasn’t any less pissed. “I’ve managed to not be found out for twenty-four years, I think I’ll be okay for four and a half more weeks,” he said coldly.

He went to change feeling like he could use some training about now.

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The slamming door made Magnus jump and he heard Simon whimpering in the corner, so he must’ve moved as well. Magnus turned around and was surprised to see Isabelle stalking in with the
angriest look on her face. “Wow, what has ruined your day?” he asked and she laughed harshly as
she stormed past, going to kick her shoes off in the corner with force. “Hey! Don’t dent my wall just
because something happened.”

“I thought you were going over for good news?” Raphael asked her.

She scoffed, walking over to where they were stretching and joined them. “My mother surprised
Alec with news that she’s landed him a major fight that’s a title shot.”

Magnus perked up, heart picking up a beat. “That’s great! Alexander hasn’t had a fight in a long
time—”

“And it’s in four and a half weeks,” she finished harshly. “Six weeks is the usual minimum to
condition for a regular fight, and that’s if you have been fighting steadily. He’s taken the last year off
and it’s a title fight, so they’re more rounds and more damage to the body.”

Her words made Magnus still, looking at her curiously. “Wait… He can do this, right? I know him,
he won’t turn down a fight like that, but he’s not going to hurt himself in the process is he?” he asked
worriedly. He had known Alec long enough to know full well how hardworking Alec was and how
much he pushed himself on a regular training day where he was working with a fighter. He could
only imagine how hard Alec pushed himself when he was the fighter that was in training.

She huffed. “He promised he’d stick to no more than six hours per day, because at the gym there’s a
rule for fighters so they don’t injure themselves, but he has a key and can sneak in if nobody stops
him, so I don’t know if I trust him.”

“Six hours per day?” Magnus asked in surprise. “Jace didn’t train that much for his fight!”

She nodded. “Yeah, but Jace was training for two months, not half that,” she said angrily. “Mom
knows Alec will do anything for her, she knows that he would fucking learn to be a cab driver if she
asked him to do it. He’s the golden child who would never disobey her or do anything to harm the
family image, and she is abusing that.” She groaned in frustration, putting her face in her hands. “It’s
an amazing opportunity for him, it really is, and if this works out, it will be major for his career in the
future.” She looked up, shaking her head. “But it could go so badly wrong. For him. If he loses
terribly, The Institute still had the press of a fighter up for a championship run, and it draws attention
to Lydia and Jace and some of the other fighters, even if it ruins his image and makes it look like this
break has been because he couldn’t cut it and the loss would prove he’s just a has-been who went
out before his time.”

It worried Magnus a lot to think of how big of a deal this was for Alec and how little control Alec
even had over the outcome. It was his life and his mother was really the one calling the shots. If she
said jump, Alec asked how high, and this time she might have set him up to jump in front of an
oncoming bus. Alec was so young, and Magnus knew how much Alec loved what he did, even if it
was the inevitable outcome given his upbringing and Alec’s personality. He didn’t want to see
Alec’s career in the toilet so early in his life, especially after Alec had told him he still had a decade
before his probable peak. Magnus looked at Isabelle worriedly. “How did he take it?”

She shrugged. “He seemed frustrated but not that upset. I guess he’s just aware of the fact that what’s
done is done and he’d just be wasting time and energy arguing with her that could be used to train.”
She reached out, tapping Magnus on the arm lightly. “He said to tell you he’s sorry for having to
cancel lunch.”

Magnus waved a hand. “News like this, I wouldn’t expect him to take off to eat lunch with me
anyways.”
Isabelle gave him an uncomfortable smile, looking a little uneasy. “Things probably won’t be the best with you guys pretty soon. I’m not saying it’ll be his fault, but with this much pressure on him to get in shape and ready so fast… it’s gonna be rough. Living with Jace when he’s training is bad enough, but Alec doesn’t whine like Jace does. He just gets harsh and serious and stops doing anything for fun. He sorta becomes a machine.” She shook her head. “It doesn’t mean he cares about you any less if he stops talking to you as often or coming over as much. He just gets really focused when he’s got a fight, and this is extreme.”

“Well,” Magnus said with a sigh. “I don’t look forward to having my boyfriend so removed, but it’ll be okay.” He smiled sadly. “I knew I was getting into this with a very unique man. I just hope he believes me when I tell him it’s okay, unlike all the times he kept apologizing for not being ready to have sex yet.” He chuckled. “He really has a hard time accepting that he isn’t letting anybody down.”

Isabelle winced. “Yeah, on the sex front, if you haven’t had the conversation in passing at some point, you should probably be warned that fighters don’t have sex while they’re training for a fight. It’s an old superstition about lowering testosterone that isn’t actually backed up by science, but fighters live by it a lot of the times.”

Raphael barked out a laugh when he saw the look of surprise on Magnus’s face, but he couldn’t help it. “Wow, no, I have not had that conversation, but what the hell?” he asked, making a face. “How did that myth even get started? Did some guy perform poorly in bed and lose his confidence and lose a fight and then blame it on the bad sex?” he asked incredulously. He sighed heavily, already mourning the fantasies of repeats of yesterday’s Sexy Sunday the following Sunday. “Well shit. There goes my weekend plans.” He grumbled. “It’s a good thing I care more about Alexander than I do about sex, because that, my dear, is sorta shitty.” He shook his head. “Do all fighters really go six to eight weeks without sex? Even ones in relationships?” he asked.

She laughed at his face but nodded. “I mean some don’t, some only go the last two weeks before a fight, and I’m sure some just lie to their coach about not having sex, but it’s just one of the many reasons a lot of fighters struggle with relationships. Girls don’t want a hot guy they can’t have sex with.”

“It’s especially tragic when it’s Alec, because he’s like crazy hot,” Simon called from the corner and Raphael gave a glare that way.

“Maybe you should date him, then! He’ll be too busy to care that you stay out all night and do not bother calling to reassure him you aren’t lying in a gutter somewhere dead,” Raphael called back. Simon just made a miserable sound. “Magnus, at least you won’t be the only one not getting any for the next month. I’ll be lucky if he lets me sleep in our bed after fucking up this bad.”

The others could see the amused grin on Raphael’s lips that he couldn’t stifle even if Simon couldn’t. “You are lucky I love you, Querido, or else even the couch would not be on offer after worrying me like that.” He lowered his voice, looking at Isabelle with a surprisingly serious look. “But really, I thought he was missing, I called his mother worried and we were going to call the police if he didn’t turn up this morning. It was pretty shitty of you to not call me and tell me he was passed out drunk with you and Clary, Lightwood,” he muttered.

She nodded, looking guilty. “I know, I’m sorry. I was pretty drunk, too, so I went to bed without even thinking about it. Clary is still at my place sleeping it off, but Simon insisted he come with me to see you.” She shook her head, voice dropping to a whisper. “And I promise, we were with him the whole time we were at that club. He never even had the opportunity to cheat on you when he was too drunk to know what he was doing.”
Raphael shook his head quickly. “That was not even a thought of mine. The only way he would ‘cheat’ on me when he was too drunk to know what he was doing would be if someone noticed he was too drunk to notice what he was doing and preyed upon him when he could not stop them, and in that case it would not be Simon I was angry at. I would put your family of fighters to shame when I was finished with any monster that hurt him that way.”

Isabelle’s jaw clenched at the thought. “Oh don’t worry. It may not be my career, but I could make sure anybody who dared try to hurt Simon paid for it dearly. He was safe the whole time, he and Clary both.” She grinned. “Although, if I were you, I might would worry about his weird obsession with my brother lately. It’s pretty out of nowhere.”

“I heard mention of Isabelle’s magical gay big brother,” Simon called. “He’s hot. And tall. I like tall. I’ve never made out with somebody taller than me. Rafa, can I make out with Magnus’s boyfriend?”

Raphael sighed heavily. “No, Simon, you cannot make out with Magnus’s boyfriend.”

Magnus chuckled, shaking his head at the resigned look on Raphael’s face. “So this is why you never bothered bringing him around and telling us you had a boyfriend for all that time. He’s a total weirdo.” He smiled suddenly. “He’s right about my boyfriend being really hot though. And tall. All muscly and tall. It’s really nice.” He nudged Raphael. “And Simon is stuck with your little ass.”

“Actually his ass is really big if you never noticed,” Simon called. “Raphael’s got the best ass. It’s all round and perky. I like it when he wears sweatpants cause his ass is so nice.”

Raphael groaned. “Simon, go to sleep. You’re being very annoying right now.”

“Is he still drunk?” Magnus asked Isabelle. “He sounds somehow both drunk and hungover at the same time.”

She grinned. “Might be, honestly.”

Magnus sighed, laying down on the floor. “I just really hope Alexander doesn’t drive himself crazy doing this. He’s too young to burn himself out.”

Isabelle nodded. “I’m pretty worried about it, too.”

~

After pushing himself all day the first day and finding out just how out of shape he really was, Alec decided that he should probably talk with Magnus about everything. He didn’t want to dump all of this on Magnus without talking about it first. He did not want to break up with him like his mom had suggested, but he also knew that Magnus at least deserved to know what was coming for them in the next month and a half.

When he got to the studio after leaving the gym, he was already getting sore from the day’s training, but he was adamant that he needed to make things clear with Magnus. Magnus was the last one at the studio when he got there, so the door was locked, but he knocked anyways.

Magnus saw him and smiled, jogging over to open the door for him. “Hey, I didn’t expect to see you,” he said, greeting him with a quick smile. He let Alec in and skipped back over to where he had been sweeping the floor. “What’s up? How did training go? Isabelle told me about your fight.”

Alec nodded, wincing some as he walked over to lean against the wall. “It’s going okay. I actually wanted to see if you wanted to maybe go out tonight?” he asked. “Things are going to be pretty hectic now but I’d really like to go out on a date, talk about things, and just have at least one more
night of normalcy before all this goes crazy in my life,” he said earnestly, deciding not to try and hold back on his worries in the least.

Magnus looked up with a smile of surprise, but nodded. “Yeah. Okay.” He looked at the broom. “Just let me finish up here and change into normal clothes and we can go do whatever you want.”

After Magnus finished cleaning up and changing, he and Alec headed out, going to Alec’s favorite sandwich shop three blocks from the gym. “It’s the last time I get to eat bread for a month,” Alec had explained and Magnus just laughed at how sad he looked about that.

“Isabelle told me how fast-tracked this all is,” Magnus said sympathetically. “Are you going to be okay? I can’t imagine how hard this is all going to be on you.”

Alec shook his head, smiling sadly. “I’ll manage. I’m not the first fighter to do this. I won’t be the last.” He looked at his last bite of sandwich. “This is always the worst part. Giving up my favorite foods.” He ate that last bite with his eyes shut and a soft sigh as he chewed. Magnus just laughed at the blissed expression on his face. Alec sipped his soda and then looked at the rest of the cup with a sad look. “No more soda either.”

“Soda’s bad for you anyways,” Magnus said with a shrug. “I think you should probably have a drink, too. No more booze. A little wine before your dry-spell would do you good.”

Alec made a face. “I’m not much of a drinker, but if that’s your way of inviting me over for a drink, I wouldn’t say no,” he teased.

Magnus looked at him with a warm smile. “Wanna come stay the night? I know you probably won’t again until after the fight.”

“Yeah, we still haven’t really talked,” Alec said, sighing. “It just sucks this got dumped on me now, when I was finally free from focusing on Jace and had some time to focus on you.”

Magnus waved a hand. “It’s alright, Alec. This is a big opportunity for you. I wouldn’t want you to pick spending more time with me over your career. I’d be a pretty shitty boyfriend if I wanted you to put me first. A good boyfriend supports you, a good boyfriend doesn’t stand in your way.”

“Well,” Alec said, reaching over to grab his hand. “You’re kind of an amazing boyfriend, and I’m really glad you’re mine,” he said with a sweet little grin that made Magnus’s insides glow with warmth. Alec was just the cutest thing sometimes.

They got up to throw away their trash and Alec winced as he did so. “I really hope your ‘stay the night’ offer wasn’t expecting a repeat of the other night, because I am so sore and growing more so by the minute. I couldn’t carry you to bed right now if I tried,” he joked and Magnus just grabbed his hand, tugging him closer to kiss his jaw.

“It’s okay. I know what it’s like to be find yourself unexpectedly out of shape.” He winked. “You know, being a dance teacher, I’m pretty good at massaging the tension out of muscles. Even if you can’t throw me in bed and have your way with me, I can still get my hands all over your naked body,” he purred, tangling their fingers together.

He loved the fact that Alec still blushed some when he flirted with him like that, even after their sex-a-thon over the weekend. “I’m open to a massage,” Alec mumbled bashfully and Magnus smiled, leaning his head on Alec’s shoulder as they started walking.
After a glass of wine each and the scent of a spicy yet floral massage oil filling the air, Alec was pretty sure he was going to melt into Magnus’s bed. Magnus sat on his thighs, massaging his back after doing his arms and legs first, and Alec was sooo relaxed. He wasn’t even sleepy as much as he felt like he’d turned to liquid. “I think I’m a bowl of Jell-O in a man suit,” he mumbled and Magnus laughed hard enough to make the bed bounce. “Shhhh, don’t laugh at me.”

Magnus leaned over, kissing the back of Alec’s neck, his bare chest resting against Alec’s back. “You’re the cutest thing in the world, Alexander.” Magnus rubbed his hands along Alec’s biceps as he kissed his shoulder. “Things aren’t going to be easy for us soon and I hate that, but things like that. It reminds me that you’re too adorable to get mad at.”

Alec sighed heavily, turning his head to kiss Magnus’s cheek. Magnus shifted down some, laying more fully on top of Alec, just half-way hugging him as he rested his cheek on Alec’s bare shoulder. “We won’t be able to see each other very much. We can’t have sex. I’ll be too tired to spend the night. I won’t have time to come just hang out and watch TV because of how long it takes to get here and get back making it not really worth the trip. I can’t cook for you because I can’t eat the things I cook. I’ll try and make time to call you and text you more but it’s going to be hard. If I was training on a normal schedule I could still go out on dates that aren’t food-related and come see you, but I’m on such a fast-tracked schedule it makes all of this so much harder.”

Magnus nodded, rubbing a hand down his side. “It’s worth it, though,” he murmured. “I understand and once this fight is over is, hopefully you won’t be blindsided like this again. From the way Isabelle talks, if you were training normally for a fight, things wouldn’t be that much worse than when you were focused on Jace, right? I can handle this month, Alec. I’m a big boy, I understand you have a hard road ahead of you. It would be shitty of me to get angry when I chose a fighter.”

Alec chuckled. “You say all of this now, but I know how I get in a normal training schedule.” He pulled his hand from under the pillow and found Magnus’s hand, curling their fingers together. It hurt down in the pit of his stomach to even consider what he was about to say, but he knew it was only fair. “Magnus, if you can’t handle this, I won’t blame you. If you want to just call things off and see how it is after the fight, I will understand. I don’t know if I could ever date a fighter, so I do get it-“

“Shhhhh,” Magnus shushed him. He kissed Alec’s shoulder and Alec relaxed some instinctively. “There is nothing to be gained from going on a ‘break’ for a month. I would still be not having sex, I would still be worrying about your training, I would still be just as happy for you, and I would still have every feeling I have for you. All it would mean is that what little interaction we may have would be gone too.”

Alec smiled. “It just doesn’t seem fair to you-“

“Which is the same thing you said when you weren’t ready to have sex yet, Alec,” Magnus stressed. “I chose you. I want you, so I chose you. I didn’t have to choose to get involved with a virgin, I didn’t have to choose to get involved with an MMA fighter. But I did. And it’s my choices that got me here. You shouldn’t have to change for me. I’m not changing for you,” he said bluntly. “Not a bit of who I am has changed for you, and you still like me just how I am, don’t you?”

Alec nodded even though, deep down, his heart clenched at the word ‘like’. He knew it was more than that by now. “I wouldn’t want you to change for anything.”

Magnus nodded, patting his shoulder. “And I don’t what you to change, Alexander. Every part of you makes you the man I chose to be with. This is a bump in the road, but I’m sure it won’t be the hardest thing that we ever face as a couple. Not if this is a long-term thing like I want it to be.”
It was almost enough to make him come to tears – something he hadn’t done in years – to have Magnus imply that he wanted this to be more than just what it was now. Alec wanted the same thing. He wanted a future with Magnus. He could see himself being with Magnus for a lot longer than the few months they had been together and he wanted that so badly. “I want you with me through everything, Magnus. You know that. I just- I just have a bad feeling is all.”

Magnus laughed against his neck and then kissed it with a smack, sliding off of Alec to lay beside him, shoving Alec’s arm up so he could wiggle under it, cuddling into his side. “Yeah, well, I’d have a bad feeling, too, if I was about to start a six hour a day, seven day’s a week training regimen that barred me from having sex and sugar. I’d have a pretty terrible feeling,” he teased and Alec laughed, pressing his lips to Magnus’s.

“Yeah, that’s probably it,” Alec said, cuddling Magnus close. “I’m going to miss this more than the sex,” he admitted. “Just being with you.”

Magnus petted his hair, smiling sadly. “Yeah, I know. But it’ll be okay. I’m sure of it.”

Alec knew deep down that Magnus would regret those words sooner or later, but looking back, he could have never known exactly how fast it was going to happen.

~

Not talking to Alec really got depressing fast, Magnus realized. He hadn’t noticed how much time he spent either with Alec during lunch or in passing and how much time he spent talking to him on the phone or texting him. For the whole first week, all he managed was to send Alec a goodnight message and wake up to a good morning message from him. Alec was up at six every morning, ran to the gym, and trained with either Jace or Lydia on and off between breaks where he oversaw the gym and did paperwork in the office for the entire day. He was restricted to six hours working out or sparring, but he didn’t leave the gym until after Magnus had closed up the studio and went home.

Magnus hadn’t realized that ‘we won’t see each other much’ meant not seeing each other at all and not having a single conversation. It was what Alec had warned him about, and he did understand, but it was still a serious letdown. He really missed him. He missed seeing Alec and talking to Alec and just being with Alec.

And he didn’t shy away from complaining either. “Good morning, Raphael. How lovely a day it must be since you drove your boyfriend to class this morning,” he said sarcastically as he cleaned the mirror, watching Raphael cross the room with his keys and his bag behind him. “Sure must be nice. Getting to sit in traffic with the man you just slept the whole night beside. I bet you even got to yell at him for leaving his socks on the floor.”

Raphael seemed entirely unsympathetic. “Yep, and he kicked in his sleep last night because he didn’t listen when I warned him not to watch a scary movie before bed. He also has a cold so he sneezed on me. Twice.”

Isabelle just cooed from where she was stretching. “Awww, I bet Simon is adorable when he’s miserable. He looks like a puppy always, I bet it’s even worse when he’s sick.”

“There is nothing adorable about my boyfriend,” Raphael said with a dry laugh. “He’s an annoying little shit when he is ill. He becomes a four year old. I always threaten to give him back to his mother when he’s ill. She just suggested I give him too much cough syrup so he falls asleep.”

Magnus just sighed. “I miss Alec,” he mumbled. “I know I signed up for this, and I know I knew it was coming, but it still sucks. I knew it would suck. But that doesn’t make it suck less. I’d be happy
just sleeping beside him. Even if he doesn’t have time to talk to me, I’d just be happy getting to be next to him.”

Isabelle hummed. “Maybe you should come stay at our place some night. You could get up and go running with him in the morning,” she suggested. “I know it’s not much, but he would probably relax some if you were there. He’s been really, incredibly uptight and it’s only been a week,” she said. “Alec’s not usually a nightmare during training but he and Jace were fighting yesterday. I think Alec’s been sneaking extra hours already and Jace caught him. But they’re both being pretty cold towards each other.”

“Hmmm.” Magnus brightened up a bit. “You know, he might enjoy the surprise.”

Isabelle nodded. “Totally. He always smiles more when he’s been with you,” she said, and he grinned, shaking his head.

“I smile more when I’ve been with him, too,” he said, deciding that yes, definitely, he would go spend the night with Alec. Getting up at six AM to go running sounded worth it if it meant even twenty minutes with his boyfriend after a whole week with barely even a word.

~

Magnus had never been to Isabelle, Jace, and Alec’s apartment, and while he knew that they came from money, he was still somewhat floored by how ultra-modern, sleek, and clean everything was. “Jesus, it’s like you live in a magazine,” he said as Isabelle let them in. “This is insane.”

She just shrugged. “We hired a decorator. None of us could agree on anything. Jace wanted ‘man cave’ looking, Alec wanted boring and drab, and I wanted colorful and glittery, so the compromise was a decorator that picked something we could all live with.”

The walls were a dark blue-gray color, the floors were a very dark wood, and most of the tables and decorative things were glass or metal. The furniture was black leather everything, and the light fixtures were white and shaped like something from a science fiction novel. There was art on the walls in places, flowers in vases on totally arbitrary tables in places, and it looked like most of the knickknacks on book shelves and the like were definitely not something that once served a purpose but rather had been gathered just for decoration.

It was also massive.

Their living room was giant, the kitchen had expensive appliances and a lot of space, they even had a dining room that opened out to their balcony. Add that Magnus knew they had a guest room for when their little brother came to visit them, and he was pretty sure it was the biggest apartment he’d ever been in.

Since it would be a while before Jace and Alec got home, Isabelle got out her nail polishes and they sat together on the couch, painting each other’s nails while they waited. When the door did open, Magnus was painting Isabelle’s toes so he didn’t dare look away yet. “Izzy, you home?” Jace called.

“In here,” she replied. Magnus heart footsteps coming and finished Isabelle’s toe just in time to turn and smile for Jace.

Jace raised an eyebrow. “Well now. Magnus Bane. What’re you doing here?”

“Magnus? What?” Alec came in from the hall, only to blink when he saw Magnus and Isabelle on the couch. “What’re you doing here?” he asked, and Magnus shrugged.
“Painting your sister’s toes,” he said, then held up his hand. “She did my nails, see?”

Jace walked over, slapping Magnus on the arm. “Hey, dude. I saw you at my fight the other week. What’d you think?” He flopped down beside Isabelle, slinging an arm around her shoulders.

Magnus grinned. “I was impressed. I didn’t know how I would handle a fight since I hate violence, but it was actually really fun. Such a thrill watching your friends’ brother beat the shit out of some dude.”

Jace smirked. “It was a good fight, that’s for sure.”

Alec seemed to finally snap out of his surprise and he finally walked over. “Hey,” he said with a small smile, leaning down to kiss Magnus hello. He sat on the edge of the couch beside Magnus’s hip, hanging onto the back of it for balance. “It’s great to see you.”

Magnus smiled and leaned against him. “Good to see you, too, Alexander.” His smile softened when Alec closed his eyes and curled his free arm around Magnus, pressing into him with a soft sigh. Magnus just curled a hand around his wrist, stroking it comfortingly. “Hi,” he whispered and Alec mumbled against his neck.

“I really hate to interrupt, but Alec, you gotta eat,” Jace reminded him and Magnus looked over just in time to see Isabelle slap Jace in the stomach with a glare.

Alec nodded, however, and stood up, hand trailing long Magnus’s side. “Come with me?” he asked, and Magnus nodded, hopping up to follow Alec to the kitchen. Alec went to open the refrigerator and pulled out a Tupperware container. Magnus gave him a curious look, hopping up on the counter, and Alec went to pop the container in the microwave. “I have to eat seven meals a day. And then first thing in the morning and last thing before bed I have to drink either water with protein powder or milk with protein powder.”

Magnus cringed. “How do you keep all that down?” he asked, and Alec shrugged. “As crazy as it sounds, it’s making me lose weight. I’m already down five the first week.” He pulled his shirt up and tightened his abs, presumably showing how much body fat he had cut.

“Well now,” Magnus said, winking. “Go around flashing those abs at people and a boy might get ideas,” he joked, making Alec smile tiredly. Magnus leaned against the cabinet. “Are you doing okay? Isabelle says you’re cheating on your workout limit,” he accused and Alec made a face.

“Only a little, I just really need to get in shape,” he stressed.

Magnus sighed. “Alec, you’re going to hurt yourself. Darling, please be careful.” He reached out, tugging Alec closer so he could hug him, looking up into his eyes. “I just don’t want to see you hurt yourself.” The microwave beeped and Magnus let Alec go so he could go get his food. “So, I know you have to go to bed like, in an hour, but I was thinking maybe I could stay the night and we can go running in the morning,” Magnus suggested. “I know you run to the gym and it might be nice to run together.” Alec looked up with a smile, cheeks puffed out around the mouth full of broccoli he had. He just nodded and Magnus grinned. “Awesome. I’ll take that as a yes.”

After Alec finished eating he went to go take a shower, so Magnus sat with Isabelle and Jace while he waited. Jace started talking about Alec’s training and Magnus was disheartened by what he learned. “It’s not going that great,” Jace admitted. “He’s really pushing himself and he’s getting really stressed whenever he can’t do something up to the standard he needs to be at. If he keeps sneaking extra hours I’m gonna have to sit on him to stop him working out.”
Magnus huffed, shaking his head. “How could your mother do this to him? He’s going to hurt himself trying to make it for that fight and if he doesn’t keep going at this rate and risk hurting himself, he will lose spectacularly and it will still screw his record,” he stressed. “Why would she do that to her own kid?”

Jace rolled his eyes. “Because Maryse Lightwood does what is best for her. I’m not saying she doesn’t love us, but she definitely is aware of how useful we all are for her.”

Isabelle nodded. “Mom loves us, and she’s always provided us with whatever we needed, but she definitely knows how useful we are.”

“I really wish I could have a real conversation with her sometime,” Magnus said, then paused. “Although, she probably hates me enough already. Being the thirty-three year old man dating her twenty-four year old son she would much rather be straight can’t put me in her good book.”

Jace whistled. “Whoa, you’re thirty-three?! Shit, nobody bothered telling me my brother had a sugar daddy.”

Magnus rolled his eyes. “You’re the rich ones. I’m just the dirty old man perving on a hot, young kid.” He sighed, deflating some. “I just really worry about him. Seriously, Jace. Lock him in the office if you can’t trust him. I want him to do well but I don’t want him to screw himself up. If he hurts himself he won’t just mess this up, he’ll mess up his future. I’ve seen it in my sport, and I know it happens in yours, and I don’t want someone as young and with such a big future as Alec to end up like that.”

Jace nodded with a genuine look of worry in his eyes. “I know, Magnus. I don’t want that either. Trust me. I’m doing what I can to get him ready without letting him hurt himself. You just try and help me keep him sane, because you seriously bring him out of his shell, dude. I know you and I have had our issues, but you’re good for him,” he said earnestly. “I want what’s best for my brother and it seems like that’s you.”

Magnus smiled in surprise. “Awww, you know you like me,” he cooed teasingly, making Jace roll his eyes. He laughed, shaking his head as he stood up. “Alright, I’m sure Alec’s out of the shower by now. I’m gonna go get ready for bed, too, if we’re running at ass o’clock in the morning.”

When he got to Alec’s bedroom, he looked around a little sad but not at all surprised by how non-personal his room looked. He had no posters, no photos, nothing that yelled ‘Alec lives here’. It was a very utilitarian room. More importantly, however, Alec was just pulling a shirt out of his dresser to get ready for bed. “I wish I could say ‘sleep naked’ but then I’d want to have my way with you.”

Alec laughed, turning around while he pulled his shirt down. “I’ve got to go drink one more thing before bed, but you can go ahead and get ready,” he said, kissing Magnus’s temple on the way past.

Magnus leaned into the brief touch, feeling oddly grounded. It was starting to become something Magnus really noticed. He had known for a while now that the way he felt about Alec was serious, and that it was something deep and comfortable, but being apart from Alec, he hadn’t expected to feel so much more like himself when he was near him again. And when Alec came back and got into the bed Magnus had already crawled into, he was reminded once more how much this meant to him. How much Alec meant to him. Alec immediately slid right up to him and pulled him into his arms, relaxing as he curled himself around Magnus almost entirely.

“I really miss you,” Alec murmured against his neck, hugging Magnus close as if he was afraid he would try and get away from him. Magnus knew the feeling all too well. “It’s crazy, Magnus. A few months ago I didn’t even know you, and now I went a week without getting to see you and I felt like
something was wrong.”

Magnus positively melted. “Oh Alexander, I know exactly what you mean. But hey, it’s alright. I’m not going anywhere. Just try and relax and shut off your brain, okay?” He reached back, petting Alec’s hair soothingly. “Stress is bad for your weight loss anyways.”

“Don’t I know it,” Alec grumbled. “Damn stress hormones. Making this even harder than it already is. I’m going to have to steal one of your pillows and bring it home with me so my bed smells like you and makes it easier to relax and get some sleep.”

Magnus giggled. “You associate me with relaxation? That’s so sweet.”

“Of course I do.” Alec kissed his hair sweetly. “My life is never less stressful than when I’m with you.”

Magnus laced their fingers together on his middle and squeezed, sinking into Alec’s warmth. He knew exactly what Alec meant by that.

~

Alec found it hilarious that to be a dancer, who danced all day long basically, Magnus hated running so much. “This sucks. Why did I think this was a good idea?” he asked only halfway into their run.

“You’re not even out of breath, why are you complaining?” Alec asked him with a laugh.

Magnus whimpered. “Cause running sucks ass. My feet hurt already. And I don’t have to be out of breath to feel like I’ve been stabbed in the ribs,” he said, grabbing at an apparent stitch in his side. “I hope you realize how much I like you to do this.”

Alec grinned, shaking his head. “You’re the best boyfriend I’ve ever had,” he joked just to see Magnus roll his eyes and grumble about being his only boyfriend. Alec, in spite of Magnus’s obvious misery, was having a great morning. He felt amazing when he woke up with Magnus in his arms. He had been so stressed out and just being near Magnus was relaxing and wonderful. He then sat at the dining table drinking his water and protein-plus-creatine powder mix while Magnus ate cereal, glaring at him the whole time, though secretly it was worth having to watch someone eat sugary cereal just to get to talk to Magnus some more.

When they actually set out running, the air was cool but not cold, it was sunny, there wasn’t a lot of foot traffic on his street, and Magnus was at his side. It was amusing to see how quickly Magnus got really tired of running. “Alexander, I’m going to die. I hope you are happy with our relationship so far, because I’m going to be dead and then you will be single again.”

“You should be better conditioned than me for sustained cardio, Magnus. You do this for a living.”

“But that’s fun,” Magnus whined. “This is not fun. Exercising isn’t fun. Your job sucks. You have to do so much of this and that sucks ass. I’m so glad I have a job where I don’t have to go to the gym, cause if I did, I’d be fat. You would be dating a fat man. A very fat, fat man. Who eats what he wants and doesn’t ever go to the gym ever. Because I eat what I want and I don’t go to the gym. I don’t even have a gym membership. I thank whatever higher power there is that I can get in my daily exercise at work because otherwise, I would be monumentally fat. I’d be the size of that entire cab,” he said, pointing to the taxi driving past. “You don’t see many fat Asians, but I’d be a fat Asian. I may not be Japanese, but I’d make sumo wrestlers look skinny—“

“Okay, okay I get it,” Alec laughed, unable to help himself. “You do not like exercise that isn’t for fun.”
“No I do not,” Magnus panted. The running seemed to be finally getting to him. “But I like you, and an extra twenty minutes with you is worth it.”

Alec rolled his eyes, smiling brilliantly. “I would kiss you if we weren’t running right now.”

“Awww maaaaan, even more of a reason to hate running,” Magnus proclaimed dramatically.

When they had to stop for the traffic light to turn just before the turned the corner onto the street where, a few blocks up, they would be at the gym, Alec pressed the button and then immediately grabbed Magnus, who yelped in alarm, pushing him up against the pole to kiss him. His yelp became a moan as he sank into the kiss, opening his mouth for Alec’s tongue. The kiss lasted far too short a time for either of them, but when the cross walk started the audible countdown from ten seconds, Alec pulled away and winked before running across the street. Magnus made a confused sound before snapping out of it and following him.

“I take it back, running is awesome! It’s great! I love running,” Magnus proclaimed dramatically, his smile matching Alec’s when he caught up with him again. “Best exercise ever,” he joked, winking at Alec before falling silent, both of them making the rest of the run without a word.

They stopped outside the gym and Magnus looked so terribly like he wanted to kiss him goodbye, but Alec knew that Magnus understood why he couldn’t. He settled for reaching out and resting his hand on Alec’s shoulder, squeezing subtly. Alec nodded to him apologetically. “Thanks for running with me,” he said and Magnus just gave a sad little shrug.

“It’s always good to see you, Alexander.” He pulled away, letting his hand trail down Alec’s arm as he turned and walked next door, pulling his keys out of his pocket to unlock the studio and get started for the day. Alec watched him, wanting to have even just a few seconds more of being near Magnus, but he was distracted from watching Magnus disappear from view by someone calling his name. As he turned to greet one of the other fighters, he missed his chance to wave goodbye one last time.

“Hey, Man, was that guy hitting on you? I heard that place was run by homos, but I never saw any of them actually bothering anybody.”

And Alec’s good day entirely evaporated.

~

Even though he had reassured the other fighter he’d run in to at the door that Magnus wasn’t hitting on him, Alec wasn’t really all that surprised when, after his morning workout, during his mandatory two-hours in the office, Lydia came in and shut the door. “Hey, Alec, did you come to work with Magnus this morning?” she asked, voice lowered.

Alec sighed, leaning back in his chair. “Yes, I did. But I told what’s-his-face-“

“Richard?”

“Yeah, I told him Magnus wasn’t hitting on me. He was standing beside me talking, that isn’t even remotely ‘gay’,” he said, making air quotes with his fingers.

Lydia shook her head slowly, leaning forward. “No, Alec. Your mom is here looking for you. She’s really pissed. I heard her asking Jace about Magnus and it sounded really serious.”

Alec frowned hesitantly. “But… why? How does she know we ran to work together? We just ran together. Friends can run together. Hell, I could’ve bumped into my sister’s boss on my run and kept
pace with him to gossip about her.”

“I don’t know,” Lydia said lowly. “But she’s upset and I just wanted to ask you before she
ambushed you.”

Before Alec could respond, the door behind Lydia opened and Maryse walked in. “You,” she said to

As soon as Lydia was out Maryse shut the door and even turned the blinds on the window in the
door, turning back to him with a pale look of anger on her face. “You are so lucky that I have the
influence I do and the money I do, Alec,” she said coldly.


“You!” she snapped, slamming a fist on the table. “One month! All you had to do is keep it in your
pants for a fucking month, but oh no! You, Alexander Gideon Lightwood, you have to prove once
again that blood doesn’t mean that much. At least the one I adopted can do what he’s supposed to
do.”

Alec physically flinched away from his mom’s harsh words. She had never actually put into words
that she thought Jace was better than him. He had always suspected it, and he knew she held them
both to higher esteem than the eternally defiant Isabelle, but he had never thought he’d live to hear
his own mother tell him he wasn’t as good as his brother. “Mom, what—”

“That MAN!” she shouted, glaring down at him from across the desk. “You’re in training! You
shouldn’t even have a reason to be around him right now, but of course, you still manage to get
cought—”

“What are you even talking about? I haven’t gotten caught! Magnus patted me on the shoulder and
said ‘good day’, that’s not getting caught!”

Maryse stood tall and dug something out of her bag. She tossed a SD card onto the desk. “I just paid
six thousand dollars to keep a photograph of you kissing that little shit from next door on the street
corner. A journalist was coming to do a profile on the gym and you stopped on this street
to kiss him,
Alec. You thoughtless child,” she said harshly. “Your training costs, your food costs, and the time
you’re not training others isn’t even worth that six thousand dollars. If you win the fight, you’ll have
just enough money for me to have not lost money on you, all because of that man of yours.” She
held up a hand accusingly. “And like I said, why are you even around him right now?! You’re in
training, so what is the point of him right now?”

Alec looked up at her, dropping the SD card in surprise. “Wait… do you seriously think that the only
reason I’m with him is sex?” he asked incredulously. “You think there’s ‘no point’ in me even being
with him right now since I can’t have sex during training? Seriously, Mom?!”

She shrugged. “What else could you want with him? I can see him being interested in your money as
well, but—“

“He owns a dance school!” Alec argued. “Magnus doesn’t even remember I’ve got money half the
time. And my relationship is none of your business, but since you decided to make your beliefs clear
to me, let me correct this idea that I’m only interested in sex when it comes to him. Magnus and I spent
ages together before we ever started dating just talking to each other, and even when I did finally get
up the guts to ask him out, he dated me for two months before we ever slept together! I was the one
that wasn’t ready and he never pushed me, so clearly I’m not just a hot piece of ass to him either,” he
stressed. “So ‘the point of him’ is that he’s my boyfriend and I like just being with him. He came to
sleep at our apartment last night just so he could have breakfast with me and run to work with me, so
that’s what the point of him is! To give a shit about me!

She sighed. “Alec, he’s a thirty-something year old man, be realistic-“

“You know what, you need to leave,” Alec said coldly. “I love you, Mom, but you’re really crossing
a line. I’m sorry that someone saw me, I really am. I will do everything in my power to never have
my sexuality questioned because I love fighting, but you? You need to back off. My relationship is
not your business.”

She picked up the SD card, pocketing it. “It is when it costs me six grand,” she said simply, turning
to leave without another word, leaving Alec reeling with the news that he’d really fucked up bad.

~

To say Magnus was a little worried would be an understatement. He and Alec had had some really
good communication and a really fun morning together when he stayed the night, and he had hoped
that would translate into talking on the phone some more, or maybe another invite to come running,
but in reality, it went the total opposite direction.

Alec didn’t call him at all. He didn’t text him unless Magnus texted him first, and even then the
replies and conversations were stilted. Isabelle mentioned that Alec had had a fight with their mom
that neither she nor Jace could get him to talk about, and Magnus had a bad feeling after what Jace
had said about her asking about Magnus as well that it was over him. Jace had told Isabelle that he
figured she found out Magnus and Alec hadn’t broken up while Alec was training and blamed that
on why Alec was behind schedule.

Magnus also worried about that fact. Alec being behind schedule was bad. He sort of figured that
played a major part in Alec not texting him as much. He probably didn’t want to lose focus. Magnus
hated it, but he did understand. He was confident that they would come out on the other side of this
bad connection just fine no matter how sad it made him to not get to really talk to Alec.

Because of the week of bad communication, the day he came back from lunch to see Isabelle signing
for a few boxes of things that he knew weren’t his, he jumped at the chance to help her carry the
boxes inside The Institute in hopes he might get even just a moment to chat with Alec. He knew that
this time of day, Alec had to eat and do office work to not cheat on the six hour rule, so he had a
shot. “Thanks,” Isabelle said as they carried boxes into the gym. “I didn’t want to leave any of them
just sitting on the sidewalk,” she said as she got the door for them since she had one box to Magnus’s
two.

When they got to the office, however, Alec wasn’t alone. There were two fighters in there, clearly
hanging out to eat while Alec did. Lydia was sitting on the edge of the desk since those fighters were
on the couch, but when they arrived she hopped up, making room for them to put the boxes. “Hang
on, I’ve got something to open these with,” Lydia said. She grabbed a box cutter from the drawer
down by Alec’s feet and Magnus couldn’t help the way his eyes wandered when she bent over. He
would have normally felt guilty checking her out in front of his boyfriend, but Alec had confessed
once that, even though he wasn’t interested in her since she was a woman, he really did see why
people thought she was hot with an ass like hers.

Magnus was pretty confident Alec understood the inability to not look at her ass when she bent over
like that.

When they got the boxes open, Magnus leaned over to look in, laughing when he saw the new shirts.
“I’m assuming these are not for male gym-goers?” he asked, picking up a teeny tank top, holding it
in front of himself.

Isabelle snatched it and held it up to herself, frowning. “I’m pretty sure one boob would fit in this,” she said, and Lydia grabbed the tank top, holding it up in front of herself. “I think we got child sizes,” Isabelle said and Lydia laughed, nodding.

“I would say so.” She put the tank top back and nodded to the door. “C’mon, since you signed for them we should probably both go call the manufacturer,” Lydia suggested, taking Isabelle with her when she left.

Magnus, guiltily, couldn’t help but watch them leave because, while he only thought of either of them as friend and acquaintance, there was no denying they were both extremely hot women with pretty amazing bodies. He didn’t realize he’d been caught until one of the guys laughed and smacked the other in the chest while gesturing to Magnus. Magnus grinned, shrugging. “Hey, I’m only human,” he defended.

“Bro, I told Richard,” the bigger guy said to his smaller friend. “I told him I didn’t think the guy next door was a homo,” he said, and Magnus’s skin crawled at the sudden realization that there was about to be a very uncomfortable conversation.

“Oh?” he asked evenly.

The smaller one shook his head, giving Magnus an apologetic grin. “Sorry, man. I thought Richard was right. I figured you were a total homo. Eric, here, he thought you were banging Alec’s sister, though,” he said, and Magnus glanced at Alec, who cringed.

“And I told you I never want to hear the words ‘banging’ and ‘my sister’ in the same sentence,” he stressed.

The big guy – Eric – laughed. “Yeah, Alec said you’re not a fag, he said you were straight, and the way you just looked at his sister’s ass, I guess he’d know, huh?”

For a moment Magnus heard nothing but a sudden ringing in his ears and felt nothing but a cold, terrible weight in the pit of his stomach that seemed to be spreading. “Alec told you I’m straight?” he asked slowly.

The little guy nodded. “Yeah, he said you weren’t a faggot but we didn’t really believe you were straight. You’re a pretty colorful guy, but I guess there’s all sorts these days.”

Magnus shook his head slowly. “So Alec,” he gestured behind him, pretty much feeling the panic behind him. “Said I’m straight and that other word in there, huh?” he asked, and they both laughed, nodding and carrying on. Magnus turned and looked at Alec, who was giving him a forcedly calm look that did little to hide the panic in his eyes. “How… nice,” he said, fighting to keep his voice even. He turned his back and cleared his throat. “Well, if Isabelle’s done with me, I’ve got to get back to work. Later, fellas,” he said, forcing himself not to run or storm out of the gym, because no matter how upset he was he knew that it would be so easy to fuck up Alec’s training for the day.

And he sort of hated himself for caring about that even though he had just heard what he did.

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Magnus wasn’t at all surprised when, that night, after the gym had closed and right as Raphael was leaving Magnus alone to finish cleaning up, Alec came through the door. “Hey, Magnus, I’ve been thinking all day about that thing earlier, and I just need to talk-“
All the initial shock and hurt Magnus had felt had stirred into a storm of anger and betrayal throughout the day, so he didn’t bother playing coy. “Oh, the part where you went around telling strangers that I’m straight? Or no, wait, ‘not a faggot’.” Magnus made air quotes at him, the sarcasm in his voice biting.

Alec winced. “I know, I know it’s not cool, but it’s not that big of a deal, right? I’m really sorry I was talking about you without telling you, but the guy they mentioned, Richard, he’d told some people that he’d seen you hitting on me, and I needed to convince him you weren’t, so I just said you were straight and they heard and it got a little drawn into a discussion before I settled it all-“

“By saying I’m not a fag, right?” Magnus asked angrily. “Well thank you, Alexander, great to know you’re happy to run your mouth about me to your fighter buddies.”

Alec scoffed. “Magnus, I was covering my ass! You know why it’s so important-“

“I do know, and I even understand,” Magnus said seriously. “I have never had a problem with you being closeted. I don’t care you have to deny our relationship to the other fighters, because they don’t matter. You having to be closeted sucks because I wish you could be happy and open, but I understand that sometimes being out isn’t safe and reasonable for everybody.”

Alec nodded slowly. “So… you get it?”

Magnus was pretty sure that, if it were possible, steam would have shot out of his ears at that. “I get you being in your closet, Alec, but how dare you try and shove me back in mine?” he snapped. “I am proud to be bisexual, Alec. I’m fucking vocally proud of my sexuality, because it’s who I am and I will never be ashamed of that. And you tell me that you would disrespect that huge part of who I am – of who you care about – just because you didn’t want to just pretend you’re friends with a bisexual man? You mean your little fighter pals wouldn’t buy that you can be friends with me without me hitting on you? I’m bisexual, even their puny little fighter brains could understand that I have to be able to be friends with everybody without hitting on them all the time or else I’d have no friends. But you didn’t even try that, did you?”

Alec spluttered. “Hey! Watch the ‘little fighter brain’ remarks-“

“Answer the question,” Magnus interrupted quietly but seriously.

Alec sighed, running his hand through his hair. “No, okay? I went with the easiest choice, but what does it matter? They don’t know you, Magnus. They have no reason to care-“

“But I do!” Magnus cried. “I fought so much of my life to make sure everybody knows that a bisexual man can be successful doing whatever he wants to be. I did so much to prove people wrong about me. How can you not see how disrespectful of me that was? I know you can’t be the supportive boyfriend around them, but I’m pretty sure even Jace wouldn’t do that shit,” he said, and going by the look on Alec’s face, he was probably right and Alec knew it.

Alec groaned. “Magnus, I’m sorry. I’m sorry but I did what I had to-“

Magnus scoffed. “And you had to toss in the other word, too?”

Alec shook his head. “I had to, okay? I come from a homophobic sport. I don’t like it, but-“

“Yeah, I wouldn’t think you would like the word you used,” Magnus argued. “But you still said ‘faggot’, which is really confusing to me since YOU ARE ONE!” Magnus shouted at him. “HOW can you be okay saying that word like that?! You couldn’t have just say ‘gay’?! You can’t just disrespect my sexuality by saying ‘oh no, he’s not gay’ instead of tossing around the ‘F’ word?!
You’re gay and you joked about your bisexual boyfriend not being a fag, Alec,” he said as if he was talking to a child that was slow to understand things. “Do you think I just casually go around making jokes about ‘chinks’? Because that’s just about the equivalent of what you did and it blows my mind!” Magnus cried, gesturing to his head. “Is this something about you I just never knew? That you don’t just hide, but actively foster homophobia?” he asked, and deep down, Magnus was afraid that maybe it was.

Alec rubbed at the bridge of his nose. “No, Magnus, I don’t think it’s ever come up at the gym at all. The basic idea of gay men isn’t one talked about. But it came up and I said what I had to to keep suspicion off of me.”

Magnus crossed his arms over his head. “So the best way to make sure nobody thinks you’re gay is to tell people I’m straight. Got it.”

“Magnus, I don’t get why it’s that big of a deal what total strangers to you think.”

“I’m proud of who I am!” Magnus cut in, voice catching in his throat. “I’m proud to be bisexual, I’m proud of it and you disrespected something that is so important to who I am today.” He let out a harsh laugh, tears burning his eyes. “And to just toss around ‘oh he’s not a fag’ like that’s just no big deal—” He choked on his words, taking a harsh breath. “I’m thirty-three years old, and for half of my life I’ve had contact with my parents because of being a ‘fag’ You know my parents kicked me out when I was sixteen for being a faggot. For being a dirty fucking faggot that they wouldn’t have under their roof. There’s a lot of things I can say for your mother, but your parents didn’t kick you out without giving a shit if you lived or died at sixteen years old just because you were the ‘faggot’ you told your friends I’m not.” He shook his head. “How can you think I’d be okay with them thinking I’m straight when I’ve strived my entire adult life and part of my childhood to prove everybody wrong about my chance at success as a bisexual?” He sniffled some and saw a strange look on Alec’s face when he wouldn’t meet his eyes. “I thought you understood that I’m proud of my sexuality. You told me you’re proud of who you are, too.”

“Well I’m not,” Alec said roughly, startling Magnus some. He looked up, eyes wide and bloodshot, like he was going to cry and was fighting it every bit of the way. “I’m not proud of who I am, because you may not be a fucking fag, but I am, and I fucking hate it,” he said hoarsely. “I wish I was straight, I wish I was fucking straight. My whole life would be so uncomplicated if I was just normal. My mom loves Jace more because he’s straight. I’m the less valuable child because I’m a goddamn faggot, Magnus, how could I be proud of that?!” he asked, voice growing in volume. “It’s great that you’re proud of yourself, but not everybody is! I thought maybe it wasn’t as bad as I used to think it was, but it is! It really is! I’m a liability! My future is fucked! Even if I manage to keep it hidden now, some day my mom won’t be able to pay someone off and someday I’ll get caught! If I was bisexual I could at least pass, but look at you?! Proud bisexual who has no fear of anybody knowing even though they don’t have to! You stare at Lydia’s ass hard enough for multiple straight men, and even though the last ass you fucked was mine, all they have to know is that you looked at her ass. I can’t even fake it because I look like I’m uncomfortable when I stare at a girl’s ass! I want to fake it and can’t and you don’t have to fake it but get mad at me for telling them you like women when that’s half true!”

Magnus stared at Alec, at all the pain in his eyes, and he realized that he didn’t know half of the guilt Alec carried. He had thought Alec was proud of himself. He thought Alec wasn’t afraid of who he was and was only cautious because of his career. Alec had always seemed so comfortable when they were together, and it struck him that he didn’t know Alec very well at all outside the vacuum of their relationship. “Alexander, I’m sorry,” he said softly. “I’m sorry that your life is so hard. I am sorry I complicate things.” He shook his head slowly. “But I can’t be sorry that I am upset over you saying I’m ‘not a faggot’ to people. You hurt me.”
Alec nodded slowly. “I’m sorry I hurt you, but honestly, I don’t have time for this,” Alec said simply. He looked up with a calmness that scared Magnus suddenly. His heart started beating harder and Alec just shook his head. “You’re sorry, I’m sorry, but it doesn’t matter. I have to get home. I have to eat soon or it’ll throw off my schedule. All of this is…” He shook his head. “It isn’t that important.”

Magnus gasped softly. “Not important? Alec, this is our relationship. You don’t leave an argument without finishing working things out. You can’t settle something without getting through it. We need to finish this conversation—“

“Why?” Alec asked blandly. “I have a fight in just over two weeks, Magnus. Maybe my mom’s right. What would a thirty-three year old man want with my closeted ass anyways?” He turned to leave, shaking his head. “Maybe we should both really think about that.”

Magnus shook his head. “Alec, stop! We have to talk about this!” He started to walk after Alec. “Alexander Lightwood, you stop it right now—“ Alec let the door swing shut after him and Magnus just stopped, looking through the glass as Alec calmly walked away, acting as if nothing was wrong, all the while Magnus’s heart tripped all over itself to try and figure out what the hell had just happened between them.

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Magnus tried calling and texting Alec for the next several days but he wouldn’t talk to him. He knew Alec was fine because Isabelle mentioned in passing how his training was going, but Alec may as well have fallen off the face of the earth for all Magnus saw of him or heard from him. He hoped initially that Alec would get over whatever had happened to upset him so much that he said all those things about himself that seemed to come out of nowhere, but if he did, it didn’t change that he didn’t want to talk to Magnus.

It took four days before it really hit Magnus that Alec wasn’t going to call him back or suddenly answer his texts. When he realized that Alec saying “we should think about that” probably meant “break up”, he texted Raphael that he was sick and decided to go to bed before the sun even set with Chairman Meow and not get up until he had to.

After two days ‘sick’, however, Raphael threatened to come break into his house if he didn’t call Raphael instead of text him and actually tell him what plague he had come down with. Magnus got up that morning, got ready for the day, and went to work. The first class had already started when he got there, so he simply went to the back room to get ready for his classes that day.

He managed to avoid everybody until it was time to close up, at which point Raphael finally cornered him, arms crossed over his chest. “Are you dying? Be honest, because if you have some incurable disease, you should sign the business over to me officially,” Raphael said in a tone that would sound serious to anyone else who hadn’t known him for as long as Magnus had.

Magnus smiled and, in a move that clearly shocked Raphael, moved to hug him. He sighed, patting Raphael on the back before pulling away. Isabelle looked startled in the reflection of the mirror and Raphael looked at him with wide eyes. “You aren’t actually dying, right?” Raphael asked slowly. “I don’t hug. You don’t hug me. We are not hugging friends. Dios is it cancer?!“ he asked suddenly. “I am so sorry I joked—“

“No,” Magnus interrupted with a sad smile. “I just needed something like that to cheer me up,” he said with a soft chuckle. “I know I can always count on you, Raphael. For ten years you’ve always been there even if our friendship isn’t all touchy-feely like my other friendships.”
Isabelle walked over. “Magnus, are you okay? I figured you just had a cold, but you’re being weird,” she said, looking at him curiously and it struck him that she didn’t know.

Magnus thought, so stupidly, about how Alec must be so good at fooling others while he suffered in silence if it meant his own sister hadn’t even realized. He hated that he cared so much about how it was hurting Alec when Alec was the one who had just walked away. He was hurting and he hated how much he still cared about the person who did it to him. He looked up, his vision blurring with a few tears building even though he had managed to not cry over Alec yet. “I think- I think your brother broke up with me. I think we’re done,” he said in a faint voice.

Isabelle gasped, hands coming up to her mouth and Raphael spluttered. “What?! You did not think to just tell me that instead of letting me think you were dying of cancer-“

“When?!“ Isabelle asked loudly. “What?! I didn’t- He hasn’t-“ She shook her head. “What the fuck happened?”

Magnus sighed heavily, rubbing at his eyes. “I don’t know. I mean, we had a fight, but everybody has fights. We’ve argued before this. Not big yelling fights like this one, but he seemed to understand that he had hurt me and he admitted what was going on with him, and I thought that, though it sucked ass to fight, we were working out a big thing, something that would make us better after we understood each other, but then he just went ‘I’ve got more important things to do right now anyways’ and left!”

He sucked in a breath, holding it to stop the tears that were trying to come. “He’s so messed up over something that he’d been bottling up. I don’t want to put you in an awkward situation, but it had to be your mom saying something. He started on this whole thing about finally knowing for sure that she loved Jace more than him and it makes sense he would associate me with his sexuality. But we were talking it out!” Magnus groaned in frustration. “We were yelling it out but we were getting somewhere, and he just shut down on me.” He slapped his hands together as if he had slammed a door. “He just walked away and left and I kept texting and calling, thinking he’d get through his shit and be ready to talk about it, but the other day I-“ His voice faltered and he looked away. “I realized that he- he isn’t avoiding me because he’s not ready to talk. He’s just… done. I think he wants it over.”

Isabelle just shook her head, confused. “But… he’s acting the same. He’s the same as he has been since he started training. He gets weird when he’s in training but he’s been consistent. He hasn’t said anything. He talks to me about everything. He hasn’t said anything about mom or about you or anything.” She looked up, giving Magnus a sad look. “Magnus, I’m so sorry. I don’t understand it. You guys are so good together. You make each other happy.”

Magnus smiled tightly, shrugging. “I guess not happy enough,” he managed in a strained voice.

Magnus sort of wandered around, trying to get himself under control as Isabelle got her stuff and left, phone already to her ear. He knew Raphael was still there, even if he wasn’t meeting Raphael’s eyes. He looked down, twisting his fingers, only to feel a touch on his shoulder. When he looked up, he saw Raphael looking at him with a straight face but so much sympathy in his eyes and Magnus couldn’t help but break. His and Raphael’s relationship was not, as Raphael said, like that, but he was his oldest friend and he knew that Raphael cared about him in a way almost nobody else did, and to have Raphael reach out for him and try to comfort him, it was simply too much. Magnus gave up and let his face crump, choking as the tears came. He put his arms around Raphael, stepping into him to cry into his shoulder, barely restraining full on sobs when Raphael pulled his arms around Magnus and held him. “I love him so much,” Magnus cried, crushing his eyes shut as he finally admitted to himself just how deeply he cared for Alec. “I love him, Raphael,” he whimpered and
Raphael just rubbed his back.

“I know you do. Anybody with eyes knows you do, my friend,” he comforted. He shushed Magnus’s tears, holding him as he cried, which was one of the last things Magnus had ever thought Raphael Santiago would do for him. It showed how serious Raphael knew this was that he would show so much concern through his exterior of ice. Magnus had always known what a good man Raphael was, but he was reminded now how lucky he was to have such a good friend as Raphael.

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Alec was eating with Jace when they heard Izzy get home, but both of them startled when she started shouting. “ALEXANDER GIDEON LIGHTWOOD!”

Jace raised an eyebrow. “What did you do to turn her into Mom?” he asked, and Alec shrugged, not really sure what she was upset about.

“I left my phone in my bag so maybe she’s tried to call?” Alec suggested.

However, Isabelle stormed past the dining room and then turned around and walked over with the strangest look in her eyes. “What the fuck did you do?!” She looked oddly worried but also sort of angry, which Alec was very confused about.

“Izzy? Are you okay—“

“No, are you okay, Alec?!” she demanded. “Why didn’t you tell us you and Magnus broke up? Are you alright? What happened?” Alec’s heart sank. He had assumed she knew about that already and just let it go. He didn’t realize she hadn’t even found out.

Jace choked on his oatmeal, gaping, a glob of it falling from his lip to the table. “Magnus dumped him- Magnus dumped you?!” he looked from Isabelle to Alec with wide eyes. “Bro, oh my God, I’m so sorry.”

“Oh no,” Isabelle said quickly. “He dumped Magnus,” she said and Jace jerked to look at her in shock.

“What?! Why would he do that?” He turned to Alec, who was starting to get annoyed with them talking like he wasn’t there. “Alec, why would you do that? What happened?”

Alec shrugged, eating another bite of oatmeal. “It’s what’s for the best, is all.”

Jace stared at him in confusion. “What’s best for who exactly?” He shook his head, eyebrows raised. “Because it’s not you and it’s not him. Alec, you have come out of your shell and you’ve been happy. He makes you a better version of yourself, and I would know. You’re my brother, I know you better than anybody.”

Alec glared at him, annoyed beyond belief that Jace got to be the one to say that. He knew, instinctively, that Jace wasn’t the one to blame for their mother favoring him, but that didn’t stop it from being annoying. “Look, I’ve got a big fight really soon. I need to just focus on that.”

“You were barely seeing him as it was, though,” Jace said slowly. “I don’t get it.”

“I do,” Isabelle said suddenly. “Magnus wouldn’t go into detail about what happened, but he mentioned that Mom had did something and you didn’t dump him, you just stopped talking to him and he just realized you dumped him. He skipped work for two days before even telling us what happened. You let mom do that to him-“
“I didn’t do anything to him, I just chose to focus on my career for now after the trouble being with him has caused,” he said simply. He refused to let them goad him into reacting. If he did, he knew he would actually stop and think about how much he had to have hurt Magnus by just freezing him out like that.

Jace sat back, shaking his head. “What are you talking about? What trouble? You aren’t even distracted, Alec. You’re more focused than I’ve ever seen a fighter.”

Alec sighed, looking up from his bowl. “Look… I can’t be gay, Jace. I just can’t. Mom already lost six thousand dollars to pay someone off because they found out. What happens to you if they find out you have a gay brother training fighters? The gym will be tarnished and so will you. This is bigger than me and my feelings for Magnus. Besides.” He looked at Isabelle. “Magnus is an established, attractive man with no gender restrictions. It’s not like he can’t find somebody else far better suited to his lifestyle than me to be with him. I still don’t know what he wanted with a closet-case like me anyways.”

Isabelle looked stricken but Jace was the one who spoke up. “When did you get caught? Is that why you’re doing this to yourself and to him?” he asked angrily. “Alec, this is stupid. You don’t have to give up who you are to be a fighter. Fuck Mom’s money. She’s rich. The watch she got me for Christmas cost three times that and it just tells the time!”

Alec looked up at him. “And you aren’t me, Jace. You’re her straight, lightweight golden child. I’m just the too gay, too big failed first attempt.”

Alec stood up and took his oatmeal with him, leaving Isabelle and Jace’s stunned silence behind him. He didn’t have time for their attempts to get through to him. He knew what he had to do. He knew what was best for him. It sucked to think that he had hurt Magnus, but he meant what he said. Magnus would be okay when he realized how much better than Alec he could do anyways.

For now, he needed to finish eating so he didn’t mess up his diet schedule this close to cut day. He still had seventeen pounds to go.

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Magnus felt pretty shitty. He knew what it was like to be heartbroken, but there was almost something worse about it when he couldn’t even blame the person who broke his heart. There was no betrayal to fall on. There was no anger. The last time he’d been utterly destroyed by someone, she had been an evil bitch who ruined him. But Alexander didn’t cheat on him. He didn’t lie to him. He didn’t use him and break him down just to laugh at his pain.

Alec just got too scared of his own feelings and gave up.

He missed Alec. He felt sorry for Alec. He worried about Alec. Every single day he wanted to call him to make sure he wasn’t breaking the six hour rule, and he wanted to go spend the night with him and hold him and reassure him it was all going to be okay. It was so much worse than any break up Magnus had ever had because as angry as he had been at Alec handling the whole ‘not a fag’ thing terribly, he wasn’t angry at him now.

Magnus was just sad. A horribly empty sadness. He felt like a part of himself was missing and there was nothing to do about it. They weren’t together a long time, but he had found something inside himself that he didn’t know was lurking there, just waiting for the day Alec could unlock it. And without Alec, he felt the emptiness that hadn’t been there before. At the risk of sounding melodramatic, it was like Alec had carved out a place for himself in Magnus’s heart and now that he was gone, there was an Alec shaped hole left there.
He knew that he had to get it together. He had to go on with his life. He needed to get back into the driver’s seat and stop wasting his time feeling sad. Other people were starting to notice, which wasn’t surprising. Some of his younger students had asked, in that way that little kids with no filters were wont to do, why he wasn’t as happy lately. He hated having to lie to children, but he couldn’t very confess that his boyfriend had given up on them when his homophobic mom made him feel unloved because of that.

Magnus knew he hadn’t been doing well but he still was a little amused when Isabelle rubbed at the stubble on his face and made a face in spite of him swatting her hand away. “I sorta like the scruffy look,” she said, shrugging.

He rolled his eyes. “Glad to know my lack of motivation is amusing to you,” he muttered.

She smiled apologetically. “Hey… I need to leave early. Like right now. Can you cover my last class?” He raised an eyebrow and she cleared her throat, looking aside. “Alec’s weigh-in is tonight at six. He’s had a very rough cut day, according to Jace, so I want to be there for him. He’s… struggled lately.”

Magnus’s heart jumped at the mention. She’d been careful to not bring him up and Magnus had forgotten that it was already time for the fight tomorrow. “Is he okay? I knew pushing himself was going to be bad for him.”

She nodded with a sad smile. “He fainted twice today, but they got him back on his feet and kept him working. Jace says he’s one under so he’s made it. They just have to get him over to the weigh-in while he’s able to walk under his own steam without drinking anything.”

He closed his eyes, swallowing hard, but he nodded. “Sure. I’ve got it. It’s intermediate ballet, right? I’m okay with that.” She put a hand on his shoulder in thanks and he opened his eyes with a nervous look. “Just… call me after? Tell me he’s okay?” he all but whispered.

Isabelle gave him a look that made him think he wasn’t the only one that wanted to cry right then, and she just pulled him into a quick hug. He hugged her back and then released her. “I’ll text you when he finishes the weigh-in and then I’ll call you once we’ve got some Pedialyte into him and he’s balanced out and recovering to let you know he’s okay,” she promised and he nodded silently.

When she left, he put his forehead in his hands, trying to gather himself before getting on with his job. The day wasn’t done yet.

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The ringing of his phone reminded Magnus that Isabelle still hadn’t texted him. Magnus was alone and cleaning up, having let Raphael leave early, so he didn’t hesitate to run over to his phone. He picked it up and saw he had a few missed texts, but he answered the phone immediately. “Isabelle? Is he alright?” he asked worriedly.

“Yeah, he’ll be fine.” The voice on the phone wasn’t Isabelle’s and he started some. He checked and saw it was definitely her contact, but that was Jace speaking.

“Jace?” he asked slowly.

Jace sighed from his end. “He made it right on the money and then fainted again as soon as we got him off the stage after the posing. We had to get an IV going in the locker room and get the doctor to make sure he was still alright to fight. He’s just dehydrated, though, so after the IV ran we gave him some Pedialyte and he’ll be okay.”
Magnus sat down on the floor, putting his head on his knees. “How is he going to be ready to fight tomorrow night, Jace? He’s fainted three times. That takes more than some electrolytes to bounce back from.”

“I know,” Jace said. “We’ll get him to sleep and then wake him up to get some carbs into him and it’ll be okay. Most of this fight is going to be mental for him. Which… is not good,” he said with a sad chuckle. “You know that pretty well, huh?”

Magnus laughed weakly, nodding even though Jace couldn’t see. “How much did he tell you?”

“That Mom had to pay someone off because they found out about you,” Jace said. “I think she said something about me, too. She did something, Dude. Whatever she said, it fucked him up. He’s like a robot now. He doesn’t talk about anything but the fight. I thought it was just serious focus until Izzy told me about him breaking it off with you. He won’t tell me what she said, but I can only guess she told him he isn’t good enough. She loves Alec right up until I’m better for her image, and then she treats him like shit,” Jace groaned. “I love her, because she’s the only mother I’ve ever known, but Alec has been my best friend and my brother since they adopted me, he is my other half, and she uses him like a pawn. I know she’s using me like a pawn. I’m fully aware Maryse Lightwood wanted to adopt me because she was retiring and wanted to train her own little army of future fighters, but she’s still always been a pretty good mom to me. But when Alec turned out to be gay and Izzy wanted to be a dancer and Max being the little nerd he is, she treats me better than them and I hate it. Alec has so much pressure on him always, and for her to do this to him has both Izzy and me not speaking to her.”

Magnus was quiet for a while before speaking again. “Like I told him, I have to admit that I see how she does love him. She just… she wanted him to be perfect. She doesn’t want him to be himself.” He closed his eyes, swallowing hard. “She’s his mom. I can’t compete with that. Wanting your mother to approve of you is something so ingrained in a person. I never stood a chance when she pitted her approval against him being with me. He really was becoming comfortable with who he is, Jace. He was getting there. He told me he loved himself for the first time ever, and then she undid that. She undid every happiness he found by comparing him to you and basically saying being gay made him less than you are. And the worst part is that I fully understand. Your mother is his hero. Even if he didn’t want to believe her, it’s hard to look past the doubt she gave him.”

“But that’s bullshit,” Jace said harshly. “I understand it too, but she doesn’t want what’s best for him. She thinks she’s doing what’s best but she’s really doing what’s best for her. He deserves to be happy with himself before he makes her happy, but she won’t let him. You make him better, Magnus. You make him Alec. He’s the best version of himself when you’re in his life.”

Magnus rolled his eyes. “Well, I did what I could, but I have to let him live his own life, Jace. I would be no better than her if I didn’t let him make his choices, even if those choices don’t include me.” He scratched at his hair. “Just… just take care of him for me, okay?”

Jace sighed. “Yeah, of course. But you do me a favor,” he said, and Magnus waited. “There are passes for you and for that other guy you work with. Isabelle got them for Clary and Clary’s friend, too. I think she wants to pack the house so she’s giving everybody passes. Anyways, even if you can’t get your friend to come with you, just… just come to the fight? He needs all the support he can get. People cheering for you helps when it gets tough, I can promise you that.”

It felt like a rock settling into the pit of his stomach to think about watching Alec get beaten up like Jace had been. He wasn’t sure he could take watching him lose if that was what was going to happen. God forbid he get hurt. “Jace… I can’t-“

“Just try, Magnus. I’m serious, he needs it. The guy he’s facing is a big star and Alec needs a
cheering section. It could be all that stands between him giving up and him rallying when he’s getting the shit kicked out of him,” Jace urged.

Magnus groaned, dropping his head. “That was dirty, Lightwood.”

“It worked though, didn’t it?” he asked and Magnus laughed, shaking his head.

“Okay. I’ll see if Raphael will come. And I won’t go for the hair if I see your mom, I promise,” he agreed and Jace snorted.

“Not if Isabelle does it first, you won’t,” he joked before hanging up.

Magnus put his phone down beside him and put his head between his knees, hands behind his head, taking a few deep breaths to clear his mind and stop it from running away with him.

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Alec’s hands had been wrapped and signed by the officials and he had been told he could go wherever he wanted in the locker room area while the fights before his happened. His fight was the main event. It was a big title fight. The press had been grueling leading up to it because deep down, he knew that all this talk was just that. Talk.

He had told Jace he had to pee, but in reality he’d gone into the handicap stall and locked himself in because he just wanted a moment to himself. He put his headphones on and sat in the corner and tried to stop his hands shaking. He couldn’t really work out why the hell he had ended up here. What had he done in a past life to make him end up in this situation? Why was he about to fight the Middleweight Champion at the fucking Barclays Center after four weeks of training and a year off before that? What had gone so wrong with his life that this was the outcome?

“Alec? You in there?” Alec realized he could hear Jace yelling over the music, so he shoved his headphones off and looked at the door that shook as Jace knocked harder. “Alec, c’mon. You’ve gotta get out here. It’s almost time.”

Alec reached out and undid the lock, sliding out of the way when the door swung open. Jace looked around and saw him sitting in the corner of the stall with his knees up and cursed. “Fuck. Okay. Alec, hey, look at me.”

“What am I doing, Jace?” Alec asked weakly, voice trembling. “This is so stupid, huh?”

“No, you’ve got this.” Jace squatted in front of him. “Man, you’ve worked harder than anybody to get ready for this and you’re gonna fucking demolish this guy-“

“No, I’m gonna get my ass handed to me,” Alec spluttered, breath coming faster. “Jace I’m going to get killed. He’s going to beat the hell out of me and I’m going to fucking die-“

“You are NOT going to die,” Jace stressed, eyes wide. “Alec, c’mon, Bro, this is just another fight. You’ve got this easy.”

Alec shook his head hard. “I don’t wanna do this, Jace.”

“Alec-“

“I don’t want to be here!” Alec cried, grabbing at his hair. “Why is this happening? I’m going to fuck my future. I could’ve had a career in the future but this is going to ruin it like it already ruined my life-“
“Alec, calm down, you’re just overexcited—”

“I’m fucking angry!” Alec shouted at him, looking up as the fear and anxiety flooded his body with all the adrenaline already there. “Why did Mom do this to me? Why doesn’t Mom love me, Jace?”

Jace’s face fell and he put his hands on either side of Alec’s head. “Mom loves you, Alec. You’re her firstborn son, she just puts too much pressure on you. But it’s too late to worry about that now.—”

“I didn’t choose this!” Alec stressed. “She signed for me and when the contract came, if I didn’t sign I’d have a shitty look to promoters. If I turned this fight down after my manager accepted I’d be just as fucked for the future as I would be if she hadn’t shut up that photographer who saw me kissing Magnus!” His breath came in gasps. “God, fuck, why did I let her do this? Why did I let her push me into this? Why did I let her convince me I’m the problem?! She- she just wants to use me for publicity.—”

“She thought you could do it, Alec,” Jace argued. “She knows you like I do and she knows you’re the best fuckin’ fighter there is. You are the best Middleweight out there and you’re gonna crush this motherfucker.—”

“I let Magnus go for this stupid fucking fight!” Alec cried, looking up into Jace’s wide eyes. “I-I let him go for this shit! He’s the best fucking thing that ever happened to me and I actually picked hiding my fucking sexuality for this stupid, stupid fight over him!” He felt like his chest was going to cave in and he grabbed his shirt, choking on a sound. “I don’t wanna be here, Jace!”

“Alec—”

Alec shook his head. “I wanna go home, I don’t want to fight, Jace.” He let out a sob, tears blurring his vision. “I just want to go home. I want to go home with Magnus. I want Magnus,” he choked out, tears streaking his face. “Jace- Jace oh God, I don’t wanna do this, I just want him. I only ever want him. What did I do? Jace—” He choked, grabbing at Jace’s arms. “What’ve I done?” he cried, shoulders heaving as he clung to his brother and tried not to completely fall apart no matter how much it felt like every part of him was being ripped apart from the center. “I want Magnus, I just want him, he’s all I care about, not this stupid fight, not mom’s fucking image, I just- I just want to call Magnus and go home.”

“Ah shit, Alec,” Jace groaned, pulling him into a hug before shoving him back, slapping both hands on his chest. “Okay, listen.” He shook him some, then rubbed his shoulders aggressively. “Look at me, okay?” Alec forced his eyes up to Jace’s and Jace nodded. “Look, Man, I love you. You’re my brother and I love you, so I’m going to be fucking honest right now,” he said, clearly fired up. “Magnus is here. He’s here to watch you fight. He’s out there, waiting to watch you kick the shit out of this bastard, okay? Man, I know you didn’t choose this fight, and I fucking know how bad this has been on you, I cannot imagine ever getting ready that fast. You are a goddamn badass,” he said fiercely. “You are the toughest motherfucker I’ve ever met and you are my hero, Alec. You are my fucking hero,” he snarled, eyes glassy in a way Alec had never seen them. “You’re my big brother and you can do anything, okay? You are Magnus’s Alexander. You can do fucking ANYTHING!” he shouted, punching Alec in the arm. “So what Mom threw you under the fucking bus for the gym’s image?! SO WHAT! YOU are going to go out there and kill that piece of shit and prove her wrong! She thinks you might lose and that doesn’t matter because it still gets our family name out, but guess what?! YOU ARE GONNA FUCKING CRUSH THAT GUY!” He screamed right in Alec’s face, shaking him hard. “Because YOU have a fucking score to settle. You have to prove her wrong and you have to prove everybody wrong because a gay man is gonna wipe the mat with that straight piece of shit!” Jace stood up and kicked the door open. “Come on, Alec. Do it for Magnus! Show everybody that no matter what they throw at Alec Lightwood, HE WILL STILL. FUCKING.
Alec’s breaths were coming in harsh heaves, and his pulse was pounding in his ears, but for once? He believed Jace. Jace was right. His mom didn’t expect much. Nobody did. They all knew he had struggled. They all knew what he was facing, and he had felt so fucking hindered just because he was gay and not a ‘perfect’ straight fighter. But this was one fight. One night to prove everybody wrong. One fight to throw everything he could into beating the shit out of his opponent and proving that being gay was not a weakness. He looked up at Jace. “I’m gonna crush that motherfucker,” he said suddenly, a slow realization, and Jace grabbed his hand and snatched him up to his feet. “Fuck ‘em all,” Alec said darkly, hitting Jace in the chest and Jace shouted, punching him right back.

“Fuck ‘em all!”

“YEAH FUCK ‘EM ALL!” Alec screamed back pressing his forehead against Jace’s before pulling away and heading ahead of Jace towards the area where Lydia and Hodge were waiting for him.

“You ready?” Lydia asked, and Alec just nodded, face steeled as the rage and determination flooded his system.

“Let’s kill this motherfucker,” he spat, and a cheer went up in the hallway just as the music the cued him in started and he and his team shoved their way through the doors and started towards the cage.

~

Raphael had learned that Isabelle got them VIP passes and had taken the occasion to dress to the nines. Magnus was amused underneath all of the terrible anxiety he felt. He had witnessed brutality in Jace’s fight and Jace had been better matched and preparing for two months, not caught unaware after a year off and forced to condition in half the time. He did not want to witness whatever was about to happen to Alexander, but he wanted to help him even if it was just in cheering for him.

“Man, this is so cool!” Clary said excitedly from their table in the VIP section after the last bell rang for the fight right before Alec’s. “Oh my God, this is totally why you like this stuff,” she said to Izzy, who grinned.

“I know we’re supposed to be above mindless violence, but something about two really hot guys beating each other to pulp just to prove they’re a better athlete is pretty awesome, huh?” she asked, sipping her drink.

Raphael eyed his boyfriend every time Simon reached for Raphael’s cocktail and made him smile innocently to try and cover himself. “You are underage. If you drink with me in public, I’ll get in trouble. I swear to God himself, I will make you walk home, Simon,” he said sternly.


When the announcer got into the stage and the lights went down again, Magnus tensed. He saw Isabelle’s smile slide off her face and he reached out, gripping her hand. She squeezed back, both of them sharing a look to give each other strength. The strobes and spotlights started to flash and the music began to play just as the cheers of the crowd went up again. The big screens around the top of the ring started to show promo shots of both fighters before the announcer started to speak.

“Ladies and gentlemen, our title fight of the night! For the Middleweight Title Contention we have, coming out now, the current Middleweight Champion, in the blue corner wearing the red and white shorts, weighing in at one hundred and eight-five pounds and standing six foot tall, representing Team Octopus all the way from Boston with an impressive record of twenty two wins, eleven by
knock outs, and one loss, your champion Leeeester Aikens!” The crowd around them roared and Magnus thought faintly that he hoped Alec couldn’t hear them all from wherever he was backstage. “And his challenger, across the cage, fighting out of the red corner in the black shorts, weighing in at one hundred and eighty-five pounds and standing six foot three inches tall, with a record of eighteen wins, three by knock out and four by submission, and four losses, representing The Institute in Manhattan, you will recognize the name, Aleeeec Lightwood!”

Magnus noticed far less cheers for Alec and wondered briefly if Jace had reason to be worried that the lack of support would make it even worse on Alec’s nerves. However, when Alec came to the cage, he looked pretty in the zone. Magnus had never seen Alec fight, he had never seen him spar, but he looked deathly serious and ready to unleash. He looked like a warrior heading into a battle with no fears, and going by Isabelle’s slightly relaxed grip, he assumed this was a good thing and Alec was in a good headspace to fight.

“Since this is a title match, there will be five rounds of five minutes each, so get ready for a good one, ladies and gentlemen!”

Magnus watched with bated breath as the cage was cleared, shut, and locked and the referee spoke to both fighters before stepping back out of the way and then the bell rang to start the first round. Alec and his opponent came out of their corners without any hesitation like some fighters had, because the instant they clashed punches flew and Magnus knew immediately, from the way his heart leapt into his throat, that this was going to be a brutal match to the very end.

There was blood on the mat before the first round ended and Magnus had released Isabelle’s hand for fear he might crush it. One round in and it was only by the grace of the bell that Alec had managed to not tap out. He was already cut in his hairline, and Jace looked frantic in his corner while he gave him a pep talk between rounds. Magnus really hoped that whatever Jace was saying would help Alec, because he had not looked good in that first round.

By the end of the second round, it was clear Jace’s pep talk had been a failure.

“Fuck,” Isabelle said roughly beside Magnus as the second round ended and Alec stumbled to his corner, visibly dazed from the beating he’d just received. His eye was swelling rapidly in a way that made Magnus worried he wouldn’t be able to see for the next round, and he was panting hard. Alec was shaking his head frantically at whatever Jace said, but when Jace started shouting, clearly trying to fire him up, they could hear a bit of it even over the crowd.

“What’re you trying to prove!?”

Alec’s reply was muffled by his mouth guard, but it was clear enough that Magnus sat up straight in surprise, turning to look at Isabelle, who shrugged.

“A fucking point!”

Jace clapped him on the arm and let him go and in the next round, it was obvious Alec was really fighting harder. He got in a lot of good punches, there was some blood that went flying from his opponents nose when he landed a good, solid punch, but when he tried to get him on the ground, he slipped and he was trapped. His opponent locked his legs around Alec’s middle, and it was only Alec pulling with all his might at the arm around his throat and throwing blind punches behind him that kept him from getting choked out.

“COME ON ALEC!” Magnus cried while Isabelle did the same. “YOU’VE GOT HIM! YOU CAN DO THIS!” he shouted unable to help get into the fight as Alec got in more and more trouble. Once again, the bell was the only thing that saved him, and he looked like he was starting to flag. In
a normal fight this would be where a decision was made, but he had two rounds left and Magnus was terrified because Alec was clearly losing steam.

The instant the bell rang to start the fourth round, the guy had Alec. He had him hard. He got Alec hard in the face and then got him up against the cage, laying into him with body shots while Alec just hunkered down trying to protect his head, only to get a knee to the chin that knocked him back into the cage and made him fall. Magnus came out of his seat, hands over his mouth, but Alec scrambled back to his feet. He staggered and his opponent came after him, catching him repeatedly. Alec stayed on his feet, and the referee didn’t intervene, but the more blows he took the more Magnus wanted him to. He didn’t care if Alec lost the fight, because he was getting the shit beat out of him and it was painful.

Magnus didn’t even realize he was starting to tear up until Isabelle stood up as well and grabbed his hand in a vice grip and he saw tears in her eyes too, alerting him to his own dilemma. He turned back as the crowd roared and his heart broke as he saw Alec take more punches to the body over and over. He saw the referee starting across the ring to break it up finally and he just knew it was all about to be over and all of Alec’s hard work would end in the brutal loss he’d feared all along.

“ALEXANDER YOU CAN DO THIS!” he shouted with the crowd, many of whom were starting to react to the referee letting it go on this long.

However, before the referee could break them up, a knee came up and, in a flash that Magnus sure as hell didn’t see coming – and it seemed most of the audience didn’t either – Alec caught his leg and, with a surge of strength picked him up and slammed him to the mat with a bang that echoed, making the crowd go wild. Alec scrambled to avoid getting caught in a triangle and pinned the guy’s arms, punching him repeatedly in the face.

“Oh my God!” Isabelle cried, clapping and jumping. “ALEC! YES!” she cried, and when one hard, solid punch landed and the guy immediately went limp, the referee broke them up and the bell rang. Alec staggered to his feet raising his arms as he shouted in triumph but it was drowned out by the roar of the crowd, Magnus and Isabelle included as they jumped together, clapping. Isabelle hugged him and they both turned to see Jace running into the cage and picking Alec up with the force of his triumphant hug. Hodge and Lydia both jumped around the cage with them, hugging Alec even though they had blood all over them when they were done, staining their The Institute tee-shirts with red.

When the announcer came over and raised Alec’s hand declaring it a winner by a knockout, it was only moments later a guy with a microphone and a camera crew got up to Alec, who, truth be told, was being supported some by Jace. “Alec Lightwood, you have been out of the game for over a year and now you’re the new Middleweight Champion!” Everybody cheered and Jace’s cheer was audible on the microphone as he turned and hugged Lydia exuberantly before smacking Alec on the shoulder. “Tell us what it was like coming into this fight against such a powerful champion after a year off!”

Alec took the microphone with a wide eyed smile. “I spent the past year training some of the best fighters in this city, and I’m not ashamed of that, but honestly I came into this fight with only four weeks of conditioning and training, filling in a dropped card, without a chance in the world to actually win. I only fought this fight at all for one reason, and that’s to prove a point!” he said, and Jace slapped him on the shoulder as Alec turned so that he halfway-faced his mother where she stood back with the other manager by the cage door. “I am a disciplined, dedicated fighter, I put my heart into this sport, and I have spent my entire life living a fighter’s lifestyle, and now that I’ve got this belt and I am the Middleweight Champion, I’m taking this opportunity to prove my point.”

Magnus was confused about why Alec had turned to fully look at his mother rather than the camera.
Isabelle didn’t seem any more in the know than him, because she was frowning in confusion. Alec pointed at his mother before speaking again. “My mother is a legend in this sport, and I love her more than I think she even knows. But I’m not my mother.” He turned back to the interviewer’s camera, and Magnus looked up at the big screens that showed his face in close-up.

“The only reason I’m in this cage right now is so I could prove that anybody can be a fighter, and I wanna take this opportunity, after I’ve won this belt and there’s not a damn thing anybody can do to change the fact that I’m the champion, to apologize to the man that I love for letting my lifetime of self-hatred stand in the way of making sure he knows every single fucking day that he’s the best thing to ever happen to me, because he’s the love of my life and he stood by me even when I never stood by myself.”

Magnus’s hands flew to his mouth in shock, and he heard the startled murmurings taking over the cheers that had been flying around the room. He could see Maryse swaying like she was about to faint, half the people in the ring frozen like they had no idea what the hell just happened, and, most amusingly of all, Jace jumping ecstatically behind Alec.

The interviewer seemed at a loss for words. “Uh- that’s- uh- your- I mean you-“

Alec just beamed, looking freer covered in his own blood with an eye nearly swollen shut, than Magnus had ever seen him look and he was standing in the middle of a crowd. “I’m gay, Dude. I’m gay and in love with a bisexual dancer with a pretty fuckin’ excellent right hook, my brother Jace can confirm that,” he said, and Jace nodded, still bouncing around excitedly, clearly proud of his brother. “I heard he’s here tonight, and I love you, Magnus, I’m sorry, I’m so sorry for everything,” he said, looking right at the camera. “I don’t know if you will ever forgive me, but I love you no matter what.”

Alec handed the microphone back, clearly done with the interview, and he turned around, pulling Jace into a hug that Jace returned with enthusiasm.

Magnus didn’t hear the rest of what the interviewer asked as he moved on to the loser, because he was too busy looking around at Raphael, Simon, Clary, and Isabelle in shock. Raphael looked like he was about to die laughing any moment, Clary looked excited, Simon looked like he might cry, and Isabelle just grabbed him by the arm. “Come on,” she said, dragging him away from the table.

He followed her in a daze, absolutely astounded by the fact that Alec just came out after winning a title match, and used that opportunity to tell Magnus he loved him for the first time. Magnus didn’t even realize she had dragged him and pushed past the security with him in tow, people who clearly knew who she was seeing as they didn’t run after her, and pulled him over to where her mother and father had come down out of the cage, her mother spitting mad and her father laughing much to Magnus’s surprise.

Right after them Jace came down helping Alec get down the steps, since it was clear that now that the adrenaline was running out Alec really was pretty beat up, and Jace saw her and threw his hand out. “IZZY!”

“BIG BROTHER I’M SO PROUD OF YOU!” she shouted to Alec, who looked up, only to immediately look over her shoulder to Magnus.

Magnus didn’t even realize he was crying – full on, tears running down his face – until Alec reached out for him and he surprised himself with a sob. He rushed to Alec, wrapping his arms around him, not caring about the blood he would get all over his clothes from where it hadn’t all been wiped off of Alec’s chest and body. “Alexander,” he sobbed, clinging to Alec, face pressed into his neck.
“Magnus, fuck, Magnus,” Alec groaned, clinging to him so tightly it almost hurt, but Magnus didn’t care. He pulled back and reached up, afraid to actually touch Alec’s face.

“Oh, Darling, look at you,” he choked out, cataloguing the injuries just visible on his face, from the swollen shut eye to the split on his forehead that had been bandaged but was still seeping blood. “Oh God, Alec,” he whimpered. “Baby, your face-“

“I’m okay,” Alec reassured, raising his hand to slide through Magnus’s hair. “I’m okay, I’m okay, I promise.” He leaned in and kissed Magnus, who whimpered and stood up on his toes, pressing into the kiss. He knew it had to hurt Alec to kiss him like he was, but Alec kissed like he was drowning in Magnus and never wanted to stop. When the kiss finally broke, Alec kissed pressed their foreheads together, hand cradling Magnus’s head in his palm. “I love you, Magnus. I’m sorry, I’m so sorry. I fucked up so bad, I should’ve told you I love you every fucking day, not did this to you- to us both-“

Magnus let out a weak sob, shaking his head. “I love you, too,” he breathed, cupping Alec’s jaw in both hands. “I love you, Alexander Lightwood, and I am so proud of you. Oh God, you are…” He laughed, tears still streaking his face. “You’re incredible.”

Alec kissed him again, slower and less hurried this time, but a clearing throat interrupted them, and Magnus pulled back with a start, flushing when he realized he had totally forgotten the dozens of sports network cameras all around them. Jace just grinned, winking at him. “Alright, alright, romantic show over. Alec really needs to go see the medic, and you and Izzy are probably about to get booted from the venue for busting the line like that.”

Magnus just turned back to Alec, who squeezed him close with one arm, pulling his head forward to kiss his forehead in parting. “No they won’t, they’re coming with us backstage,” he said, reaching out to take his sister’s hand as he hooked his arm over Magnus’s shoulders.

Magnus grabbed him around the middle and didn’t bother hiding a single look for adoration and love that might get caught on every single camera present as he helped Alec’s guys get him back to get assessed by the medical representative. Alec didn’t seem to give a damn who saw them, because like it or not, there was now a gay MMA champion and nobody else could win his title without fighting him, so he always had one more fight left. No matter what, there was going to be an openly gay man fighting MMA and Magnus could not be more proud of him than he was.

He knew without a trace of a doubt that he had also never loved anyone more than he loved Alexander Lightwood, and he felt pretty damn confident that their love had a fighting chance.

End Notes

I really hope somebody actually read this fic. I haven’t been this inspired in YEARS so I hope it doesn’t go entirely uninteresting to everybody. If you liked it, let me know. Even if you didn’t like it but read it all, just let me know SOMEONE read it, lol.

Works inspired by this one
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!