Blue

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Blue

by mechanical-scarecrow (WhimsicalWordWeaver)

Summary

Alec is the only Sub in the Institute and he knows that he will never have a Dom. He will never have a collar.

Everyone expects him to fail.

Then he met Magnus Bane. And he started to believe in himself again.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Alec grit his teeth as he stared at his reflection in the mirror. He tilted his head back, revealing that it was bare except for the rune on the side. He frowned as a wave of cold shivered down his spine.

Alec needed to Drop. It had been months since he was sent down, and even still it wasn’t done properly, leaving him shaking and trapped in his too tight skin.

Alec looked his reflection in the eye, "You don't deserve it."

Because it was true. Besides, he had too many responsibilities to worry about. He was the only Sub in the Institute currently, and they all expected him to fail as Acting Head. He could tell in the way that they looked at him. Some had decided to not be quite so subtle.

He took a step back and frowned at his reflection. It was really no wonder, he thought, that no Dom wanted him. His hand went, almost unwillingly, to his neck, tracing the skin that he used to dream would be covered with a collar. He no longer had that dream.

He had given up on that dream long ago. He shivered and he could feel himself start to slip. God, it had been so long, months, but he couldn't. He shouldn't. He didn't deserve it.

A knock on the door made him jerk his hand away from his throat. He cleared his throat. "Yea?"

"We're needed. We have a mission."

Alec sighed and let his head hang down, before turning to open the door. Isabelle looked concerned.

"It's unlike you to be so late. Is everything ok?"

"I'm fine, didn't sleep well last night."

Isabelle took a step closer to Alec, eyebrows furrowed, "When was the last time you... you know?"

Alec took a deep breath through his nose. This was part of the problem. No one would openly acknowledge what he was. "You mean Dropped, Izzy. It's been months since I have dropped."

"You know if you don't it's bad for you!"

Alec rolled his eyes, he was so tired, "It's not like I have a choice. You don't see a lot of people wanted to bring me down do you?"

"Well, you can do it yourself can't you?" Izzy looked so earnest. It made Alec feel bad for snapping at her.

"I could. But it's messy."

Izzy opened her mouth to respond, but Jace came in, "What are you guys doing? They're waiting for us."

Alec shot a pointed look at his sister, "Nothing, let's go."

... The mission was unusual in that they were after a rogue Shadowhunter. They weren't sure what he was planning on doing, but he had stolen a high number of weapons from the Institute, and that was
enough to be on high alert.

Jace, Alec, and Izzy dodged through the shadows, quickly finding their way into the warehouse that the rogue was hiding. They crouched behind crates, the other two looking to Alec for instruction. He struggled to keep himself sturdy, even though his brain was screaming at him that it was wrong, wrong, wrong for him to be giving orders.

He glanced over the crate, squatting back down before he could be seen. "The Shadowhunter is in the center of the room. He's surrounded by guards."

"Downworlders?"

Alec was already shaking his head, "No, I think they're just hired mundanes. They don't know what's going on."

Isabelle made an annoyed sound, "Which means we have to be subtle. Think we need a distraction?" Isabelle loved being the distraction. She was already flipping her hair over her shoulder, squaring herself to be as seductive as possible.

Jace cleared his throat and shifted uncomfortably, "Izzy, this is a room full of very obvious dominant males. You're not... the distraction most of them want."

Alec sucked in a breath. He could feel it, the dominance in the room, a heavy weight in the air. Part of him (most of him) wants to submit, just for a moment, but he couldn't. He swallowed and gripped his bow harder.

"Ok," Izzy said, with a tight nod, she refused to put Alec in that position. She was already putting her whip away, "Mundane weapons then."

Alec shook his head, removing his quiver. "There are too many, you know that. We'd need our gear. Otherwise we'd have to kill some of them. We need to distract them. You two will sneak around and get our guy. I bet the rest of these guys won't know what to do without him."

He glanced down at himself and frowned, there was no way that he was attractive enough to be a distraction.

Jace grabbed his arm, "You don't have to do this. We can figure something else out."

Alec gave a nod, "I know." Time to put his minimal acting skills to use. He ran his hands through his hair and dodged to crates far away from his siblings. Once alone, he closed his eyes for a moment and placed his head on the crate. His fingertips ached. Alec gave one slow exhale before standing, trying his best to look confused, lost, and most importantly, vulnerable.

He stumbled his way to the center of the crowd, counting at least 20 guys. "Where... where am I? I... somebody was chasing me... and now I'm lost." He made sure to keep himself breathless, "Can you help me?"

The closest mundane man stepped forward, and Alec had to resist the urge to flinch back. The man raised a hand and traced a finger down Alec's cheek. "Well, aren't you beautiful?"

Oh.

Alec's eyes slipped shut as he preened at the compliment. Nobody had ever called him beautiful before. It felt... it felt nice.
The man's thumb passed over his lips and Alec just wanted to submit, but he couldn't. He was on a mission. His siblings were here, and he had to make sure that they stayed safe. He pulled himself from the edge and opened his eyes. He felt hazy.

"What is a nice Sub like you doing in a place like this?"

Alec took in a shuddering breath, and he could feel more of the mundanes coming closer around him.

He licked his lips, "I... uh... told you that I... got lost."

They chuckled, and hands were on him, "You don't have a collar."

Alec couldn't say anything to that, so he just shook his head.

"Shame," the man said, "Good audition and that might just change."

The hand slipped around to the back of his neck, and Alec was pulled forward. He didn't have a moment to prepare for the kiss. Just before their lips met, Jace and Izzy made their move.

"Stop!" Jace shouted, blade pulled out, but not activated, and pointing at the rogue's heart, Izzy's arm wrapped tight around his neck. The mundane holding Alec loosened his grip enough and Alec struck. A few quick moves and the Dom was down, clutching at his broken wrist. Alec tugged out the knife he kept in his boot out.

"Don't move," Izzy said, "Or he dies."

The mundanes froze, as expected, but the one who Alec attacked turned toward him with a sneer.

"No wonder you don't have a collar. You're a worthless Sub."

Alec couldn't help it, he rocked back on his heels as if he had been slapped. The rest of the mundanes moved then, and really Alec should have seen that coming, but it was too late now, and there was no way he would be able to defend himself against all of them.

Then Jace was with him, having moved too fast for any human, blade glowing. He wasn't aiming to kill, just incapacitate. Izzy, continuing to hold the rogue, tossed his bow to him. He caught it, ignoring the shaking in his limbs, the hollowness in his bones, and spun, swinging out the bow to hit against the mundanes until he had enough space to nock an arrow. Now that they were no longer trying to keep the Shadow world a secret, it was fairly easy to take them down.

Alec was shaking from fighting off the Drop. His eyes couldn't focus and he felt so very cold.

"Alec?" Izzy asked. She had quickly drawn a rune for silence and a rune to bind the rogue in his place. "Are you ok?"

Alec nodded, a little too hard, "We- we need to call someone, a warlock, to come and remove their memory."

"What do we do with them?" Jace was breathing hard from the fight and looked powerful. Alec desperately just wanted to curl up against him, but he couldn't.

Alec rubbed his fingers against his forehead, "Call the mundane police. Odds are they have done something wrong anyway. Besides isn't there a werewolf there?"

Izzy nodded, "On it."
Jace sighed and pulled out his phone, "I'll call the Institute and tell them to get a warlock."

Alec pulled out his stele and marked a stamina rune on his skin. He was fading fast. Jace finished his phone call first and made his way back to Alec.

"You ok?"

"I'm fine." He was dragging himself away from toppling over the edge.

Jace looked uncomfortable, "You sure? You seemed like you were about to... Drop."

"I was." Still am.

Jace cleared his throat, "Oh."

Alec smirked at Jace, even though he sucked at it, he knew he was trying to help. "You don't know a thing about Subs do you?"

"It's hard to get to know one in our line of work." Jace laughed, "But yea, you're right, I don't really know."

He was wavering around Dropping again. He knew he wouldn't be able to get away without letting it happen. Still, he let the matter drop. "Which warlock is coming?"

"The High Warlock of Brooklyn. His name is Magnus Bane."

"Were you given an ETA?"

"That would be now."

Alec and Jace spin around, hands going to their weapons. For being a High Warlock, he looked nothing like Alec expected. He was a Dom, obviously, being the High Warlock Alec didn't expect anything else. But what really surprised Alec, was the warlock's outfit. The man wore a tight white crop top with the word "MAGIC" written on it in bold, black letters. The man's stomach was strong and toned and Alec couldn't help but stare. The warlock also wore tight black leather pants and completed the look with fire red combat boots.

He looked annoyed, "This better be important. I was about to go dancing."

Jace snorted and the warlock, Magnus, glared at him, magic sparkling at his fingertips. Alec could barely tear his eyes away. Then Magnus turned his gaze on him and Alec swallowed, wishing that he looked better.

But Magnus smiled, a small curve at the side of his mouth. "Well, maybe my night isn't ruined after all."

Alec's eyes widened and he could feel the blood rush to his cheeks. "I... uh..." He cleared his throat, "We need you to get rid of these men's memories."

Magnus was smirking as he walked, no sauntered, toward Alec, "Oh? And why would that be, Shadowhunter?"

Alec opened his mouth and he knew he should be speaking, but all he could manage was an odd, choking noise.

"We revealed ourselves. They know of the Shadow World," Jace explained, putting himself slightly
between Magnus and Alec.

Magnus raised an eyebrow. "You don't have to protect him from me. I'm sure that he can take care of himself." He turned back toward Alec, face pleasant again, "Though you don't need to protect yourself from me."

Alec couldn't help the small smile that crossed his lips.

Magnus smiled as well. He turned away with a flourish, "I thought you Shadowhunters were more careful than this. What made you reveal our world to a room full of mundanes?"

Jace and Alec shifted uncomfortably. Magnus turned back toward them, eyebrow arched expectantly. It was obvious that he wasn't going to perform any magic without an explanation. Alec sighed and looked away, crossing his arms over his chest.

"I almost Dropped around them. Being a distraction. They were not... subtle."

Magnus froze, the tension very apparent in his spine. Alec glanced and saw a flicker in his eyes. Magnus swept his hand through the air. Blue magic glittered through the air and surrounded the men. Magnus was still tense. "There. Their memory is gone. As requested."

Alec glance at Jace, still standing in front of him, and carefully stepped around him. He was Head of the Institute, he didn't need to have someone to protect him. Jace glanced at him, concerned, but didn't pursue.

"You didn't just erase their memories of this did you?"

Magnus pursed his lips, glancing up at Alec, "How did you know?"

Alec shrugged, "It just... seemed like it."

Magnus trailed his eyes up and down Alec's form. "Interesting. Well, Shadowhunter-"

"Alexander. Alec." Alec blurted out, wanting the warlock to know his name.

Magnus glanced at him again, surprise evident in his expression, "Alexander. Then. If you must know I erased everything. Except their name. That's all they get." Magnus turned, stepping around their unconscious bodies. Alec followed him, almost on automatic.

"Why would you do that?"

Magnus sighed, "I don't appreciate their actions. They give Doms a bad name. Subs are not property. They're... you're people and what you want is just as important."

Alec blinked, and a wave of confusion washed over him. Nobody had ever said something like that before.

Magnus glanced around, and stepped closer to Alec. He spoke quietly, "You said you almost Dropped. Are you ok?"

He hissed in a sharp breath through his nose. "I... that is... I haven't. I don't know... I..."

Magnus' eyes were sad, "Oh. When was the last time you dropped?"

Alec looked away, as if he had done something wrong, "Months. Over... half a year."
Magnus' mouth dropped open a bit, "You haven't... oh, darling. Do I have permission to touch you?"

Alec shifted, "I don't know you."

"True. But you can get to know me. A drink, perhaps?"

Alec furrowed his eyebrows, "You're asking me out on a date?"

"Absolutely."

Alec scoffed, "Why?"

Magnus opened his mouth to reply, but he never got a chance. Izzy bounded toward them, dragging Jace with her. "The werewolf, his name is Luke, is on his way. He's going to handle this. We need to be gone by the time they get here."

Alec nodded once, "Let's go."

Magnus raised his hands, magic sparking at his fingers, "I can create a portal. I need to go to the Institute anyways. To collect payment for the service."

Jace and Izzy glanced at Alec. "Alright."

Magnus smirked as he conjured it up. "It'll be easier if we hold hands." He immediately held his hand to Alec. The Shadowhunter stared at it for a moment before accepting it. The warlock ran his thumb over the back of Alec's hand and he shivered.

They ran through the portal.

...

They appeared right in front of the Institute's front doors. Magnus clapped his hands together, "So. Who's the Head of the Institute?"

"I am."

Magnus blinked at Alec. Alec braced himself for the laughter. The disbelief. There was no way a Sub could run this place.

Magnus grinned, "Excellent. We can discuss business over that drink?"

Alec's eyes widened. "I... uh..."

"I must say," Magnus continued, "I am very pleased to hear you run the Institute, Alexander."

"You are?"

Magnus flicked his eyes up and down again over Alec's form, "Very. I think you'd make an excellent leader."

Izzy grabbed onto his arm, leaning against him and smiling. "You should go, Alec. Technically, it is business. You do have to work out payment with him."

"Why are you ok with this?"

Izzy's eyes turned sad, "Because this place is killing you Alec. You need this. Just give yourself
tonight at least."

Could he really? He had so many things that he had to do. He couldn't just drop them all. There was no way-

"Go," Jace said, "We'll handle anybody who says otherwise. You're the boss here after all. You can pretty much do what you want."

Magnus smiled and held out a hand.

Alec felt like he couldn't breathe as he glanced between Magnus and the Institute.

"You need this," Jace said, "You need at least a night away from here."

Alec swallowed. He stepped toward Magnus, reaching out to grab his hand. The warlock smiled.

"We'll take care of the Institute for you." Izzy said. Jace nodded and the two went inside.

Magnus pulled Alec a step closer, "Now then, Alexander. Sensitive topic, but I need to know. It's been so long since your last Drop. I imagine you're still close?"

Alec swallowed, thinking about how close he was earlier. How close he still was. It wouldn't take much to send him down. "Yes."

"I want you to know that there are no expectations of you." Magnus said, "I want to get to know you."

Alec quirked an eyebrow, "I thought this was a business meeting?"

"I think we both know that this is more than that." Magnus reached out and placed his hand on Alec's upper arm. "Would you like to come back to my place?" He must have felt Alec tense underneath his touch, because he assured the Shadowhunter again. "There are no expectations of you, I promise. As I said before, what you want is just as important. I very simply just want to get to know you."

Alec looked around, shrugging what was probably too many times, "Why?"

Magnus tilted his head, like he was inspecting Alec, and he almost wanted to cover himself up with his arms. Magnus smiled, "Let me make this clear to you, Alec. I felt a spark in there. I like you. And I'd like to explore that spark."

No one had ever spoken to him like that.

"Well, Alexander, give me a chance, and I'll talk to you like that all you want."

"Oh, I didn't mean to... say that out loud."

"I find you increasingly charming." Magnus raised a hand, "May I touch you?"

Alec couldn't speak so he just nodded instead.

Magnus placed a hand on his cheek, rubbing a thumb on the skin under his eye. It was soothing. "We can do whatever you are comfortable with doing."

Alec didn't really want to go mingle in public. Yet, he felt strangely comfortable with just going to the warlock's house. "I would like... your place. But just drinks."
"Of course, Alexander." Magnus said, "Although I do want to say one thing. I will only say it once. And I only say it because I can tell that you are in pain. I can Drop you, no strings attached, if you want. It will be slow and gently. And all about you, as it should be."

"What about drinks?"

"We can do that too. Or either. Or neither of them."

"You won't be disappointed?"

"Oh, I could never be that."

Alec bit his lip, "Then, just drinks tonight. Please. I don't want to Drop tonight, especially after the mission."

"That is perfectly wonderful," Magnus said, and he seemed so sincere. "Shall we?"

Alec nodded and off they went.
Chapter 2

Magnus' loft was crazier than the man's outfit, which was saying something. It was messy, but not so much that it was distressing. Magnus sauntered in, waving his arms around, "Welcome to my loft. Feel free to look around and make yourself comfortable. If you see my cat, please let me know. He's been away for a few days now."

Magnus walked over to the kitchen, which had a nice long bar table separating it from the living room. Alec remained where he was. "Any preference on drinks?"

"I haven't had alcohol before."

Magnus glanced up at him, "How old are you?"

"Twenty."

The warlock hummed and got to work mixing the drinks. Alec took the time to allow himself fully to enter the room. He liked it. It was cozy. Already, he liked it much better than the Institute. Magnus came back over from around the bar, handing a drink out to Alec. The Shadowhunter took a sip and fought back a cough as it burned its way down his throat. Magnus smirked at him and took a drink of his own.

"Tell me about yourself."

Alec was confused, "What do you want to know?"

"Anything." He took another drink, "Everything."

Alec took another drink as he thought, "Unlike most Shadowhunters, I was raised here in New York rather than in Idris." It was a boring fact, but Alec couldn't think of anything else. Sure, he fought demons, but that just day-to-day for him.

Magnus raised an eyebrow, "Any particular reason why? I thought it was customary for Shadowhunters to be raised in the capital?"

"It is," Alec said. He was getting caught up in the story. He sat on the couch, "But when I was really young, before Isabelle was born, we did live in Alicante. Really, I was too young to remember any of it. But we moved. My parents became head of the Institute in New York until I took over. We've been here ever since."

"What is your last name? Maybe I know more of what happened? I was in New York at the time."

"Lightwood."

Magnus tensed and Alec froze, quickly realizing that that was not a good thing. Magnus quickly took another drink, looking everywhere but at Alec. Alec just wanted to fold in on himself and disappear.

"Your parents are Maryse and Robert Lightwood?"

"Yes."

Magnus sat his glass down and crossed his legs, grasping his knee with his hands. "What do you know of the Circle?"
Alec furrowed his eyebrows, "Sounds familiar. Didn't it have something to do with Valentine Morgenstern?"

Magnus was nodding before he even finished speaking, "He founded it. Their belief was that all Downworlders needed to be destroyed and that's what they tried to do. They murdered many without a second thought."

"What does this have to do with my parents?"

"They were in the Inner Circle, some of the most important members. They were banished to New York, never allowed to live in Idris again."

Alec was silent as he stared down at the couch between them. Honestly, he could say he wasn't surprised. His parents were always stricter than most. But to think... that they were actually part of something like that. No wonder Magnus tensed up. "You think I'm like them?"

"Not really, no. But it is a possibility."

Alec scoffed, swirling the drink in the glass, "I am nothing like them. They tried all my life to make me the perfect soldier. To do everything exactly as they wanted me to. I wasn't allowed to be... me. Then I went and ruined all of their hard work when I presented. They had never been so disappointed."

"You can't help how you were born," Magnus said, the tension was bleeding out of him, and he was leaning toward Alec again.

"To them I was a failure. Subs are rare for Shadowhunters. Any Nephilim that are don't become Shadowhunters. It's banned actually in most circumstances. I'm the only Sub at the Institute."

Magnus looked sad, "If it's banned then how did you become one?"

"I presented much later than normal. I already received my first rune and Jace and I were parabatai. It's illegal to break that bond, even for them. Where he goes, I go. Where I go, he goes. It's a bond that lasts forever. They couldn't take it away from either of us. So they let me stay a Shadowhunter, with conditions. They monitor me constantly. I have to pass tests every few months to prove that I'm still capable of it. The minute I mess up, even in the tiniest of ways, I'm done. They can't take away my runes, but they can make it so I can't leave the Institute."

"So, being put in charge?"

"I inherited it. Sort of. When my parents left and someone needed to be in charge, I was the only one in the family line old enough. So it's mine until my parents come back." Alec knocked back the last of the drink, grimacing at the burn. Magnus gently eased the glass out of his hands. "I'm sorry that you have to deal with that. No one should be punished or discriminated just because of what they are."

Alec shrugged suddenly feeling very light and very tired all at once. He had never explained it to someone before. It was... nice in a way.

"I take it, though, that this means that you haven't been getting taken care of."

"I don't need to be taken care of."

"I know you don't need to be," Magnus was quick to reassure, "But you deserve to be."
"Why do you care so much about me?"

"Because I've been alive long enough and I've seen true cruelty of the world. Plus, I think you have pretty eyes."

Alec blushed, and glanced away, "Where... do you want this to go?"

"I'm not exactly sure, but that's the glory of it, isn't it?"

Alec was silent for a moment. He felt calm, which was weird, but it was good. "Now that you know something about me, tell me something about you."

Magnus smiled, propping himself up on his arm on the back of the couch to stare at Alec, intent clear in his eyes. "Anything in particular that you would like to know?"

Alec bit his lip, "I want to see your demon mark. If that's alright."

"My, my, Alexander. I never took you to be so forward." He grinned as Alec flushed, but continued, "I keep it hidden by a glamour. But I suppose, I can let it down for you." Magnus closed his eyes. When he opened them again, he smiled at Alec with the eyes of a cat. They gleamed in the low light. Alec thought they were infinitely more beautiful than the eyes Magnus created for his glamour.

"I like them," Alec said truthfully, unable to fully form his thoughts into words, "They suit you."

Magnus grinned, "You never cease to amaze me."

"We've only known each other for a few hours." Alec laughed. He hadn't laughed in awhile. It was nice.

"Then we're off to a wonderful start."

...

When Alec returned to the Institute, it was nearing three in the morning. Luckily, there was no one around that would bother him. He quickly made his way to his bedroom and collapsed onto his bed, a silly grin on his face.

It was nice to have someone fully pay attention to him and to look at him like that.

He felt good.

He wanted to see Magnus again.

...

He woke up to a pillow being swung at his face. He grunted, shoving Izzy off of him. Instead of falling over, like any good sister would have, she gracefully rolled to the floor. In a flash she was back and grabbing him by the shoulders. "Tell. Me. Everything."

Alec glared, "We had drinks. It was nice."

Izzy pouted, "Is that all you're going to tell me?"

Alec shrugged, "That's all that happened. We had drinks. We talked. It was nice."

"Was he nice to you? He didn't try to force himself on you did he?"
Alec groaned, "Oh my god, Izzy. He was nice. Everything was nice."

Izzy finally let him sit up, "Well are you at least going to see him again?"

"You're very persistant."

Izzy smirked, "It's my job. Now gossip with me like a good brother."

Alec sighed in defeat, "Yes I'm going to see him again. In two days. We're having dinner."

Isabelle squealed, "I've been waiting for this day my entire life!"

Alec stood, blearily rubbing his hand over his eyes. He was almost too scared to ask, "Why?"

"Because you have to let me give you a makeover!"

Alec groaned, "No, Izzy."

Isabelle jumped up, "Oh come on. You know that I'd make you look good!"

"There's no way that anybody can make this," he gestured to himself, "Look good." Alec blinked as he realized the truth behind his words. There literally was no way that Magnus found him attractive. Very simply because he just wasn't. The minute Magnus realized that...

Alec wasn't a good Sub. There was no way Magnus would want to stay with him.

"Alec," Izzy said, "Are you ok?"

Alec nodded, "I'm fine, Iz." He was fine. Even after just a night talking to Magnus, he had felt better almost immediately.

"Good," Izzy said. She took a deep breath, "I think Magnus will be good for you."

He chuckled, "We've only been on one date, Iz."

"So? I have a good feeling about this guy. You need someone, Alec. And don't try to convince me otherwise. I know that you do."

Alec swallowed, thinking about the last time he Dropped. "Yea, maybe I do."

...

Alec was making his rounds throughout the Institute. It was honestly one of his favorite parts of the job. He could easily check up and make sure that everyone was doing fine. It made him feel good. It helped him to center himself if he was too close to a Drop. He breathed slowly as he walked, letting the knowledge that he was being helpful to all of these Doms soothe his psyche.

He was on the way to check on the training room when Jace ran up to him. "We received an anonymous tip about that mundane blood ring that's been going down."

They've been trying to crack that case for a month now. Alec was instantly on full alert, "What about it?"

"A hand off is going to happen. Tonight. At the club Pandemonium."

"Pandemonium."
"It's a club that Downworlders frequent although many of the guests are mundanes."

"So we need to be careful."

Jace licked his lips, which he always did right before he told Alec something he knew he wouldn't like, "We'll need to blend in."

Alec blanched, he hated dancing. He took a deep breath, "Awesome."

... "Izzy, get that away from me."

"C'mon Alec, just a little!"

"No, Izzy."

"It won't hurt at all."

"No."

"It'll take like two seconds."

"No!"

"I will tackle you to the ground, Alexander Lightwood. Don't think I won't."

"Try me then."

A beat of silence.

"Izzy, I swear to God that if you do not get away from me I will-，“

"It's just a bit of eyeliner!"

"I said no!"

"But you'll look so good! I promise! Do you doubt my makeup abilities?"

"...You're not going to let me out of here are you?"

"Not a chance."

"Fine. But only a little. I mean it."

...

So, admittedly Alec really enjoyed having make up put on him. He felt pretty.

...

"Dude, are you wearing-，“

"Not. A. Word." Alec said, as he walked past Jace heading out of the Institute. Isabelle had gone on ahead, getting a scene of the party. Alec thought she just wanted an excuse for her to have fun more than actually working on the mission.
"I'm not trying to make fun of you man," Jace said, clearing his throat, "I actually think you look good."

Alec could feel the blood start to run into his cheeks. He kept his head down.

Jace realized what he said and the words just started to bubble out, "I mean, uh, you always look good. You just always seem so... so Dom. It's like you don't let anyone really see that you're a Sub. And it's not a bad thing! But it's like you lock a part of yourself away sometimes."

"You know I can't... that I have to..." He couldn't speak properly. It was like his throat had decided to choke on nothing.

"I know," Jace said, "But I want you to know, that I think you look good. And I don't think of you any lesser for embracing that part of you."

Alec swallowed, but it didn't help anything, "I'm not exactly a good Sub."

Jace grabbed Alec's shoulder bringing him to a halt, "Alec, anyone would be lucky to have you."

"Yea, that's why you see a line of Doms waiting to date me."

Jace just stared at him for a moment, but Alec was done talking about it. He shrugged Jace's hand off of his shoulder and kept walking toward Pandemonium.

After a moment, Jace followed.

... 

Alec scrunched up his nose as he entered the club. He had no idea how anyone in the world could label something like this as fun. Jace was grinning, of course he was, and Alec was envious.

"Let's go find, Izzy," he shouted over the crowd.

"Right."

The two fought their way through the crowd. Many of the Subs wanted to dance with Jace, and Alec grit his teeth in annoyance. Still, they eventually made their way through. Izzy was already waiting for them, silently taking a sip of whatever colorful drink she had near the side.

"Took you long enough," she said with a grin.

Alec rolled his eyes, "What have you found out?"

She took another sip, "Well, over there behind that curtain is off limits tonight. That place is never off limits. And every few minutes someone quietly slips inside. So far no one has come back out."

"Looks like we found where this hand off is going to be."

"Good job, Iz."

"Let's go."

Sneaking in was easy. And Izzy created a wonderful distraction, as she usually did. Jace was great at interrogating, he usually always got the answers he was looking for, but tonight ended with a fight. From her high position, Izzy was able to easily use her whip to take down their enemies. Jace and Alec worked flawlessly as a team to take down whoever remained.
They stood, panting after everyone was dead, trying to catch their breath.

"Oh... oh my God." A voice stuttered out, "You guys... you... you just killed that person. Oh my God."

The three Shadowhunters turned almost as one at the new voice. A girl around their age was staring at them slack jawed, shaking as she pointed at the bodies around them. She seemed on the verge of having a full blown panic attack.

Jace ran forward, clamping a hand over her mouth, "Don't scream."

"Clary? Where are you?"

Jace stepped back hurriedly as another man walked in. "Clary, what's wrong?"

Clary turned to him, horror clear on her features. "Simon... Can't you see them?"

Simone glanced around the room, "See who? Clary, are you ok? Did you drink anything?"

"They're right there!"

"I don't see anyone!"

Clary stared at them again and Jace cockily put a finger to his lips. Alec glared at him.

Clary furrowed her brows and stepped back, turning away. "You don't see anyone?"

"No, Clary," Simon said, starting to look very, very worried. He slowly reached out to touch her, to try to steady her. With a jolt, Alec realized that they weren't Subs. Nor were the Doms. Both of them were Switches, which was rare in itself. "Clary, I think you might be coming down with something."

"But... I..."

"You know you haven't been sleeping well." Simon said, "Come on. I'll take you home. We can get a nice hot coffee on the way." Simon looked concerned and wrapped an arm around the redhead's shoulders. They started to walk away. The redhead girl, Clary, kept glancing behind her until she was past the curtain.

"She could see us."

Isabelle stepped forward, peering through the curtains, "She has the Sight. She didn't believe that guy that we didn't exist."

"Think we need to keep an eye on her?" Jace said.

"For now, we can leave her. We have more important things to do. If she has the Sight, she'll find us." Alec said beginning to move the bodies off to the side for easier clean up, "We need to finish this up. ID the bodies."

This was the horrible part of being a Shadowhunter. After the battle and the adrenaline was over they still had to clean up the mess. It wasn't so great when they were cleaning up dead bodies. Still, it was work that had to be done, and Alec would do it to the best of his ability.

"This isn't the party that I imagined."

Alec tensed and turned, maybe a bit too eagerly. Only one night and he already knew that voice.
Magnus.

The warlock was standing there looking magnificent as ever, examining the room with dead Downworlders with a raised eyebrow. Alec swallowed, worried that Magnus would take this badly.

"May I ask why you killed some of my guests?"

Alec was about to answer, but Jace beat him to it, "Your guests?"

"Why, yes," Magnus said, with a shrug, "This is my club after all. I own it."

Alec stepped forward, he wanted to be close to the other man, "We were hunting down a ring of Downworlders. They've been peddling mundane blood."

Magnus frowned and tilted his head to the side, "Well, I suppose that's alright then, but that's only because it's you my dear Alexander."

Alec blushed.

"Now, don't you have people who can come and do this for you? This is the best club in all of Brooklyn and you are spending it working? Now, that just won't do."

"We can't just leave these bodies here," Jace said, "Unless that's the kind of decor you're looking for."

Magnus gave him an unimpressed look, "Hardly. Now, come party for the night. I assure you this will all be taken care of."

"I'm not exactly complaining with that," Izzy said.

"We should really get back to the Institute." Alec didn't sound too convincing to himself.

Magnus stepped closer and grabbed Alec's hand, holding up between them, "C'mon, you successfully completed your mission. It's time for you to relax for awhile. You've earned it."

"I can't just do what I want whenever I want."

"Why not?" Magnus said, slowly stepping back toward the dancing, "Besides, your siblings want to join too."

Alec glanced toward them and then back to Magnus. "I suppose we did finish the mission."

"That you did."

"And we can't really move the bodies until the party is over."

"Right."

"So I suppose it would be responsible for us to stay here until we can move them anyway."

Magnus smirked, "That is the responsible thing to do, yes."

"And what better way to watch out for people sneaking in than to be with the people." He hated dancing, but he didn't want Magnus to leave.

Magnus grinned.
Alec glanced around and smiled a small, shy smile. "I suppose we could stay. Until the party is over and everyone clears out."

"Excellent. Now, why don't you come with me?"

Alec suddenly realized that if he went out there he would have to dance and there was no way he could move his body like that. Just let go of his mind like that. "I... uh... someone should stay here and make sure that no one comes in. The rest of you can go though."

"Nonsense," Magnus said, and his eyes gleamed. "This is my club, people only go where I want them to go."

"Well," Alec wavered, "I can go with you." He really, really didn't want to dance, but he didn't want to disappoint Magnus, "I guess."

"Have fun you crazy kids," Jace said, already heading toward the throng of girls that were trying to dance with him earlier.

"Don't do anything I wouldn't do," Izzy sing-songed, commanding the dance floor even though she wasn't on it yet.

That just left Magnus and Alec. Alone. In a room of bodies.

Magnus looked at him concerned, "What's wrong? You seem even more nervous today."

"I... uh..." Alec licked his lips, "This just isn't my area. I don't really... do well when people watch me."

Magnus looked sad, "Oh, Alexander. Why can't you see just how beautiful you are?"

Alec relaxed and his tilted his head back just a tiny bit. "You don't have to say those things. I know what I am."

Magnus took another step closer, they were so close now, practically touching. Alec could feel the heat emanating off of Magnus. He shivered, a small tingle going up his spine. "I believe that you think you know what you are. But in all actuality you couldn't be further from the truth."

Alec couldn't keep his eyes away from Magnus, "What do you mean?"

"I mean that I would like to prove it to you. If you let me."

Alec couldn't make himself say no.
Chapter 3

Magnus slowly led Alec out on the dance floor. "One day, you'll have to let me take you out properly. But we'll take it slow. Until you're ready."

"You're strangely accommodating."

"I am disgusted by the views of today's world of Subs. Subs aren't there to be ordered or controlled or used. You're not lesser than us because of subspace or because you Drop. People should be judged for who you are, not what you are." Magnus shrugged, "I don't know. Sorry, I'm trying not to make our meetings so... heavy right now."

Alec was gripping Magnus' hand tightly. He couldn't even begin to describe the well of emotions that he was feeling. He closed his eyes. His body was just screaming at him to let him Drop. To just let go like he needed to. A hand touched his cheek and he flinched.

"It's alright," Magnus said, soothingly, "Come here." Even though Alec was taller, Magnus still pulled him down so he could hid his face in the crook of Magnus' neck. He let the scent of the warlock wash over him.

Magnus kept at it with the soft words, whispering into Alec's ear, "You never have to try to be someone else around me. You never have to fight what you are."

Alec didn't say anything. He didn't think he could.

"Hey," Magnus said, "Look at me." There was a tinge of Dom in his voice, enough so Alec shivered. He snapped back so he could look at Magnus. His neck tweaked a little bit, but he didn't let himself show the pain he felt.

"Hey, hey," Magnus was gentle now, realizing the affect his voice had on Alec, "Easy. You don't have to automatically obey me. We don't have a contract. We're not even in a relationship. Although, I would like to change that as soon as possible."

Alec nodded, but he had wanted to listed to Magnus. To follow his orders and do whatever he said.

Magnus must have seen something in his eyes because he practically cooed. "Oh, you want to. You want to obey. Trust me, Alexander, we will get there. But if you really want an order, I have one. Do you want it?"

Alec nodded, still not quite able to speak.

Magnus smiled at him, "Try to have fun tonight. Do what you want to do."

"...I can do that."

...

Alec was drifting so very close to subspace. The closest he had been in a long while. His head was lulled back, exposing his throat. His mouth was slightly open, emphasizing the pout of his lower lip. They were dancing, sort of, more like swaying back and forth together off to the side of the club. Away from the crowd without being totally isolated. Alec hadn't wanted to be in the group of people dancing wildly to the fast music, so Magnus found them a quiet spot.
"Alec?"

The Shadowhunter hummed, eyes half-lidded. He was losing himself. He loved it. Alec brought a hand up to stroke along his own neck. He frowned slightly at the bare feeling, but Magnus was watching him. He liked Magnus watching him.

Magnus made a choked sound in the back of his throat as Alec moved. The young man was beautiful and Magnus couldn't understand how no one realized that. Even though he wanted nothing more than to just continue the night as it had been going, he could tell from the fuzziness in Alec's eyes that the Shadowhunter was far too close to subspace. He didn't want him to suddenly Drop in the middle of the club.

He tightened the grip he had on Alec's hips so the younger man would stop dancing. Alec frowned and blinked at him, "Did I do something wrong?"

Magnus was quick to stop Alec's fears, "Not at all. I just don't want to accidentally send you into Subdrop."

Alec tensed, Magnus had completely forgot how sensitive people were when they were so close subspace. How careful he needed to be. "Why?" Alec's voice sounded so broken and the way he held his body screamed insecurity. "Do you not want me?"

Alec was being too loud, the others in the club near them were beginning to listen in. Magnus walked them slowly away, glaring at the crowd as he did. Alec refused to look at him. "Why does no one want me? I try, I try to be a... a good Sub, but no one even looks at me."

"Alexander," Magnus was ready to soothe him, but Alec was left to the panic of his mind.

"No one has even given me a collar before. I'm twenty and no one has even given me a collar." Alec tried to pull away, but Magnus wouldn't let him. If he wasn't careful, Alec could Drop right here and now.

"Alec, come here."

Alec obeyed instantly. His head was so fuzzy. Why did he always make mistakes? He just wanted to be good. His mouth opened on its own accord and he could not control the words flowing out. "I'm sorry. I can do better. I promise. I can be good. I'm sorry."

"Alec."

Alec flinched, "Sorry. I'm sorry." Magnus had never called him that before, and now he had said it twice.

"Alexander," Magnus realized his mistake, "You've done nothing wrong. I assure you."

Alec was shaking his head before he had even finished speaking. "I'm a bad sub. Nobody even wants me."

"I want you."

Alec froze and stared at him, unable to believe him. He licked his lips and whispered, "I haven't Dropped in so long."

"I know you haven't." Magnus kept his voice soft.
"It hurts."

Magnus slowly led them to the leather couch that he always claimed as his own. With a glare, he emptied it and the area around it so that he and Alec could have some semblance of privacy. He wanted to help, but he didn't want to push too far. Still, Alec looked like he was on his way to having a breakdown.

He hesitated too long because Alec stumbled back, hand coming up to grab his forehead. His other arm wrapped around his stomach. It looked as if he were holding himself together. "I'm just... I have to go. I can't... It hurts too much."

Magnus reached out and snagged Alec's sleeve. The Shadowhunter was so far gone, he couldn't let him leave now. There was no way Alec could properly defend himself right now.

"Get on your knees."

Alec crashed down so fast that his knees hit the floor with a sharp crack. He didn't flinch though, just stared up at Magnus with wide eyes.

"Oh, darling," Magnus silently berated himself, he needed to be more careful around Alec, "Please don't hurt yourself. I would never want that." He eased his hands into Alec's hair, gently stroking through it. Sometimes, he would scratch his fingernails along his scalp and watch the Shadowhunter's eyelids flutter.

Alec hummed and his hands twitched in his lap. Magnus chuckled, "You have permission to touch."

Alec happily wrapped his arms around Magnus' leg, pulling him close. He nuzzled his cheek into the warlock's knee.

"Alec, can you speak?"

"Mmm," Alec hummed, when he finally spoke it was slurred and slow, "Yes, sir."

"Very good," Magnus said, "You're doing so very well. Just beautiful. But I need to ask you some questions before we can do anything else. Is that ok, darling?"

Questions? Why did he want to ask questions? Alec couldn't think through the fuzziness that was his brain and he just wanted to obey so he nodded, eyes slipping closed again. Magnus licked his lips, knowing that he was about to open up a not-so-fun subject, but he had to know. He couldn't risk hurting Alec.

"You said the last time you Dropped was over six months ago. Can you tell me what happened?"

Alec tensed and pressed his forehead against Magnus' leg, "I don't. Why do you want... I..." He whined. Alec was shaking now and he was so very confused. He thought he was doing good, why is Magnus asking him these things?

Magnus didn't stop petting his hair, "It's ok, Alexander. I just need to know so I don't accidentally hurt you. Can you do this for me?"

"I... uh..." Alec swallowed, brows furrowed, "It was a bad day. My brain wouldn't shut up. I couldn't stay at the Institute, so I went out hunting. Alone. It was so cold." He shook his head, "I don't want... Why?"

"Just a little bit more, darling. Then I promise it will get better."
Alec slowly nodded, his body screaming at him, "Just... ah... I was so close to Dropping. So, very close. Just breathing hurt." He hummed, a painful sound, "Some guy found me. Talked to me. Dropped me."

"Did he-" Magnus was outraged.

Alec shook his head and his words ran together, too fast, "No, no. He just... Dropped me. I don't know why. It was so messy, I had... I had never dropped with anyone before. He left... left me in an alley. Right after he Dropped me he just left me. It was so cold."

Alec took a deep, shuddering breath, "I spent the night there. I crawled back to the Institute in the morning after the worse of the Drop was over. No one even noticed that I was gone."

Magnus froze, rage flowing through him at how poorly Alec had been treated. He wanted to find whoever hurt the Shadowhunter and rip them to shreds.

Alec flinched, pulling away from Magnus, "Why does no one want me?" He sounded so broken, so empty. Like he had accepted that statement as fact. To Magnus' dismay and horror a few tears started to slip down Alec's face.

He was starting to Drop. Hard.

Alec noticed how tense Magnus was, "Sorry. I'm sorry. Sir." He curled forward, until the back of his neck was exposed.

Magnus instantly reached down, cupping Alec's chin and pulling him back up. "Alexander, darling, you have done absolutely nothing wrong. What happened to you was horrible. More than horrible. You deserve way more than that."

Alec just looked confused. Magnus wanted to cry.

He bit his lip, debating between bringing Alec back out of the Drop or helping him go all the way down. Magnus knew that Alec desperately needed to properly Drop, but they had known each other for such a short period of time. It seemed too quick to help Alec through a Drop. Drops left the Sub vulnerable, Magnus wasn't quite comfortable just yet.

But Alec was in so much pain.

Magnus knew what happened to Subs who didn't drop. He had seen it happen multiple times over the years. Dropping wasn't just part of a Sub's biology, but it was a necessary process. Without it, a Sub could lose all stability. Some could even go insane in some not rare enough cases. Subs needed it. Eventually, it would start affecting his physical health as well.

Alec pulled away from Magnus, eyes unfocused and wide, and he just stared. There were tear tracks on his cheeks, but Magnus was pleased to see that Alec was no longer crying. He put his hands in Alec's hair again. Alec shuddered, eyes closing. "Sorry, I'm sorry. I'm bad. It's just... I'm so cold. Sir. I've been so cold."

Magnus came to a decision. And hoped Alec would be ok with it tomorrow. He was going to Drop Alec fully. Help him through it. The warlock didn't want to see him in anymore pain.

"Alexander, I have one last very important question for you," Magnus said, cupping Alec's cheek, stroking the skin with his thumb.

"Mmmm, sir?"
"Do you want me to Drop you tonight? Nothing serious. Nothing binding. Just so you feel better."

"You want to Drop me?"

"Oh, Alexander, I would like nothing less."

"Yes. Yes, yes, yes." Alec resumed his kneeling position next to Magnus, tilting his head back to expose his throat again. He was trying to make himself desirable. So that Magnus wouldn't change his mine and not want Alec anymore.

Magnus grinned down at him. With a bit of magic help, he was able to pull Alec into his arms and lift him properly. Alec buried his head in Magnus' neck and wrapped his legs around the warlock's hips. He needed to take Alec out of the club discreetly. It wouldn't be good for the Shadowhunter to be seen in such a state.

"Alec, we have something very important to-," Jace was speaking before he had fully gone onto the slight stage the couch was on with Izzy. They seemed surprised about Alec's state. When Alec noticed them, he whimpered, trying to bury himself further into Magnus' grip.

"Is Alec ok?" Izzy asked, and she reflexively went into a defensive position, "What did you do to him?"

Magnus sighed, he just wanted to take care of Alec, "You Shadowhunters really have no idea how to take care of people like your brother do you? He's Dropping, hard."

"Dropping? Now?" Jace sounded almost... panicked, "He can't be."

Magnus was growing angry again, "It's not like he had much of a choice. Do you not understand the pain he has been in? Or what happened to him the last time that he Dropped? He needs this. I promise you that no harm will come to him."

Izzy shifted uncomfortably, "Normally, we'd be more than ok with this. We would be encouraging it even, but not tonight."

"Why not?"

"Our mother is here. And she wants to see him. Now."

The warlock was confused, "Can't you tell her what is going on? Surely she would understand." Alec had told him the way the Shadowhunters treated Subs, but wouldn't his own mother want what was best for her son? Wouldn't she want him to be healthy, happy, and whole.

Apparently not.

"Our mother," Izzy said, and there was a bit of fire in her voice, "Does not accept the fact that Alec is a Sub. She treats him as a Dom and ignores everything else about him. If she saw him like this she would be furious."

Magnus breathed out slowly through his nose, turned and placed Alec gently on the couch. Alec frowned, but didn't say anything, just pulled his legs up to his chest and shivered. "You're telling me that your mother would rather see Alexander suffer than to have a Sub for a son?"

"Yes."

Magnus closed his eyes and glanced at Alec. The Shadowhunter was looking at them with confusion.
in his eyes. "I'm not sure if he will properly survive this."

"He wouldn't survive not being a Shadowhunter either." Jace said, hand rubbing at his parabatai rune. He was looking at Alec with wide eyes and Magnus wondered if Jace could feel any of the Drop through the bond.

Still, Magnus was done speaking to them. He knew, logically, that it was not their fault, but he couldn't help the anger coursing through him. He knelt down next to Alec, touching his upper arm gently. "Alexander, darling, can you understand me?"

Alec nodded slowly.

"Good. Now, this will be difficult, but I know you can do it. How far under are you?"

Alec turned his head away, humming in the back of his throat, "Not... not all of the way. Far. Though. Close."

Magnus sighed. He really didn't want to do what he had to next. He spoke authoritatively, "I need you to pull out of the Drop, darling?"

"What?" To Magnus' dismay, Alec's eyes started to fill with tears, "Did I? I don't... I did something wrong. I'm sorry. I can't... Sorry, I'm sorry. I'm bad. I'm sorry."

Magnus wanted to touch Alec, to reassure him, but he knew that wouldn't help bring him out. He had to shock Alec out of it. "Alexander, if you want to be a good Sub, you have to listen to what I say. And, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, but you have to come out of your Drop." He hated to have to order Alec so, but it was the only way to get a Sub out from so close of a Drop.

Alec rolled onto his stomach, hiding his face, "No, I... Why? I... Why?" He whined.

"Alexander, this is an order. Do not Drop. I need you to come back up for me."

Alec said nothing, just clenched his eyes shut. His body was tense. Magnus turned toward Jace and Izzy, both who were watching him with strange fascination. The warlock stood, wanting to put himself in between Alec and his siblings. He knew the Shadowhunter would not want to be seen like this.

"When does your mother expect him? It might be a while yet before Alexander is ready to see anyone."

Jace and Izzy glanced at each other, "She wants to see him as soon as possible. Trust us, our mother gets her way, otherwise she would tear the Institute apart trying to get it."

Jace scratched at his ear, "Our mother is kind of controlling. She does everything for the family name. Reputation is the most important thing to her."

"She just cares about our family. Wants to make sure we have a good standing." Alec's voice was rough and pained, but still it was clearer than he had been speaking since he had begun dancing. He sat up, swinging his legs over the side and rubbing his face with his hands. He breathed deeply and when he finally looked at him his eyes were so very tired.

Magnus went to him immediately. Alec flinched.

"I don't understand? Why?" Alec whispered, "I thought you were going to... that I was going to Drop. You stopped me?"
Magnus brought a hand up to cup Alec's cheek, "Your siblings say that your mother is here. She wants to see you now."

"Oh," Alec's eyes grew, if possible, even more weary. He seemed empty. Just a vessel of tiredness and pain. "So, I didn't do anything wrong?"

"I hate so much that I had to cause you that pain, Alexander. I wanted nothing more than to help you through the Drop."

"Yea," Alec said, "Me too."

"How do you feel?" Magnus said, "You should probably eat something. After meeting with your mother you should rest."

"Honestly? I feel like shit, but it's like I'm separated from that pain. From it all. I don't feel... quite real right now." Alec stood. He stumbled a bit, but kept walking. His voice was so... blank. "Let's go see what Mother wants."

"Alec, are you ok?" Jace asked, trying to reach out a hand to steady his brother. Alec just waved him off with a hand, the other rubbing his forehead as if fighting off a headache.

"I'm... fine?" He didn't seem quite so sure of himself.

Magnus felt guilty, he tuned Alec back to him, "Alexander, I want to make sure that you are in no way at fault for what happened. You were wonderful. Actually, you were beautiful, and I'm honored that you trusted me with yourself." Magnus stroked his thumb over the back of Alec's hand, "I hope that you would still like to have dinner with me tomorrow. Maybe we can pick up where we left off. Properly Drop you this time."

Alec gave a tiny smile after a moment, the first sign of emotion since he crawled his way out of the Drop. "That sounds nice."

"And if you need me at all. Just give me a call. Promise me that you will."

"I will." Then he was pulling away and was gone.

Jace, Izzy, and Magnus watched after Alec as he walked to the exit. He seemed stiff, too stiff. Not quite right with the rest of the world.

"Is he going to be alright?" Izzy asked.

Magnus sighed, "I don't know. I've never seen anyone bring themselves back from so close to a Drop like Alec did. It can't be good for him."

"Do you think he's in pain?" Jace was rubbing again against the parabatai rune.

Magnus' eyes were sad, cursing the unfairness of the world, "Undoubtedly."
Alec felt like he wasn't quite... real. As if he were walking just a little out of sync with the rest of reality. Jace and Izzy were standing beside him. They were walking back to the Institute. It was a cold night. He knew that Jace and Izzy were speaking, but he just could not process what they were saying.

He blinked.

They were at the Institute now. The harsh lights inside made Alec's eyes ache. His mother was waiting for them, standing at the top of the stairs with a stern expression on her face. "Where have you been?"

Alec pinched the bridge of his nose. Five seconds in and he was already being reprimanded. "We were on a mission, Mother. Taking down the ring that was trafficking mundane blood."

"That mission should have taken you three hours at the most. They say the three of you have been gone for five."

"We were waiting for... clean up."

Maryse raised an eyebrow, "And how did that go?"

Shit. He had completely forgotten about the bodies that they had left behind. Anyone could just walk in there. Everything was just too much, it had completely slipped his mind.

His phone chimed.

He glanced at it quickly and he couldn't help the smile that slid across his face. The message was from Magnus. The warlock had done their clean up for them. A stab of pain went through his mind and down his spine, filling every nerve with the instinct to curl up away from it. "It's all done."

Maryse pursed her lips and the three siblings stiffened under her scrutinizing gaze. She sighed and turned away. "Jace, Isabelle, please go to your rooms. Alec, follow me. We have much to discuss."

"Mother, what you need to say to him you can say to all of us," Izzy protested.

"No, Isabelle." Maryse was stern, "It does not."

... Each step behind Maryse felt one step closer to his own demise and yes, he realized how over dramatic he was being, but he felt as if he was allowed given the circumstances. The door shut behind him with a definite click.

"You're near a Drop."

Alec cringed slightly, though he tried not to let it show, "How did you...?"

"I have been alive much longer than you have, I know how to tell these things." She seemed angry, and for a moment, Alec regretted everything that had happened with Magnus. He tensed, clenching his fists.

Maryse tsked, shaking her head, "You are a disappointed, Alec. We need you to run the Institute. To
be strong. To be here. You can't behave like a Sub and if you Drop? You need to do it alone. I raised you better than that. Need I remind you what will happen to our family if the Clave scorns us again? What will happen to you?” It didn't sound like the natural concern that a parent would have. Instead, it sounded like what it was... a threat.

Alec's throat ran dry and he licked his lips. Guilt coursed through him, but it was irrational. There was no reason for him to feel guilty. He couldn't help what he was. But still, his mother knew all of the right words to make him feel awful. "I know, Mother. I'm sorry."

She blinked, "I know you are. Consider this a warning, Alec. You can't let this happen again."

"I won't."

"Good. Now, tell me at least that the Dom you've found was a respectable Shadowhunter."

He knew he should be angry at how hypocritical she was being. That he should be angry at the fact that there she was yelling at him for being a Sub and then turning around and judging him for how he did it. Nothing he did would ever be right. He knew that he should be angry, but he wasn't. He was just... tired.

He didn't see the point in lying and dragging it out, "No, mother. He was not."

"He? You couldn't have even found a female Dom?" She glared, "Are you trying to ruin this family?"

Alec said nothing.

"Not only did you go gallivanting off away from your responsibilities and abandoning your family. You indulge yourself in a mundane..."

Alec twitched slightly, barely even any movement at all, but it was enough. His mother froze and rage as cold as ice poured its way into her features.

"A Downworlder?" Her voice was barely above a whisper. "You were with a Downworlder?"

"Mom, I-"

"No. You've disgraced us more than enough."

"But-"

"Shut. Your. Mouth."

Alec clamped his mouth shut, unable to disobey. A wave of nausea washed over him.

"Tell me who and what you've been... associating with. Now." The way she was speaking was as if she was planning on cutting them down.

His name slipped through his lips without any permission of himself, "Magnus Bane."

"The High Warlock of Brooklyn?" She seemed shocked, and Alec realized with a jolt that he was probably one of the few people that she couldn't really touch.

His mother looked furious. Her hand twitched and for a moment Alec thought that she was going to slap him. She didn't though. Instead she just pointed at the door. "Get out."
He did.

...  

Izzy was waiting for him in his room, nervously bouncing her leg up and down. She jumped up as soon as she saw him. "Alec! Are you ok? What did she say?"

"I'm fine, Izzy." And it was true. He wasn't angry or sad or scared. He didn't really feel anything. He was just tired. That thought should have probably been alarming, but it just... wasn't. He felt empty and all he wanted to do was sleep.

"But what did she say?"

"She knows about Magnus," Again, there it was. Just the helpless obedience. He couldn't help but to do as what people told him to do.

"You know that whatever she told you was wrong right? She's stuck in the past, everyone in the Council is. You're not lesser because you're a Sub, please believe that, Alec."

"I do." And he did. He just simply did not care.

Izzy looked at him with a confused expression. "What's wrong. You seem so... blank."

"Nothing's wrong, Iz. I'm fine."

"Normally after a meeting with Mother you're outraged. I can barely calm you down. Why aren't you angry?"

"I don't know, Iz. But I'm just... not."

"Something's wrong."

"I just want to sleep."

"You never want to do that."

"Iz, please, why aren't you letting this go?"

"Because something is wrong and you don't even notice!"

Alec sighed, "Do what you must, but I am going to sleep." He walked past Izzy and crawled in his bed, not even bothering to pull up the blankets. He was out within moments.

...  

When he woke up, he felt cold.

He blinked and found that he really did not want to move.

He kept sleeping.

...  

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He dreamed of magic and blue sparks flying through the air.
"Alec, please, you have to get up. You're late!"

"Everyone's wondering where you are. You really need to wake up. This doesn't look good, brother."

"Alec, please, you've missed so many meeting. Mother is angry."

"They're going to call the Conclave, Alec, to come and inspect us. They can decide if you stay a Shadowhunter or not. You have to wake up."

"Alexander."

Alec's eyes snapped open with a sharp breath. Finally, after... after, well he didn't know how long, he felt something. And it was painful. He gasped, finding it difficult to breathe. His mind felt like it was on fire. His vision blurred and an extreme wave of vertigo hit him.

"Breathe, Alexander."

He did. Slowly, his vision focused and he saw Magnus standing at the side of his bed. The warlock looked worried. Alec tried to speak, voice rough, "Magnus?"

Magnus smiled, a small, self-deprecating smile, "Hello, Alexander."

Alec was so confused, "What's going on?"

"You've been sleeping for a few days now. You were unresponsive to everyone."

Panic rushed through him, "What?"

Magnus sat next to him and grabbed his hand, "Apparently, after that meeting with your mother you came in here to sleep. You've been in here for four days. No one could get you to wake up. Your sister only told me about you this morning. I'm so sorry, Alexander. I would have been here immediately."

"Four-four days?"

"Yes. I was worried that you weren't replying to my texts, but I figured that you were busy. I swear I would have came had I known."

Alec sat up, wincing. Four whole days. He couldn't believe that he had lost four whole days. "What happened to me?"

"You went into a sort of shock," Magnus explained, "When we cut you from the Drop your body couldn't handle it."

"I remember. I couldn't... feel anything. Nothing mattered. I just wanted to sleep." Honestly, it still
felt like he couldn't feel anything.

Magnus looked sad, "I'm so sorry, Alexander. I didn't want to hurt you."

Alec didn't blame Magnus at all for any of it, "If you didn't do what you did then I would no longer be a Shadowhunter."

Magnus looked pained, "About that."

More panic. "What?"

"The Conclave is sending over someone, I don't know who, to inspect the Institute and -mainly- you. That's why Isabelle called me. It was a last, desperate attempt to get you to wake up."

Alec licked his lips, panic was settling in, but he couldn't let it show. He had to be ready for the inspection. He couldn't handle not being a Shadowhunter. "When will they be here?"

"You have a few hours."

Alec sighed and nodded, "Ok. I can do that." He swung his legs over the side of the bed. His body protested, but he fought through it. Magnus stood with him.

"How do you feel?"

Alec saw no reason to lie to Magnus, "Empty, mostly. It hurts. I'm... scared. About what will happen with this inspection." Everything felt murky, like he was looking through a pool of water, but instead of trying to see something he was trying to feel something.

"It will be fine. You're a great Shadowhunter, no one will thing you to be incapable of it."

"I know I'm a good Shadowhunter. But I'm worried that won't matter." He groaned, putting a hand to his head as the pain spiked, "God, my head hurts."

"That's why your body went into shock. To escape the pain. It will lessen, eventually. But it won't go away completely until you finally Drop."

"I can deal with that." Alec said, "I can't believe I've been asleep for four days. How much did I miss?"

"I don't know what you missed in ways of the Institute and running it, but I do know that your family has been trying to get you multiple times. You've missed multiple meetings."

"My mother?"

"Has taken over until you are ready to come back."

Alec smirked, "She doesn't want me to ever be ready to come back. Did she even come to visit me?"

"No. She didn't."

"Right." Alec nodded once, "She couldn't. She only comes to us when we are useful to her." He was going to say more, but the pain spiked and he grabbed at his head, hissing through his teeth. Magnus grabbed onto him immediately and the pain lessened.

After steadying himself, Alec sighed, leaning further into Magnus' touch, "This is going to be fun."
His mother was waiting for him in the main room. There was the regular bustle of Shadowhunters in the room, but it seemed tenser than usual. Alec walked confidently through them, Magnus trailing behind him slightly. The warlock looked serious and Alec wondered if he had ever been in the Institute before. Maryse was waiting for them, hands on her hips. She looked furious as she saw Magnus.

"What is the warlock doing here?"

Alec didn't let her intimidate him, "He's here as a guest. As the Head of the Institute, it's in my power to allow whomever I want into the Institute."

"You're not the Head of the Institute. You were only the Acting Head until I had returned from Idris."

"We haven't gone through the forms or any of the procedures," Alec challenged, "Until then, I am still Head of the Institute and what I say goes." He felt a twinge in his head and he was worried the pain was going to overwhelm him again, but Magnus put a hand on his shoulder blade and he was able to steady himself again.

His mother looked ready to spit fire, but she knew that he was right. In the eyes of the Law, Alec was still the one in charge. The tension in the room grew until it was palpable in the air. Alec could feel the weight of the gaze from the rest of the Shadowhunters on them, watching to see how it would all unfold. She glared away, "Fine. You may resume your position."

She left in a rage, the rest of the Shadowhunters automatically jumped back and away from her. Alec sighed in relief. He knew that it wasn't the last battle, but he knew that he had at least won this battle. After a moment, the tension started to bleed out of the room, and everyone began to go back to work.

Alec turned to Magnus, smiling slightly, "So far, so good."

Magnus smiled back, "Well, I must admit, I was expecting a bit more yelling."

"Don't worry, I'm sure that will come later. She wouldn't want to ruin her reputation just to yell at me though."

"Whenever she decides to begin, give me a call. I'll be there with you. If you want me." Magnus glanced at him from under the eyelashes.

Alec blushed and swallowed, he wasn't used to... well anybody wanting to be somewhere just for him. "I... I would like that. Yea."

Magnus' smile grew broader, "Excellent." He grabbed Alec's hand and gently tugged him along, back out of the main room and into his room again.

"We can't stay long," Magnus looked apologetic, "You're needed out there. You can't let your mom have the satisfaction, and I have clients that I need to attend too."

Obviously, Alec didn't want that, he wanted to stay with Magnus, but the warlock was right. They couldn't just shut off the rest of the world. Magnus raised his hands, hovering them just gently over Alec's temples. "May I? It will help with the pain."

Alec eye's slid shut and he nodded. He felt the warm spark of Magnus' magic on his skin and the pain dulled in his head. After a moment, Magnus stepped back and Alec opened his eyes again.
"Shall we meet for dinner tonight?" Magnus said, offering a hand to help Alec stand. No one had ever done that for him before.

"That—that sounds nice." Alec released a shuddering breath. The warlock made him feel... different, special. He didn't want that feeling to go away and go back to the way he was treated with the Shadowhunters. He never knew... that it could be like this.

"I'm sorry that I have to leave you like this, Alexander," Magnus said, "I wish I could give you the attention you deserve."

Alec licked his lips, "Yea?"

Magnus smirked, "I suppose both of us will have to suffice with just this."

Alec was about to ask what he meant when the warlock pressed his lips gently to the Shadowhunter's. Alec made a muffled sound and his eyes slipped shut. It was nice. Simple and sweet. Alec wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Too soon, Magnus pulled away.

"I will see you later tonight."

Alec couldn't properly speak, so he just nodded.

Magnus smiled and was gone.

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Isabelle was waiting for him when he finally came out of his room. She looked worried and oddly proud. She grinned when she saw him. "You made Mother angry."

He couldn't help the smirk that spread across his face, "Good."

Her look turned more concerned, "How are you feeling? Honestly?"

"Better." And it was true, he could actually feel things again. He felt alive, "A lot better. Magnus told me it won't last though. I'll start feeling the pain again. But it shouldn't get as bad as it did."

Izzy licked her lips, her lipstick stayed flawless, "It was because we stopped you from Dropping wasn't it?"

"Yea," Alec admitted, "But I don't blame you guys for it. You had to drag me back."

Izzy was about to reply, probably to protest, when a Shadowhunter, Alec didn't remember his name, came up to him. "Sir, I have the report from the rogue incident a few days ago that you wanted."

"Thank you," Alec said, taking the file. The Shadowhunter nodded and went back to his post. Alec flipped it open. "The Shadowhunter was last stationed in Idris."

"In Idris? What is he doing all the way down here?" Izzy glanced at the papers, "Christian Hollowbrook."

"I'm not sure. Apparently, he went missing a few days before showing up here. Before that there was no marks against his character."

"That's odd." Izzy said, "He stole our weapons, but why would he? He must have had plenty of access of weapons up in Idris."
"Maybe he was looking for something else. The weapons were just a cover up."

"What could be so bad that stealing weapons was a good cover up?"

"I don't know," he scanned through the file again, but nothing major popped out at him, "We need to talk to this guy." He walked over to the unit of Shadowhunters that handled prisoners, "I need you to set this prisoner up for interrogation."

The Shadowhunter in charge took the file from him and nodded, "Yes, sir."

He turned and began to make his rounds, trying to put together everything that he had missed. There was a pile of documents that he had to sign and approve. Shadowhunting wasn't all fighting demons.

Izzy kept up with him, "Magnus told you about the inspection that was happening?"

He fought down the flare of panic, "Yes. They should be here sometime tonight."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to keep doing what I always do. I do a good job here, I don't want to seem forced. There's not much I could do at this point."

Izzy nodded. Alec sighed, he really just wanted to forget about the inspection, "Ok, let's go figure out what this Christian Hollowbrook was up to."

... 

The interrogation room was cold and harsh. Alec hated them. He forced himself not to shiver as he entered. Christian Hollowbrook was already there, runes for binding drawn on his wrists. The Shadowhunter glanced at Alec, eyebrows raised.

"A Sub? Are you understaffed here?"

Alec didn't let it faze him, keeping to business, "You're Christian Hollowbrook?"

"Yes, I am," he answered, "Why is a Sub like you interrogating me?"

Alec ignored him again, "What are you doing all the way in New York? You're supposed to be in Idris."

Christian leant forward as far as his bound hands allowed. "I refuse to answer your questions."

He kept himself calm and professional, "I am the Head of the Institute as such you are required to answer any of my questions."

The rogue was already laughing before he had finished speaking, "You? The Head of the Institute? You shouldn't even be a Shadowhunter! Is this some sort of joke?"

"I assure you it's not a joke."

"What's it like?" The prisoner was speaking faster now, "Being the only Sub in this whole place. Separate, weaker than everyone else. And everyone knows it. You can never be a true Shadowhunter."

Alec licked his lips, anger beginning to flicker through him, "Fine." He wasn't getting anywhere like this. He walked back out, handing the file over to Izzy stiffly, "He's all yours."
"I'll make him squirm," Izzy promised.

Alec watched her go, anger starting to grow. God, he was so... so done with how he was treated. He was a Shadowhunter, damn it. And he was a good one too. Just because he was a Sub didn't mean that he couldn't do his job. He grit his teeth and glared. He was the one who was supposed to be interrogating the rogue. He trusted, Izzy, he did, but it just wasn't fair.

He needed to go to a walk.

He went back to the crowded hustle and bustle of the main room, hoping that the normalcy of it would help to calm him back down.

Of course the Universe just had to fuck with him though. Because he was Alec Lightwood, and he couldn't have nice things.

Jace literally came running into the Institute, breathless and frantic. Alec grabbed onto him, trying to steady him. "Jace... Jace, what's wrong?"

Jace grinned, a wild grin with a gleam in his eyes, "Oh, nothing. Just got chased by demons on the way here. No big deal."

Alarm shot through Alec, "Demons? Are you ok?"

"I'm fine," Jace waved him off, "She on the other hand, has had a rough night."

For the first time, Alec noticed the companion that Jace had with him. She was also out of breath and red in the face. With a jolt, he recognized the girl that was at the club yesterday. The one that could actually see them. What was she doing here?

"Alec. This is Clary."
Chapter 5

Alec needed something to drink, something hot preferably. Coffee. That's what he needed. Coffee. And aspiring. There was too much going on. The inspection, the interrogation and now this girl just showing up out of nowhere.

Speaking of which, Clary was huddled in a chair looking to be a second away from totally collapsing. Alec pulled Jace to the side, "Explain to me exactly what that girl is doing here."

"Her name is Clary," Jace started, "And her mom was kidnapped."

"That's sad and all, but what exactly does this have to do with us? She's a mundane, Jace."

"No. She's not." Jace sounded almost angry and Alec's heart sank, "I Marked her. She has to be a Shadowhunter."

"You Marked her?" Alec could barely believe it, "Are you crazy?"

"Probably."

Alec glared at his adoptive brother, "Tell me everything that happened."

"I don't really know, ok?" Jace admitted, "I found her and the demons were already chasing her. I just helped her. And then she got poisoned. It wasn't my intention to bring her here and make a mess. But I had to give her a rune. She was going to die."

"You didn't know she was a Shadowhunter. You could have turned her into a Forsaken."

"She could see us." Jace hadn't been this passionate about something in a long time. "She had the Sight, Alec. And demons were chasing after her. I figured she had some angel blood in her."

Alec had no words for the anger that he was experiencing, but he just ignored it. "Fine. But if anything, and I mean anything, happens, it's your responsibility, got it?" He seriously did not have time for any of this. He just wanted to go on the dinner date with Magnus.

Jace nodded, "Course."

"Good," Alec said, "OK, let's figure this out."

Jace grinned, "Thanks, brother."

Alec made his way over to Clary, kneeling down next to where she was sitting. He was never good at this part, talking to anyone, "You're Clary right? You were with my brother, Jace."

She nodded, "Can you help me find my mom?"

Alec blinked, that's not what he thought she was going to lead with, "Why don't you tell me everything that's happened. From before my brother found you. We'll see what we can do."

"My house was destroyed and there were... there were people there. They were looking for something."

"Do you know what?"
"No. I wish I did. Maybe then I could just give it to them and they'll let my mom go."

Alec decided not to tell her that they would probably just kill her faster if they had whatever they were looking for. "How did you escape?"

"Dot... she, uh," her eyes glazed off and filled with fear, "Oh my God, Dot. I don't know if she's ok! We have to go check and make sure she's safe." She was close to a panic again, tears beginning to well up in her eyes.

Alec was never that good with dealing with people, he always felt to awkward. But something in him just seemed to click just right then. Maybe it was because he was so close to a Drop, or maybe not, Alec didn't know but he had the strange urge to comfort her.

Alec licked his lips and sat down next to her, "Take it slow. We'll figure it out, ok?" He felt awkward and he knew he was doing nowhere near a good job, but it seemed to work. Clary blinked a few times, clearing her eyes, and nodded.

"She... uh..." she furrowed her brows as she thought back, "She created this... this thing. In the wall. She told me to think of the police station. Of Luke. And then suddenly I was there."

Understanding dawned on him, "A portal."

"A portal? But that's impossible."

Alec glanced down at the rune drawn on her. How was it that she had Shadowhunter blood and not know anything about their world? It was unheard of, but here she was.

"Is there anything else that you remember? Anything at all?"

"The people... that were there. At my house. They weren't demons. I think they were... what's the word? Shadowhunters. I think they were Shadowhunters like you. And I think that there were more of them."

Dread settled itself in Alec's stomach A group of rogue Shadowhunters? That was not good. And he had a sneaking suspicion that the rogue they caught was a part of all of this too. It would be too much of a coincidence otherwise.

"Thank you," Alec said, "If you want, Jace can show you to a room that you stay in until we figure this out."

She nodded and stood making her way to Jace. Alec felt a flare of... of something from the look Jace gave her but fought it down. He had to work. He had to go talk to Izzy.

He thought of Magnus. About their kiss. A small smile spread across his face. He couldn't wait to see the warlock tonight. It would be nice, especially after all of this craziness. He wondered what Magnus was up to and his fingers itched to pull out his phone.

Izzy was waiting for him, writing things down furiously on a clipboard for the files. Surprisingly to most, Izzy was very good at keeping up with her paperwork. She glanced up at him and her face was grim. "We have a serious problem?"

Great. More good news. "What is it?"

Izzy looked like she didn't believe her own words even as she said them, "Valentine."
"Dinner couldn't come fast enough and when he was finally free to go, he left before he even changed out of his gear and before he even knew where he was actually going. His mind was buzzing and he could tell that whatever Magnus did to him with his magic was beginning to wear off. He pulled out his phone and saw that Magnus had just texted him.

*Good evening, darling. I know this wonderful cafe near the Institute if you would like to meet me there.*

Alec couldn't stop the grin from spreading across his face. The day already seemed like it was better, just from that one simple text from Magnus and the knowledge that he would soon be in the warlock's presence. He replied immediately.

*Absolutely. Text me the address?*

Address in tow, Alec made his way to the cafe, a new bounce in his step as he walked. The cafe was small, but in a nice, cozy way and Alec already felt relaxed. He had expected Magnus to be outside, but when he entered he could see why he wasn't. The warlock was sitting at a table tucked away into a corner. He hadn't noticed Alec, apparently he had been given permission to decorate the table as he wanted, or maybe he just didn't care, because every so often he would snap his fingers and the design would change, straight down to the napkins.

Something about Magnus made him feel confident and he loved the way it felt, "Trying to match your outfit?"

Magnus’ head shot up, smile lightening, "Well, actually, I was trying to get the shade of your eyes, but I just can't get it right."

Alec blushed slightly and he sat down, fingers playing with the edge of his table cloth. "So this is a Downworlder place right?" He was worried about the fact that he was still in his gear. Some Downworlders completely hated all Shadowhunters. Well, to be fair, there were more than plenty of Shadowhunters completely hated Downworlders. Like his parents.

Magnus looked slightly nervous, "Yes, it is. Is that ok?"

Alec nodded, "I didn't really stop long enough to change. I'm still in my gear."

Magnus’ eyes trailed his eyes up and down Alec's body, "Oh, I've noticed. If I didn't have a thing for leather before, I sure do now."

Heat flared up over Alec's face. "I... I... uh, just thought... that... I didn't."

Magnus quirked his lips in an amused manor, "Not to worry, Alexander, no one will bother you here. They know you're with me."

Alec smiled and he grabbed a glass of wine to take a quick sip. He licked his lips as he put it down, nervous about his next question, "Since this is a Downworlder place, do you mind... taking down your glamour?" His voice started strong, but by the end of the sentence it was beginning to shake.

Magnus blinked and for a second, Alec was worried that he had overstepped but then he smiled, "Of course." Magnus closed his eyes and when he opened then again they were golden and cat-like. "You just continue to surprise me."

"I hope in a good way."
"Very," Magnus assured, but then his expression turned slightly somber, "How are you feeling?"

"Ok. I can tell that whatever you did this morning is wearing off though."

Magnus looked sympathetic, "Would you like to Drop tonight, Alexander? Finish off what we started? I feel so horrible for dragging you out of the Drop."

Alec licked his lips, "Y-yes. I would like that."

Magnus grinned, "Excellent."

Alec cleared his throat, feeling more than a little awkward, "So, how was your day?"

Magnus took a sip of his wine before answering, "Busy. I has a long list of clients that I had to deal with today, but none of them wanted anything extensive done. Just a bunch of menial tasks. It was very tedious."

Alec couldn't understand how anything Magnus did could be considered menial, but the warlock had continued speaking before Alec could say anything about it. "But tell me about your day. Has the Inspector arrived?"

Alec nodded, "Yes. Her name is Lydia Branwell, but she arrived later than planned so she decided to stay the night and begin the inspection tomorrow."

Magnus hummed and Alec was curious about the look in his eyes. He seemed... protective? Alec decided that he liked it. Before Magnus could actually say anything their waiter arrived. Magnus ordered for both of them, which made Alec feel sort of fuzzy inside. He refilled Alec's glass of wine, who hadn't even noticed it was empty yet. He wanted to bring up Valentine, but he also didn't want to make Magnus discuss work with him over their date.

Magnus noticed anyway, "Is there something bothering you, darling?"

Alec flushed at the pet name, but nodded, "You... uh, mentioned Valentine before. Today, we discovered something. Apparently, there is a group of rogue Shadowhunters searching for something."

Magnus was tense, "And this has to do with Valentine?"

Alec shrugged, "Just think of it more as a hunch. There's no concrete evidence linking everything, but the name of Valentine was mentioned by a girl Jace rescued. But the man's dead, right? So it can't really be him." It came out more like a question than a statement.

Magnus blinked at him and the way he was staring started to freak Alec out a little. "You were too young to remember anything and by the time you were born everything was winding down anyways, but Valentine was a monster. If there is one thing that I don't doubt is that he could still be alive."

"So, you think it really is him, then. Coming back to... what? Finish what he started?"

Magnus leaned back, "The girl you mentioned. What was her name?"

"Clary Fray."

Magnus' eyes widened as he tensed. Alec was confused as to what her name implied. "Magnus?"

"This is something I need to look into." Magnus said, gazing off, "Something must have happened."
"You know her?"

Magnus nodded, "I know her and her mother. But if Clary Fray is a part of this, then rest assured that I think Valentine could very well be back."

The thought unnerved Alec. Valentine was not someone he wanted to contend with.

Magnus spoke with a soothing tone, noticing Alec's distress, "I don't want to discuss this here. It doesn't matter if he's back or not. Right now, all I care about is our date. I want to get to know you better."

Alec hummed, appreciative of the switch and took a deeper sip of wine, "I'm not sure what to talk about."

"Tell me something that I don't know," Magnus said, his golden eyes shining in the candle light.

Alec couldn't think of anything interesting to tell Magnus. He was boring and uneventful. Magnus must have seen him floundering because he threw him a bone. "Tell me what you do in your down time. When you're not chasing demons or running the Institute."

"I train, mostly," And yea he realized how boring that was, but Magnus just seemed interested so he continued, "I don't go out much. That's really Izzy's and Jace's area, but I like to read. I enjoy cooking too. My sister can't cook at all so I had to learn. It's calming. But really, I just mostly just stick to myself when I'm not working."

Magnus was smiling at him, and he blushed under the gaze. He wished he was more entertaining. Their food arrived. Alec had absolutely no idea what was on his plate, but he also really didn't care. It smelled amazing. He took a bite and groaned at the flavor. It was singularly the best thing that he had ever eaten. He glanced up and caught Magnus' eyes and the heat that was in them. He swallowed, realizing the sound that he had made when he began. He blushed deeper.

"Good?" Magnus began eating his own food.

Alec nodded and took another bite.

...

After, Magnus took Alec's hand and led him out. He hadn't even let the Shadowhunter see the bill, which was something Alec was distressed about, but he was quickly distracted by the way Magnus was looking at him.

The warlock said, "Would you like to come back to my place?"

Anticipation tingled in Alec's lower stomach, it spread to the tips of his fingers, "Yes, please." If he was too eager, Magnus didn't comment.

They walked in silence, and it was nice, just enjoying each other's company. The walk was quick and when they made it Alec already felt more at ease just by being in Magnus' home. Even though it was only the second time he had been there, he was already comfortable.

Magnus led Alec to stand in the middle of the room and cupped his cheek, thumb running on the skin just under his eye. "Are you ready to begin?"

Alec licked his lips and nodded. He could feel it already. The Drop.
"Any triggers?" Magnus whispered, leaning in close so there lips brushed. Alec trembled. "I don't want to hurt you."

"Just... uh..." Already his brain was fuzzy, "No. Just. Don't leave me."

"Oh, Alexander, I would never do that." Magnus gave one last stroke of his thumb, "We won't do anything sexual tonight. I don't want to push you too fast."

Alec was grateful for that even though part of him was screaming that he wasn't good enough and that's why Magnus didn't want to do anything sexual. He ignored that part as best he could.

"Take off your shirt," And oh, the voice was deep and... and Dom. Alec's knees trembled as he practically tore the shirt from his body. His eyes slid shut.

Magnus made a noise in the back of his throat, "You are absolutely gorgeous." He felt the warlock's hands trail over his skin, just the barest of touches. Goosebumps erupted where Magnus' hands went.

"Get on your knees," Magnus ordered, "Gently." He remember last time he gave Alec that order and he didn't want a repeat of it.

Alec complied, sliding to his knees and gazing up at Magnus with half-lidded eyes. Magnus put his hands in Alec's hair and started to massage his scalp gently, "Good boy."

Alec preened at the praise.

Magnus chuckled and stepped back. Alec frowned, why was he leaving?

"Don't worry, darling. I'll be right back. Crawl to the couch for me."

Alec complied, the leather pants making it difficult to move fluidly, but he made it to the couch. He could feel the Drop, just a fuzziness of the edge of his conscience and he knew it wouldn't take much to fully go under.

Magnus returned and sat on the couch next to where Alec was kneeling. "I'm going to blindfold you now. Is that ok?"

Alec nodded.

"What your safe word?"

Oh. Oh shit. He didn't have one. He never had to have one before. He bit his lip. "I... I don't have one?" Already he screwed up, they were barely five minutes in and he already failed at an order, "I'm sorry."

He tried to fold in on himself but Magnus was already there, stroking his face, "Shh, shh, that's ok. Let's stick with the typical red, yellow, green, for now and we can work out something later."

Alec nodded, but was still tense after his screw up. Magnus stroked his face one more time, before replacing his fingers with cloth. He gasped slightly as Magnus tied it tight and he couldn't see a thing.

"There we go," Magnus said, "Oh you are absolutely beautiful. You are perfect."

Alec's mouth was dropped open slightly and he was breathing hard.

"I have some dessert for us. And then afterwards I can draw you a nice bath and take proper care of you. How does that sound, Alexander?"
He struggled to find his voice, "Good. That sounds. Really good."

"Open your mouth." Magnus grabbed a piece of the chocolate cake and slid it into Alec's mouth, letting his fingers catch on Alec's full bottom lip. Alec moaned slightly at the rich taste of the chocolate and the feeling of Magnus' fingers. He hurriedly swallowed and opened his mouth again.

"Careful," Magnus said, gently, "I don't want you to choke." He fed Alec another bite and this time the submissive licked at his fingers.

He paused on the next bite, "You're a good boy. You know that right?"

Alec didn't but he nodded anyway, mouth still open and waiting.

Magnus leaned forward to brush his lips against Alec's ear, "Tell me."

"I'm..." he swallowed, "good. I'm a good boy."

Magnus smiled and rewarded Alec with another piece of cake.

"And you're beautiful."

"I'm..." Alec really couldn't believe this one, "No. I can't... I..."

Magnus frowned and his heart hurt at the sight of Alec struggling with the concept of his own beauty.

"Say it." He stroked down his cheek with a clean hand, going down to trace along his collarbone, "Say it for me, Alexander."

"I'm... I'm beautiful."

Magnus kept up the praised in between each bite of cake, noticing with glee how Alec's body seemed to relax even more each time. He was starting to slur his words and on the last bite of cake, Magnus left his fingers lingering, pressing gently against his lips, trailing the tip of his fingers against the sensitive skin.

"How far are you?"

"Pretty... pretty close? I... fuzzy. Floating." Alec pressed into his touch, "S'good."

"Excellent." Magnus stood, "Crawl to the bathroom, darling. I'll lead you so you don't hit anything. We'll get you cleaned up and then tonight can truly begin."
Chapter 6

Alec looked dreadfully good kneeling on the tiles in Magnus' exquisite bathroom. The Shadowhunter was pliant, trusting in such a pure manner that Magnus just wanted to kiss him until he couldn't remember his own name. He was a beautiful Sub and he was going under so wonderfully.

Alec's mouth was still slightly open, just enough that his tongue was visible, and Magnus couldn't resist the urge to continue his actions from the living room. He eased his index finger into Alec's mouth, running the tip against the sensitive skin of the inside of Alec's bottom lip. The Shadowhunter whimpered slightly. The chocolate was delicious, but the taste of Magnus' skin was just even better.

"You are so wonderful," Magnus murmured, "Stand."

Alec frowned slightly at his words, but he didn't want to argue against them. He wanted to believe what Magnus said, but it was just so difficult. It honestly it didn't make sense in the Shadowhunter's mind. Still, he hurried to follow Magnus' orders. He stood, ever trusting in his blindfold, as he waited for Magnus to make his next move.

"You're almost under, aren't you darling?"

"Close. So close." It almost sounded like he was pleading. Anxiety was beginning to well up in him. What if he did it wrong? What if it was like the last time he Dropped? He didn't know if he would be able to handle it if he was left again.

"I'll take perfect care of you. I promise."Just like that, with just a few simple words, the anxiety began to bleed away. Oh, it was still there, but he knew somehow that Magnus would never harm him. Magnus snapped his fingers and the bath started running. He knew the temperature would be perfect, so he didn't bother to check. Instead, he took another step closer to Alec. "I'm going to finish undressing you now. Just so you can take your bath."

Alec was nodding before he had even finished talking.

Magnus didn't let himself get distracted by Alec's skin, although he desperately wanted to. He put the clothes to the side and allowed himself an appreciated glance. Alec was gorgeous everywhere, and Magnus could hardly wait because really, it should be against the Law to be that perfect. Alec must have been able to feel the heat of his gaze because he whined and shifted. His legs were trembling.

Internally, Alec was close to completely breaking down. Magnus was just staring at him. What if the warlock just turned and left? What if he realized that Alec was not pretty? Was not a good Sub? Was not worth it? He knew he was not the best to look at and he fought the urge to wrap his arms around his chest.

Magnus noticed his distress, and pulled Alec into a hug. He never had a Sub that was taller than him before, but he wasn't about to complain about a perfect excuse to press his face to Alec's chest. "You are absolutely stunning. I almost want to tie you up so you can never leave and no one else can look at you."

Alec trembled.

Magnus grinned and with a wave of his hand, the bath stopped running. He eased Alec to sit on the edge and helped him to swing his legs over. Alec practically moaned and went boneless in the hot water. Magnus bit his lip.
"I'm going to take off your blindfold now," Magnus said, reaching behind Alec's head to untie the knot. "Until the bath is over. You are allowed to open your eyes." He let the cloth drag along Alec's skin as he pulled it away.

Alec blinked his eyes open and Magnus could see the glaze of the Drop beginning to take over them.

"Talk to me, Alexander," Magnus said swirling his hand through the water near Alec's chest. The Sub stared at it, "I want to build our relationship on communication. How do you feel?"

Alec's eyes fluttered close and he arched, tilting his head back to fully expose his throat, "Ah, good. Almost. Warm."

"Excellent. Now. Listen to me, Alexander, I need you to let go."

Alec sagged against the tub. His voice was breathless, "Yes, sir."

Magnus chuckled and then reached over to grab the soap, "I'm going to clean you up and make you nice and relaxed."

Alec groaned, "Take care of me?"

Oh, he must be close, because there was no way that Alec in full control of his faculties would ever ask that.

"Oh, I intend to." Magnus said, and he wouldn't deny that he was breathless too. They lapsed in silence then, just listening to each other breathing.

Magnus poured the soap onto a washcloth and urged Alec to sit up properly. He scrubbed gently, more like a massage than actually cleaning. As he moved on to shampoo and condition Alec's hair, he began to whisper compliments and praises. Magnus wanted Alec to see himself how he saw him. With each stroke, Alec became more and more relaxed, but even still there was a tension that was refusing to budge. It was barely noticeable, but Magnus resolved to have Alec completely and totally relaxed by the end of the session.

When he was done, he pulled the plug and helped Alec back out. He wrapped the Shadowhunter in the softest towels that he owned and pulled him close again.

"You are doing so well."

Alec hummed.

"Follow me, sweetheart. Let's find you something comfortable to wear."

He took Alec's wrist and gently pulled him along, noting the way his feet dragged along the ground. Yes, Alec was dropping quite nicely. He was so giddy about it, but he kept himself calm. Tonight was about Alec.

He had already lit candles in his bedroom so when they entered there was a soft glow in the room and there was a pleasant scent of vanilla in the air. He sat Alec at the edge of the bed. He had picked out pajamas for Alec, his own personal favorites.

He eased Alec's arms into the top, although it was a shame to cover that glorious chest. It was slightly harder to get Alec into the pants (because, again, Alec should just not be wearing anything), but they managed. The pajamas were a little too small, but not overbearingly so.
Alec grinned sleepily and brought his wrist up to his face to rub his nose into. The clothes smelled like the warlock.

He was cared for. He was good. He had to be. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been given all of these nice things. He had to be good. It didn't make sense otherwise. He whined and tilted his head back, "I'm... I'm good?"

Magnus looked delighted, "Yes, you are, Alexander. Very good."

Alec slid from the bed to his knees, eyes half lidded, "Please, sir." He couldn't think, could barely breathe, all he wanted, all that his mind and heart screamed at him was Magnus.

He wanted- no, needed to please Magnus. To give him everything.

"I'm going to blindfold you again," Magnus said, already moving to do it, "And then I'm going to bind your wrists together."

Alec keened.

"Give me a color, darling."

"Ah... ah, green."

"Very good. My good boy." Magnus said, rewarding the Sub with a small kiss to his lips. He pulled another silk scarf from his nightstand and eased Alec's hands behind his back. He tied his hands together, not tight enough to cut off blood circulation, but tight enough to feel.

Alec was whimpering.

"How far down are you?"

"Nngh."

Well, that was answer enough. Magnus took a step back to just stare at this wonderful Shadowhunter. His pale skin a stark contrast to the dark pajamas he was wearing. His eyes covered and his hands bound behind him, pulling his shoulders and muscles taut. Alec seemed to love to expose his throat, a kink Magnus was desperate to explore, as he kept his head thrown back.

Alec started to whine, more pained this time, and Magnus hurried back to him. "Ssh, ssh, I'm here. I will never leave you."

Alec was easily soothed. He was shuddering in Magnus' grasp, but now from pleasure instead of insecurity. The Shadowhunter buried his nose in the crook of the Warlock's neck, breathing in his scent. Magnus shuddered when Alec began licking at the skin there.

Alec frowned, "What are... I... did I do something wrong?" His words were slurred, so much so that Magnus almost had a hard time understanding him.

"No, no, no," Magnus assured, "Not at all. But we shouldn't do that. Not yet."

"Don't want me?" Shit. Alec was moving away, curling in on himself, "What? I did... I thought." Alec swallowed, "Not good? I..."
Magnus reached for him again, "No, no, you are amazing. I assure you."

"Why don't you want me?" Alec's mind was swirling in darkness. What was wrong with him? He thought he had been doing so good. He thought that Magnus wanted him. He thought that finally, finally, he was being a good Sub. But his Dom didn't want him.

God, Magnus wasn't his Dom. They weren't even properly dating yet.

Maybe that was the problem. Maybe to Magnus this was temporary. But... it didn't feel like it. Alec thought they were both on the same sort of page. That's what it felt like. He was sure of it.

He whined again and fought against the bindings on his wrists. "Bad." He whispered, low and under his breath, "Bad, bad, bad, bad."

Magnus was distraught. They were doing so well. Alec, his Alec, was dropping so beautifully. He really should have foreseen this coming. Intimate relationships were integral in Drops. He had just... he thought that the shyness in Alec would carry over into his behavior in the Drop.

He didn't want to push Alec too far, but he also didn't want to lose him.

He kissed Alec.

"Oh, my beautiful Alexander," Magnus whispered, pushing their foreheads together and allowing his own eyes to slip shut. Rage flowed through him, but he fought to keep it calm and contained. He knew that if Alec felt how angry it was it would only make the Sub blame himself. Still, it was difficult, someone, and Magnus was beginning to realize that it was multiple someones, had somehow twisted it into Alec's mind that he wasn't good enough for anyone. That he had to pay for attention. Magnus' heart broke. "I want to find whoever hurt you and taught you that you are only good if you have sex and turn them inside out." Alec bit his lip as his mind revolted at upsetting Magnus, but the violent words weren't directed at him.

His thoughts were so fuzzy, and he wasn't a hundred percent tracking on everything that was happening, but he just wanted Magnus to not be upset anymore. He wanted his (no, not his) Dom to be happy.

He nudged against Magnus' nose with his forehead, "I'm... Good?"

Alec couldn't see, but he could feel the grin that spread across Magnus' face and elation burst through him. He was actually pleasing a Dom. He was actually doing good. He never thought that this would ever happen.

"I'm Good." He repeated.

And finally... finally, he was under all of the way.

He was floating. Floating in the sea and in the air, and normally he was always so cold when he was like this, but now... now he was warm. Like sitting next to a fire after playing all day in the snow. He hummed and stretched, feeling pliant and loose and just so... so good.

Magnus was taking care of him.

Magnus could tell that Alec finally, fully Dropped as soon as it happened. It was like this hidden tension that was being held tight in his body finally released. He rubbed his hands up and down Alec’s bound arms, wanting to continue providing warmth and contact.
Now that Alec was fully Dropped he untied his hands and massaged the wrists to encourage blood flow and went on to remove the blindfold. Alec practically melted into the bed, still humming slightly.

"Alexander," Magnus said, "Can you understand me?"

The Sub only hummed in response, a sleepy, sated smile on his face.

Magnus couldn't resist the adoring look that crept across his features. He had only known Alec for a few short days and already he was attached to him more than he had ever thought he would be capable of again.

He reached once more into his nightstand and pulled out a present that he spent way too long wrapping, "I know you're too deep right now and that you probably can't understand me." He kept his words soft and smooth, using one hand to stroke through Alec's beautiful and thick black hair, "I was planning on giving this to you in the morning, when you would actually be aware of it, but I simply cannot resist. I desperately want to see you in it now. I promise to explain properly in the morning. Is that ok, darling?"

Alec hummed, but he opened his eyes to stare at Magnus and the emotion there nearly floored the warlock.

Magnus knew that right now Alec wouldn't have the coordination to open it himself, so he carefully and quickly opened the present, pulling out the bracelet that he had gotten for the Shadowhunter. It was old, and the silver of the bangle was beginning to tarnish, but it was still beautiful. A simple silver bangle, with six bright blue gemstones embedded in it. Magnus gently eased it onto Alec's wrist, loving the way it looked on him.

He eased himself out of the bed just for a moment to ease the covers from underneath Alec's body. He hurriedly climbed back in and pulled the Shadowhunter to his chest.

"You were so wonderful today and especially tonight. So, so amazing, you stunning creature." Magnus whispered the words and ran his fingertips lightly up and down Alec's back until he was sure that he had finally fallen asleep.

Magnus took a moment just to stare, awestruck, at the wondrous man that he held in his arms. After so many long years, he had never thought that he could feel something like this again. He curled himself around Alec, wanted the Sub to feel protected even in slumber. Just as he was also about to fall asleep, he whispered, "You've unlocked something in me."

Alec slept, his heart was warm, and he was cared for.
Chapter 7

Waking up wasn't as fun as going to sleep, especially when you woke up being suffocated by a mass of fur. Still, Alec hadn't felt as amazing as this since... well... he had never felt amazing as this. Sure, he slept through most of the actual Drop, but that was understandable since he had barely slept within the past two weeks.

Next time, he would stay awake, and he couldn't wait.

He stretched, head clear and with no pain as he gently dislodged the Chairman off of his face and onto Magnus. He sat up and checked the time, smiling at the warlock as he did so. 6 am. Not bad. That was the longest he slept in one go in a very long time.

He had about 2 hours before he had to be back at the Institute, so he didn't feel at all guilty when he relaxed again against Magnus. He wouldn't fall asleep again, but it was peaceful just to lay in the silence with the warlock.

Although, with Magnus, nothing was ever truly silent for very long. After just a few moments, the warlock was already stirring, as if sensing that Alec was awake. Magnus blinked up at him, without the glamour, and smiled.

"How do you feel?" Magnus was quite remarkable, just waking up and the first thing he cared about was how Alec was feeling.

Alec ducked his head in slight embarrassment, "Much better. I'm sorry... for falling asleep."

"I think it was wonderful," Magnus reassured, "You have nothing to be sorry for."

Alec blushed and looked away. The Chairman apparently didn't approve of that though, because he jumped from Magnus onto Alec's lap. Surprised, Alec couldn't help but let out a small chuckle, hands going to automatically stroke at the cat's fur.

Magnus stretched, and Alec couldn't help the way his eyes slid over the warlock's body. Magnus noticed of course and smirked, arching his back just that little more. Alec bit his lip and looked away again.

Magnus kept smirking as he sat up, slowly running his hands up Alec's back, over his shoulders, and down his chest. He placed a small kiss behind Alec's ear. The Shadowhunter shivered, but otherwise tilted his head to the side to allow Magnus more access.

"How long do you get to stay?"

"I need to be back at the Institute by eight." Alec replied, leaning back against Magnus' chest. He sighed and closed his eyes, "I feel so... light."

"That's good." The warlock responded, "That means I did my job well."

The Shadowhunter hummed although a bit of doubt weaved its way into his voice, "It wasn't just a job for you though, right?"

"Of course not, Alexander. I had a marvelous time with you and I would love to do it again."

Alec was silent for a beat, "Me too."
Magnus grinned, "Excellent. Now, what should we do with the rest of this lovely morning?"

"I have to get ready soon. It's a long walk back to the Institute."

"Or..." Magnus offered, "Alternatively, I can just use magic for everything."

"You don't have to do that." Alec said.

"I know I don't have to," Magnus agreed, "But I want to, especially since then I get to keep you a little longer."

Alec grinned and bit his lip, "If you want to... then that works for me."

"Wonderful. Now how do you feel about breakfast?"

...

Two steps into the Institute and Alec wished once again to already be back in Magnus' flat. He played with the bracelet around his wrist, the cool metal of the jewelry against his skin was the best feeling Alec had ever felt. He kept glancing at it, too overcome. Magnus gave him jewelry. Briefly, he realized that Magnus never explained it to him like he said he would, but Alec didn't mind.

He was distracted by it so much, that he didn't realize Maryse coming up to him. Her eyes immediately honed in to the bracelet.

"What is that?"

Alec's gaze snapped to his mother, and he brought his wrist close to his chest, protecting the jewelry.

"It's a gift," Alec said, tersely, "From Magnus."

The rage was instantaneous. Maryse tensed, shaking from the anger. Her words were clipped, "You. Will. Not. See him again. I forbid you."

"You can't forbid me to do anything, Mother. I-"

The slap was unexpected and Alec wasn't prepared for it. He stepped back from the force of the blow. His brain immediately revolted, but he fought to kept himself standing. He was rendered speechless though, and he could only stare at his mother with wide eyes.

The rest of the Shadowhunters seemed to freeze and stare at them, but a sharp glare from Maryse sent them scrambling to get back to work.

Maryse held out her hand, "Give me the bracelet."

Alec returned the glare, although it was with less intensity, "No."

"You're disobeying me?" She scoffed the words, as if she couldn't believe them, "That was an order. Alec."

Alec hated the part of his body that wanted to obey, but he was too angry to give in to that side of him. He opened his mouth to begin what would probably be one of the biggest arguments he and his mother would ever have when Izzy jogged up to them.

Izzy ignored their mother, turning her full attention on Alec, "Jace wants to see you."
Alec turned toward her, already the impending fight with his mother was fading from his mind as a surge of protectiveness for his siblings rushed through him, "Why?"

"He wants to go to the City of Bones."

...

Alec actually had an office in the Institute, though he rarely used it. When he entered, Jace was already waiting for him. Clary was also there, standing in the corner and looking confused.

Alec wasted no time, "Why do you want to go to the City of Bones?" Any appointment or just travelling to the City of Bones had to go through and be approved by the Head of the Institute.

"There's a block in her mind." Jace explained, "And I think if we can break through it we can get some useful information." He paused a beat. "For the mission."

Alec cocked an eyebrow at his adopted brother. He had a sneaking suspicion that the mission was not the first thing that was on the blonde's mind when it came to Clary.

"Explain," he said, instead of calling Jace out on it. He saw Clary flinch a tiny bit, and he held back apologizing. He didn't always mean to sound so harsh, it just happened when he was working.

"I don't think it was just a coincidence that Clary was attacked by Valentine's men the same day that the man supposedly came back from the dead. She knows something. Something that Valentine wants. And she doesn't know what."

Alec licked his lips in thought. It made sense, but he didn't know how well Clary would take being subjected to the Silent Brothers. He knew she was a Switch, but still... she could react very much like he did.

Still, the mission came first, his family came first, and so he inclined his head, "Alright, I'll schedule an appointment."

Jace beamed at him and clapped a hand along his back, "Thanks, man."

...

Before Alec could get back to his regular routine of work, Izzy snagged him and dragged him back to her room. She didn't even hesitate a second before speaking, "Spill."

Alec raised an eyebrow, crossing his arms, "What?"

Izzy gave him an exasperated and flicked a finger along Alec's bracelet, "This! He gave you jewelry, Alec! Do you know how important that is?"

Alec couldn't help the please warmth that spread up from his chest. He ducked his head before that warmth could spread across his cheeks. "I know."

"Tell me everything!"

Alec rolled his eyes, "Izzy, we're supposed to be working. The inspector is supposed to be here today."

"She already is."

Alec straightened and Izzy's eyes widened in surprise. They both turned simultaneously and stared at
Lydia Branwell in the doorway. Maryse standing right behind her with a smug grin painted across her face.

Alec tried to speak, but immediately his brain just shut down the communication center of his brain. Because that's helpful. He stammered, "Uh... I... um..." He was flailing hard, and oh my god, he was so stupid. He should have been working, how could he fuck up this bad already? He was such a failure and he was already going to lose the Institute before he even could try to fight for it.

Izzy placed a hand on his arm and he snapped back to reality. Shame bubbled up in his chest and he could feel his face practically glowing red. He clicked his mouth shut and just stared at Lydia, waiting for her to say whatever it was that she was going to say.

She blinked and appeared to be assessing him. She blinked again and smiled slightly, "It appears that I'm a few minutes early. I apologize if I have caused any distress." She spoke diplomatically but with a warmth that Alec seldom heard from many other Shadowhunters, "I'll go to the mission room, she said, I'll begin the inspection in a few minutes time." With that she walked away, leaving the three Lightwoods to stare after her.

Maryse looked angry at how Lydia chose to react, and glared at the ground for a moment before storming off in a huff. Izzy was grinning beyond belief. Alec was still staring at the spot she was at in surprise. He could not believe it. No one had ever... been on his side before, other than his siblings, and now Magnus.

He glanced back at Izzy and allowed a small smile to fold across his face, playing with the bracelet.

... His mother refused to try to sabotage him again (for the day at the very least), and the rest of the day passed smoothly. It was a fairly simple day, all things considered, and he even caught Lydia smiling once or twice before putting back on her diplomatic face.

Then it was time for the appointment with the Silent Brothers.

Apparently, Clary's mundane friend Simon was going to drive, and Alec held his tongue on arguing about that particular fact. He grumpily climbed into the car, playing with the bracelet along his wrist, and stared pointedly out the window. He was determined not to partake in any conversation.

That didn't last long.

Simon, the mundane, apparently had no real filter, or even understood exactly what was going on, because he just opened up his big, mundane mouth and just blurted out, "So, you're a Sub who hunts demons? How's that like?"

The car went silent, and Alec could tell that his siblings were about to make a scene, but in all honesty, he wasn't even offended. It was kind of nice, in a way. He lifted a shoulder in a half shrug. "It's fine."

Simon glanced at him through the window, "Dude, just fine? You hunt demons. Like, that's your job. Do you not understand how ridiculously cool that is?"

Alec turned to look at Simon and then at Clary, "Is he like this all the time?"

Clary nodded, the Switch smiling, "Mostly. I would answer him though. He'll keep pestering otherwise."
Simon spluttered, "I don't pester!"

Alec leaned back, rolling his eyes, "Mundanes." He continued louder, "I realize. I like what I do. I like it a lot." He shrugged, "Yea, I wish I could change some things, but this is the way things are. There's no use wishing I could change something I can't."

Ok. Simon was probably looking for a more lighthearted answer, and Alec could tell that he made the silence heavy now. His siblings refused to look at anything in particular. He closed his eyes and wished he could take back some of his words. "Sorry."

"No," Jace said, "We're..."

The car stopped. Simon licked his lips, "We're here."

... They decided that only Jace and Clary would go to see the Silent Brothers and the remaining three would wait by the car, guarding to make sure nothing would happen.

Alec really should have been expecting that Simon would try to talk to him again. It was then that he noticed that the mundane was wearing a collar. His stomach and heart lurched, and he was so jealous and his fingertips tingled. Izzy was off walking around, getting the scene, so it was just the two of them.

"I'm sorry," Simon said, rubbing the back of his head, "About the questions. I just thought it was cool. That you do what you do, and you don't let them stop you."

Alec didn't smile, "They try to. Still are."

Simon winced, "Yea, Clary said something about an Inspector. That sounds horrible."

The Sub thought about Lydia, about what she did this morning, "It's not so bad. I've been dealing with things like this for awhile."

Simon clapped a hand on his shoulder and Alec tensed up, but the Switch didn't appear to notice, "I mean I'm a Switch, so I know my... Drops aren't the same? But still," he exhaled sharply, "I would be near Drop all of the time around so many Doms at once."

Alec wanted him to stop talking, but didn't want to admit that he wanted it. He closed his eyes briefly. It was true. Sometimes, he just wanted to Drop with all of the Doms there, to fall to his knees as they all came around him and- he shook his head, god he had just dropped, he couldn't be getting close to it again could he?

He knew the answer already, and he knew it was because he refused his body to have it in such a long time.

Simon noticed his lapse, of course he did, and Alec just wanted this whole evening to restart. He glanced at the mundane and Simon just stared at him with a small smile. Alec had no idea what to say. Simon could tell though and instead of speaking, just clapped Alec on the shoulder and walked away.

Ok... maybe the mundane wasn't completely awful after all.

Alec walked around, needing a moment to himself, and played with the bracelet that Magnus gave him. He wished the warlock were here. The bracelet became warm and a slither of blue magic
slipped from the jewel and wrapped and twirled around Alec. He gasped at the immediate warm feeling he felt throughout his body. He closed his eyes and basked in it.

Maybe this was what Magnus wanted to explain to him about it. He clutched the bracelet close to his chest. He bit his lip, he really wanted Magnus.

"Alec!" It was sister yelling, and he ran, he was farther away than he thought, and he was angry at himself for getting so distracted.

When he got to them, he realized that they were not prepared for this. Jace and Clary were back apparently, but all of them were staring up.

Vampires. And they had Simon.

It was perfect insurance, if any of them fought, Simon would die.

They took him.

...

Clary was crying,

Which was a natural, proper reaction when one friend's got kidnapped by the undead.

"We have to rescue him. He's only here because of me."

"We will," the words slipped out of his mouth before he could properly think them through all of the way, but he knew they were true. They would save Simon.

Alec looked at Jace, "Did you at least get what you came here for?"

Jace shrugged, "Mostly. There's a block in her mind. We have to go get it removed."

Only a warlock could do that, "Who put it there?"

Jace glanced at him, eyes sharp, "Magnus Bane."

Alec blinked, "Well. That's going to be easy,"
"We need to save Simon!" Clary shouted again, and it was apparent in her tone that she wouldn't help them anymore until Simon was safe and sound.

Jace turned to placate her, "And we will, I promise, but-"

"We still need to prioritize the cup," Alec interrupted, "If Valentine gets it then we'll all die anyways."

"Way to be the optimistic, brother," Izzy said, but she was smiling as she said it.

"I'm just being realistic," Alec defended himself anyway.

Clary was shaking her head, "I don't care. I don't care about any of this. We have to get Simon."

Jace locked eyes with Alec for a moment in silent conversation. After a few moments they both nodded. Alec was pulling out his phone. Jace pulled Clary to the side to try and calm her down.

Even though the call was for business, Alec couldn't help the smile that was crossing his face.

Magnus picked up, "Alexander?" He practically purred his name.

"Hello, Magnus." Alec desperately wished that this wasn't a business call.

"To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"We need your help," Alec said, "If you aren't busy."

Magnus hummed, "I'll be right there." He hung up before Alec could tell them where they were. He stared at his phone for only a moment trying to decide if he should call back or not.

"Hello, darling." Magnus said, appearing right beside him.

Alec's body automatically relaxed at the sight of Magnus. He wanted nothing more than to just nuzzle in close to the warlock and maybe even his nose into the crook of his neck.

Alec blinked himself away from those urges and straightened his spine. "We've had a..." He trailed off, a little unsure of how to explain.

Jace did it for him, leaning forward, "A situation."

"Clarissa? What are you doing here?"

The shock of Magnus knowing her name was enough for Clary to calm down enough to focus on their immediate surroundings. Her gaze sharpened, "Magnus Bane?"

He gave a small bow, glittery magic sparking from his fingertips, "That would be me." He straightened, and the look he was giving Clary was one of fascination and confusion, "But what are you doing here?"

Her lip trembled again, but there was fire in her eyes, "My mother was kidnapped. And they want
Jace stepped in, "We came here to fully restore her memories, but we found a block. You know something about that?"

"I do," Magnus bowed his head in a small nod, "I put it there. Per request of Jocelyn."

The Shadowhunters froze as the words sunk in, looking at Magnus who remained as calm as always.

"But why?" Clary asked.

Magnus shrugged, "I didn't ask. I just do what I get paid for."

Alec glanced at Magnus, but didn’t say anything. He was sure that Magnus was hiding something from them.

Clary was getting frustrated, and she stepped forward, "Ok, we can't worry about that right now. Right now, we have to find Simon!"

Magnus sighed, "What happened to your friend?"

Instantly, Alec could see that the aloof nature was not a good idea when Clary Fray was involved. Her cheeks turned pink with rage. Alec interrupted before she could start yelling. He wasn't sure he could handle that right now.

"We were ambushed by vamps." Alec explained, breath hitching only slightly when Magnus turned and met his eyes, "They took Simon. We have to give them the Cup, or they'll kill him."

"And we can't get the cup without my memories," Clary said, "So I need you to give them back."

Alec opened his mouth to explain that even if they did find the cup, there was no way that they would trade it for Simon. Jace held out a hand to stop Alec with a warning look in his eyes, and Alec felt his mouth shut with a click of his teeth.

Magnus glanced between them for a moment before turning his attention back to Clary, "Even if I wanted to biscuit, I can't. I didn't keep your memories. I just got rid of them. Just like I was paid to do."

Clary's mouth pressed into a thin line, "Then what the hell are we supposed to do?"

Izzy shrugged, "There's not much we can do. It's not like we can just walk into the vampire's nest and take Simon back."

Clary perked up and Alec knew instantly that Izzy said the wrong thing.

"Where do the vampires live?"

"We don't know," Jace answered.

"And even if we did," Alec said, "We couldn't go after him anyway. We cannot give them the Cup under any circumstances."

Clary turned angry eyes on him. "Simon is more important than some dumb Cup!"

Alec didn't flinch, though he almost wanted to. "If we give them the Cup, people will die. The mundane isn't worth it. I don't care how close of a friend he is."
Clary slapped him.

He took a step back, not from the force, but just from the shock. Jace and Izzy were looking at her with shock and seemed frozen on the spot. Magnus, however, looked angry, blue magic sparking at his fingertips.

"Don't you dare speak about Simon like that!" She shrilled.

Alec raised a hand to his cheek, but he didn't change his stance, "It's not about Simon."

"Shut up!" It was an order. Alec's jaw clicked shut.

Clary turned to Magnus, "You must know where the vampires live."

Magnus' eyes sparked, "I do."

"Tell me."

Magnus brought his hand up to his chin as if he were thinking, "See, biscuit, I'm not too sure if I will."

Clary's cheeks flooded with red, "Excuse me?"

"Listen, the reason I've survived this long is because I don't get involved in things. Especially things I know you have no chance of winning. Even if I did tell you where you could find the vampires. You have no Cup to give them."

Alec felt like there was more than Magnus was saying, but he stayed silent. He didn't know what he would say anyway.

"Listen. You can't find the Cup without me." Clary said "But I won't help you without Simon. We go and rescue Simon, and I promise I will do whatever you say to find the Cup."

Jace and Izzy looked at Alec, waiting on his decision.

Clary stepped forward, "Please Jace."

Jace glanced at her, and then turned back to Alec. Alec sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. He couldn't really say no.

"Fine." He turned to Magnus.

The warlock sighed as well, throwing his hands up in the air while he muttered under his breath. "Shadowhunters." He continued at a normal tone. "Well, if all of you are so determined. The vampires hole themselves away in the old, abandoned hotel. Hotel Dumort."

"That's close by," Jace said, "We need weapons first though."

"There's a church on the way," Izzy said, "C'mon."

There was no point wasting time. They began to move. Alec was only a few steps behind him, but Magnus grabbed his arm to hold him back. Alec waved the others ahead.

The warlock was caressing his wrist, where the skin met the metal of the bracelet. Alec loved it.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Magnus asked.
"It's not about what I want," Alec replied, "It's about what is necessary. We need the Cup. And for that we need Clary."

Magnus sighed, "I suppose." He paused, looking down at his thumb stroking Alec's skin. "Look at me, falling for someone with a sense of duty."

Alec glanced at him sharply, "Falling for?"

Magnus gave him a coy smile, "Why, of course, Alexander."

Alec brought up the arm Magnus was stroking, letting the light glint on the metal of the bracelet. "Will you explain this to me. Later? I could... feel you."

Magnus grinned, tucking a piece of Alec's hair behind his ear. "Of course. Call me when you get done with this vampire business."

Alec nodded, breathless.

Jace called, "Alec!"

Alec glance back behind him, "Coming!" He gave a final glance to Magnus.

The warlock smiled, "Go. Do what you do."

Alec nodded.

...  
"Why are we at a church?" Clary asked, "I thought we needed weapons."

"We do," Jace answered, "This is where we'll get them."

"In a church?"

Alec fought back the urge to reply sarcastically. He had no desire to get into another argument with Clary. He would just let Jace handle it.

Jace hopped up to the podium, pushing it to the side, revealing the symbol of the Shadowhunters.

Clary's eyes widened as she took it in. Jace popped open the latch. The four of them grabbed as many weapons as they could.

Once they had their gear in hand, Alec began giving orders. "Before we go in, Clary needs to know the basics. Jace, you handle that." He ignored the way Jace's eyes lit up at that. "Izzy and I will go on ahead and scout the area. Absolutely no engagement of the enemy until we regroup."

"Understood."

...

The hotel was easy enough to find, the glamour on it just enough to hide from the mundanes. Alec glanced to the sky, "We don't have much daylight left."

Izzy nodded, "We'll have to act quickly."

"The front door looks unusable." Alec said.
Izzy was walking forward, "I think there's an opening on the side here that we can use."

Alec crept forward as well. "Ok. Let's wait back at the entrance." The snuck back and pulled out a stele, taking turns to draw runes on each other.

"So..."

Alec groaned, knowing that tone in his sister's voice. "No."

Izzy grinned, "What did Magnus pull you back to talk about?"

"Izzy this is none of your business."

She kept going anyway, "You looked so much better today. Was the Drop that good?"

Alec instantly blushed, "Izzy!"

"So it was!"

Alec ran a hand through his hair, "It was. But we didn't do anything. He just Dropped me."

"He's taking it slow."

Alec blew air from his lips, "I suppose."

"You deserve someone to cherish you."

Alec took in a shaky breath.

... Ten minutes later, it was time to rescue Simon.

Clary looked more in control and seemed almost adept at holding the weapons.

"Ready?"

They nodded.

Alec led the way as they snuck into the hotel. It was dark, as was expected, but at the very least there were no vampires in immediate sight.

"We're going to want to keep this simple. We're breaking the Law by being here."

"We're not breaking the Law," Izzy corrected sarcastically, "We're just bending it."

Alec glared at her, but allowed it, "Fine. Still, we don't want to alert more than we have to. Get in. Get out."

"Let's do this."

Despite all the buildup, they were walking alone and in the silence for awhile, with no real clue of where they were going.

"They'll be waking up soon," Jace murmured, "It's almost night time."

"Don't you guys have any tracking spells or something?" Clary asked.
"We're not warlocks," Jace said, "We don't have spells."

"What about those runes?"

There was a beat of silence before Jace sighed, "Ok, we do have a tracking rune."

"Can we use that? This place is huge. We'll never be able to get through this building before the vampires wake up."

Jace and Alec looked at each other, speaking silently, before nodding.

Jace held his hand out, "We'll rune you. They've always been more attune to you."

Alec shrugged, knowing it was true. Jace took out his stele and burned the rune into Alec's forearm. Alec winced a bit at the burn, but couldn't stop the small gasp from escaping his lips as his vision was torn away from his eyes and swirled through the hotel. Jace grabbed his hand, and the sight instantly sharpened.

"What's happening?" Clary asked, "I thought runes only affected the person they're drawn on."

"They do," Izzy answered, "But Alec and Jace or parabatai. That's a bond stronger than any other. They can amplify the power of runes for each other."

"I found him," Alec murmured, before taking off, trusting the rest of the team to follow him. He grabbed an arrow from the quiver and nocked it, knowing that they would have to fight. He sensed the rest of them ready their weapons as well.

He stopped in front of a door that looked more ornate than the rest. At the very least it wasn't actively falling apart.

"He's in here."

"Let's do this."

Izzy kicked the door in, and they rushed through. Simon was sitting on a couch and two vampires were in the room as well.

The female one smiled, "So. You've come."

"We have."

"I imagine you don't have the Cup."

"We don't."

She smiled, sharp, "And what do you think is going to happen now?"

Clary stepped forward, "We're taking Simon back."

The vampires laughed, "Did you hear that Raphael, they think they're taking the mundane."

The other vampire in the room finally spoke, "Silly little Shadowhunters."

Everyone was still. The tension in the air growing until it was so thick that it could be cut with a knife. Alec wasn't exactly sure who made the first move, but suddenly everyone was moving. He dodged out of the way and shot an arrow, but the female jumped away. Alec snarled and nocked
another arrow. He was about to shoot again when Clary ran forward slashing the blade and getting in the way of Alec's shot.

The commotion brought about other vampires and soon they were outnumbered. Alec was surrounded and they were too close to get a good shot. He swung out with his bow, twirling after he made contact to hit more of the vampires. He rolled forward, grabbing an arrow as he did so. He got to his knees, knocked an arrow, and fired. The runed arrow drove its way through three vampires. Alec grinned, but a hand whipped out and scratched him along his face. His blood dripped.

The vampires near him stopped for a moment.

"The blood of a submissive Shadowhunter." One said, "It must be exquisite."

"Like a fine wine."

Alec glared, anger rushing through him. Just one day. Just one. He wanted to be considered for something other than his submissive status.

The bracelet sparked. Blue magic shooting out in a small wave at the vampires. They stumbled back alarmed.

"A warlock." One muttered, but it seemed that the magic only angered them more. They advanced, and Alec tightened his grip on his bow, getting ready to fight.

A sharp whistle rang out.

Most of the vampires turned, grappling at the few vampires that didn't respond. Shocked Alec glanced around and saw Raphael gripping onto the first female vampire, and she was unconscious.

"Go!" He shouted, "Camille is no longer in control. We can have no Shadowhunters as we finish this battle! Take the mundane and leave us! We desire no war."

Alec glanced at his companions and nodded. Instantly they were moving. Jace whizzing through to grab Simon and pull him to his feet.

They didn't look back.

...

Later at the Institute, they were all taking a moment to just breathe.

They were in the infirmary, surrounding the bed that Simon was sleeping on. He was ok, no damage noticeably done to him.

"We're no closer to finding the Cup," Izzy said.

"For now," Alec responded. "We'll get a breakthrough soon."

"Hope?"

Alec shrugged, "It's all we have."

...

Alec was walking back to his room, wanting to pack a bag before he went to Magnus' penthouse, when a hand on his shoulder stopped him.
It was Clary.

"Listen," she started before he could speak, "I just wanted to say thank you. For going after Simon. I know he's just a mundane to you guys, but... thank you."

Alec blinked, "You're welcome." He began to turn away, but she stopped him again.

"And... I'm sorry. For how I treated you. Before. I was freaking out, but that's still not acceptable. I won't try to command you again. You didn't deserve that."

Alec didn't know what to say.

"You're a good person, Alec."

She walked away. Alec could only stare after her.
Chapter 9

The day after they rescued Simon was surprisingly anticlimactic. They had no new leads for the Cup yet, and Clary couldn't, or rather wouldn't leave Simon's bedside until he had woken up. She didn't want him to wake up in the Institute without someone he knew right there with him.

Alec went through the motions of keeping the Institute together. Assigning missions and filing paperwork for the Clave. Lydia monitored him for a little while, taking notes.

She looked up at him, after awhile, "I'm sorry about this. Off the record."

Alec raised an eyebrow, but didn't stop from his work, "About?"

"About the Inspection. You think I don't know what's really going on? The discrimination."

Alec shrugged, "Well, I did make a mistake. I was out of commission for days. That's inexcusable."

Lydia stared at him in confusion and this time he did pause in his work to look fully at her, "What?"

"That's not why I was called here," She explained, "Your mother requested the inspection."

...

Alec thought that after such a hard and stressful night, the Universe would at least make it easy for him to leave the Institute and make his way to Magnus' house.

Of course, the Universe had other plans.

He had a bag packed and slung over his shoulder. It was late enough that one wouldn't expect to see anyone, besides one or two Shadowhunters who would mind their own business, in the halls.

That's why he ran into his mother.

She was standing fierce and with her arms crossed, "I heard what you did today."

Alec sighed, "Yes, Mother?"

Her eyes glinted, "You infiltrated the vampire's nest! An act that could've started a war and was most certainly against the Law!"

"It was to protect a mundane, Mother," Alec explained, "One with valuable information that could help us find the Cup."

His mother flinched, but it was very slight, "Yes, I've heard of the story. Of your hunt for the Cup with this mysterious girl. I don't know where you came up with such a story."

"It's not a story, mother. It's real. It's here somewhere," Alec honestly didn't know why he was even bothering to argue, he knew how it was going to end, "Valentine is looking for it."

"Don't say his name!" There was a crack in her ever-present control, "Valentine is dead and he isn't coming back."
"He is back. And he wants the Cup. It'll only be a matter of time before he starts his next move."

His mother huffed, and Alec was just done with it. He shifted the weight of the bag on his back and moved to step around her. Even though just the talk of Valentine unsettled her, she was still aware enough to realize something was off.

"And where do you think you're going?"

"Out." His mother deserved no explanation.

She grabbed his arm, "You're not going anywhere."

He wrenched his arm out of her grasp, "I'm twenty. I'm the Head of the Institute."

"Not for long," his mother spat, "Tomorrow, I'm putting up the paperwork to return the position to me."

Alec felt like ice water had fallen through his veins. He hadn't even realized how much he liked the position- needed the position until this moment. He couldn't say anything, because he knew that if he did, it would just lead to screaming.

He couldn't deal with that right now.

He turned on his heel and walked away. Right before he walked out of the door, something made him stop.

"I know you called for the inspection."

His mother didn't say a word. He left.

...

It was such a relief as he made his way up the stairs to Magnus' penthouse. He didn't have to worry here.

He reached out to knock on the door, but the moment he got close, the bracelet pulsed with blue magic and the door opened on its own.

Alec stood there for a moment, just taking it in. Magnus had given him a key. Warmth bloomed up in his chest and he couldn't stop the small smile that spread across his face.

He slowly pushed open the door, stepping quietly inside. He felt a bit awkward, but the warm glow in his chest kept him moving. Magnus was in the kitchen, leaning on the counter, slowly sipping on a drink.

Alec licked his lips.

Magnus straightened upon seeing him, "Alec!" He put his drink down and came to embrace Alec.

"I take it you successfully rescued the mundane?"

Alec smiled as he took in Magnus' scent, "We did. No real complications and no war with the vampires."

Magnus leaned back, "But something happened."
"Just a long day."

"You need a drink." Magnus snapped his fingers and a new drink appeared in his hands. He gave it to Alec and led him to the couch.

Magnus curled up next to him, playing with a curl of his hair. "Tell me?"

Alec took in a shuddering breath, the weight of the day beginning to build upon him, "My mother. She ordered the inspection. Not the Clave. It was her. She doesn't want me to be a Shadowhunter."

"Darling," Magnus soothed.

"I'm a Sub. I'm not incompetent."

"I know." Magnus said, "You are magnificent."

Alec turned, pushing his nose into the crook of Magnus' neck, "Need to Drop."

"I figured you might," Magnus said softly.

"So soon?"

"Oh, Alec," Magnus said, "Even you don't know what you really need, do you?"

Alec mouthed at Magnus' skin and shrugged, the question to difficult for him to process right now. He just wanted to be good.

He wasn't very good today.

Magnus wrapped his arms around Alec, stroking gently up and down his back. Alec shivered, "Why can't I just be good?"

"You are, darling."

Alec pushed himself closer until he was straddling the warlock. "I don't understand." His voice was beginning to slur.

"I know you don't," Magnus moved to also start stroking his hair, "Those mean Shadowhunters didn't teach you anything that you needed did they? They don't know what you need."

Alec was trembling, "Need t'drop."

Magnus nodded, nuzzling into Alec's hair, placing kisses at his temples. "Yes, you do, darling. But you don't know why."

"M a Sub."

"Yes, but do you know what that means?"

Alec whined.

"We're going to have a serious discussion after this, my dear Alexander."

Alec whined again, gripping almost painfully on Magnus' shoulders. Magnus hummed, trying to soothe him.

"Lean back," Magnus ordered, keeping his hands on Alec's waist to make sure he wouldn't fall. The
Shadowhunter leaned back. His head tilted back, exposing his throat.

"So gorgeous," Magnus murmured, squeezing tightly enough that it was just on the right side of pain. Alec squirmed in his lap.

"My perfect Sub," Magnus said louder, "Now, take off your shirt."

Alec hurried to obey, taking his shirt off and tossing it off to the side. There was a light sheen of sweat already on his chest that Magnus couldn't wait to get a taste of.

"Touch yourself."

Alec's hands immediately went to his waistline, but Magnus caught them before he could get too far, "Nuh uh, Alexander. Above the waist. Feel for yourself how beautiful you are."

Slowly, almost shyly, the shadowhunter stroked his hands up his abdomen. His fingertips tickled at the hair scattered across his chest. Alec brought up a hand to stroke at his throat. The other hand went to his nipple, pinching at it lightly.

Alec gasped, a short, small ah and bit his lip. A pink tinge stole across his cheeks and Magnus couldn't help the small groan that escaped his throat. Even now, his Sub was self conscious.

"Beautiful."

Alec gasped again, head warm and fuzzy, as his body rolled. He could do this. He could listen and be good for Magnus. He could make this so good for Magnus. He let his eyes open slightly and glanced at the warlock.

Alec was rolling with pleasure, unable to resist, unable to fight the sensation. He loved the look on Magnus' face. He could be so good. He wanted to be perfect for his Dom. He raised his hand to suck his fingers into his mouth, delighting in the sound Magnus made for his actions. Alec's head was swimming in the thought and he felt himself slipping under.

Deeper, deeper, and deeper still into his own mind. Fuck, he needed it. He needed it so badly. He needed to be good. He had to be good for Magnus. He would die if not.

Perfect. He needed to be perfect and good. So, so good. He needed to be a good Sub. Then maybe Magnus would keep him. And he could get a collar. Alec shivered at the thought. Maybe Magnus would get a nice collar for him. Something sturdy and beautiful at the same time. And he could wear it everywhere and it would never break because magic and it would be very pretty and everyone would see him and maybe think that maybe just for once Alec was pretty and someone loved him completely and truly just once, but first he needed to be perfect. So Magnus would keep him. Would want him.

Perfect.

Fuck. Everything Alec wasn't.

His hands faltered and slipped out of his mouth as he took in a sharp breath. No, nonono, he had to be perfect. He stroked both hands up and down his chest, trying to get back into the rhythm. He was Dropping, he could feel it. So why couldn't he do it?

Oh God, he was a horrible Sub.

Perfect. He needed to be perfect. Perfect, perfect, perfect. perfectperfectperfectperfectperfect-
Alec! Alexander!

Alec gasped, and his whole body went boneless. He couldn't himself up anymore. He fell backward, and he would have ended up on the floor if Magnus hadn't caught him.

Fuck. He messed up. He stopped. He wasn't supposed to stop. Fuck, fuck. Magnus cupped Alec's face, gently rubbing at Alec's cheeks with his thumbs.

"Ssshhhh," Magnus murmured, "Alexander, please."

That's when Alec realized he was talking, almost chanting a mantra, just repeating the word perfect over and over again. He snapped his mouth shut with a click. He trembled.

"Oh, my darling Alexander," Magnus soothed, "Don't you know that you are already perfect."

Alec so very much wanted to disagree, to fix what was such an obvious mistake, but he didn't want to mess up again. To upset Magnus more than he already did.

Oh. He was crying.

Magnus made a wounded noise in the back of his throat. As if it were physically painful for him to see Alec cry. "Oh, my darling Alexander. I want to go to the Institute and destroy all of them for making you think like this."

Fuck, he was ruining everything.

This is why no one ever wanted him. Why he had never been asked out or never had anyone want to drop him before. It made sense now, why no one trusted him to be the Head of the Institute either. He was just a failure. God, no wonder he didn't have a collar or anything or any sort of collection from Doms at all.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

"I'm sorry," Alec said desperately, tilting his head back to expose his throat, hoping to do anything to make it better. "I'm sorry."

"You have nothing to be sorry for. You're wonderful," Magnus said. The next words he said were orders, "Wrap your legs around my waist and your arms around my neck."

Orders... yeah... he could do orders. He could make that work. Maybe he didn't have to be all bad. A complete failure. Maybe he can do at least one thing right. He wound his legs and arms around Magnus. The warlock stood, taking Alec's weight with surprising ease.

"Don't hate me," Alec whispered and then bit his lip, wishing he could take the words back immediately.

"I could never hate you. Never, Alexander." Magnus whispered, making his way to the bedroom. He gently pressed Alec down on the bed, crawling quickly over him.

"You are the most wonderful Sub I have ever had the pleasure of meeting," Magnus said, peppering kisses over Alec's face. "You follow orders wonderfully. And you are so beautiful."

Alec squirmed under the praise, unsure of how to respond.

"I'm going to show you," Magnus promised, "You're going to see how wonderful you are." He paused, voice going a tad softer. Alec whined, wanting only to be dominated. But Magnus was
stubborn, "You can always safe word. No one will be upset with you. I promise. Understand?"

Alec nodded vigorously. He could be good. He could be so good. Magnus grabbed his arms and lifted them above his head. Just far enough that his back had to arch slightly to accommodate.

"Keep your arms here." Magnus ordered, "And do not move them unless I tell you."

Alec locked his muscles. He could do this. His eyes slipped shut.

He bit his lip at the first touch. A gentle, warm, passing touch down the center of his chest to his stomach. Magnus rubbed his chest for a few moments and Alec hummed.

"So beautiful." Magnus murmured.

Alec shook his head slightly.

"Hush," Magnus said, "You trust me don't you? I say you are the most beautiful man I have ever met. The most beautiful Sub."

Magnus brought his other hand to join the first. He scratched his nails down Alec's front leaving a trail of raised red skin. Alec grunted and arched, but he managed to hold the position. Magnus did it again. Harder.

Alec whimpered, "More. Please, oh please."

Magnus chuckled, "Of course, my dear." The warlock leaned down, licking at Alec's pulse point and then bit down.

"Ah!"

"Wrap your legs around my waist," Magnus ordered, still nuzzled into Alec's neck, nipping again at the Sub's neck, trying to leave as many marks as he could. Alec complied immediately, the new position leaving him bowed and strained.

The Shadowhunter shook from the strain, but held the position, mouth hanging half open from the sensation.

"That's it," Magnus praised, "So good. You're so good for me. Such a good boy."

Alec keened. "Sir... sir, please."

Magnus' fingers curled, and he detached himself from Alec's neck to bite down his chest. He lavished at Alec's nipples, groaning as the man almost yelled from the pleasure.

"Oh, Alexander." Magnus gasped, unable to resist rocking his body into Alec, "You exquisite creature. The things you do to me." His mind felt focused, singled onto Alec. It was liberating.

He could feel Alec trembling, struggling not to move. To keep from taking what he so desperately needed.

"Say it."

"Nnghh."

"Alexander, tell me you're beautiful."
"I..." Alec licked his lips. Magnus slid his hands down and around to cup Alec's ass and bit at his collarbone.

"Say it."

"I'm beautiful," Alec gasped.

"Again."

"Beautiful. I'm beautiful."

"Magnificent." Magnus groaned. He tightened his arms around Alec's waist and moved so he was sitting on his knees with Alec straddling him. The new position forced their cocks together. Alec gasped at the sensation, even through their clothes and couldn't resist bucking his hips, trying to get more friction.

"Take what you need, Alexander. Make yourself cum for me."

Alec shuddered and his body rolled, grinding down against Magnus. Magnus met him for each movement, leaning forward to continue his mouth led discovery of Alec's chest.

"How deep are you?" Magnus gasped.

"Hngnh," Too many words. Too many. All that mattered was Magnus and showing him how good he could be. His mind was fuzzy and heavy. And oh it felt so good, so much, so much, too much. He had never felt like this before. He never knew he could. Everything was so perfect and the pressure and friction was amazing and fuck, fuck, fuck.

Alec threw his head back as he came, body twitching. Magnus bit his lip at the sight and couldn't resist thrusting up to Alec's body the few short times until he was overrun with his orgasm.

Alec collapsed, whimpering on the bed. After a moment he rolled and pushed himself up on his hands and knees, crawling over to Magnus to nuzzle into his stomach. Alec whined, but it wasn't as happy as a sound and pulled at his clothes.

Magnus chuckled, "Of course darling, whatever you need. Stand for me."

Alec complied, albeit a bit on shaky legs. Magnus smiled, "Take off your pants and fold them. Leave them on the chair."

Alec was so beautiful when he obeyed. Soon, the Shadowhunter as standing in just his boxers and the bracelet. It was a good luck for him. Magnus stood as well, leaning forward to peck Alec's lips.

"As a reward for being so good tonight, you can undress me in any way that you wish."

Alec's eyes were hazy and unfocused, but the joy from the statement was immediate and clear. Alec surged forward, hurriedly unbuttoning his shirt.

"Darling, darling... slow down. There's no need to rush."

Alec's fingers clenched in the fabric, "Need."

Magnus' eyes turned understanding, "I know. Sweetie, I know." He allowed Alec to remove his shirt, and the Sub started on his pants, fingers fumbling slightly with the buttons and zipper. Magnus stroked his hair. As soon as Magnus kicked his pants a way, Alec fell forward, burying his nose into Magnus' neck, going completely boneless. He was trembling.
"You're deep, aren't you."

"Hnhggg, uh-huh," Alec mumbled. 

Magnus kissed his cheek, "Come to bed. Let me hold you."

And so Magnus did.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

Also for those interested:
I have a radio show! It's called NerdCore and we discuss Nerd things! If you wanna listen to it, just drop my a message and I'll tell you the info.
Chapter 10

Alec woke up smooth and on the line between going under and not. He stretched, back arching off the bed and he hummed. He smoothed his hands down his chest and he gasped as he remembers last night. His mind was still slightly fuzzy, hanging right on that line of subspace. He hummed with pleasure, both physical and emotional. He rolled and found Magnus, sleepily nuzzling his nose into the warlock's chest. Even though they didn't go any farther last night, Alec loved the feeling of Magnus' bare skin on his.

Magnus stroked his back and Alec sighed.

"Good morning, angel."

Alec blinked his eyes open and stared up at Magnus, meeting those beautiful cat-like eyes.

"How are you feeling?"

Alec couldn't talk, he just made a noise in the back of his throat and closed his eyes again.

"Oh," Magnus cooed, "You're still almost under, aren't you?"

Alec nodded and pressed his face further into Magnus' skin, inhaling his scent and refusing to accept that the rest of the world even existed. Magnus chuckled, leaning back slightly and tilted Alec's face up with his fingers. The warlock kissed the shadowhunter, deep and hard. Alec keened. Magnus broke away to sit up.

"C'mere." Magnus said, "Straddle me. Keep your arms behind your back."

Alec hurried to respond, the certainty of the order making his mind calm with relief and made a deep bubble of emotion build in his chest. He swung a leg over Magnus' lap. He wanted to show Magnus that he was oh so good at taking orders. He clasped his hands behind his back and tilted his head to the side, exposing his throat.

He shivered as the cold air brushed his bare skin, and for a brief painful moment he went back to the time not so long ago when no one loved him as a Sub. He thought he could never experience this.

He grit his teeth. He didn't deserve this.

Magnus' hands were quick and calm and soothing on Alec's face, gently smoothing down the path of his cheeks. "Come back to me my darling angel."

Alec smiled, and his eyes slipped shut again. Magnus bent forward to kiss at his neck, making Alec tremble.

Magnus held them there, in that perfect piece of bliss, for a few moments. Then he pulled back, all the way until they were laying down again, legs still tangled. Alec's skin tingled and he was shaking. He was sure Magnus could feel how into this he was. He couldn't help the small whimper that
escaped him as he pressed closer.

Magnus chuckled. He rolled so he was on top of Alec, using his weight to pin him down. Alec loved it. Magnus grabbed his wrists and pulled them up so they were pinned above his head. Magnus kissed him, licking into his mouth and tasting every part of him. They continued for a few minutes before Magnus moved back.

"Darling," he murmured.

Alec hummed.

"You're so good for me."

Alec arched.

Magnus leaned down for an excruciating kiss, stealing Alec's breath. After much longer than Magnus had initially planned (Alec was just too addicting), he sat up and pulled away, ending all contact except for one hand that he kept in Alec's hair, stroking the dark black strands.

Alec whined, eyes snapping open and searching for Magnus' gaze.

"Alexander, darling. There's something very important that we need to discuss."

Alec's eyebrows furrowed, but he wasn't all the way under yet, so after a moment his gaze was already clearer. "Mmm?"

Magnus sighed lovingly as he took in his adorable partner. He couldn't take his eyes off of him. "Sit up for me darling. I'll wait for you to come back to me."

Alec closed his eyes. He was floating and fuzzy, but he wasn't lost yet. He was still in control. And he focused himself. It was difficult, but the next time he opened his eyes they were clear.

"Good job, angel." Magnus murmured, taking notice and now letting Alec lean his head down on his shoulder. He resumed stroking the dark hair.

"What did you want to talk about?" His voice seemed a bit rough.

Magnus licked his lips, and he was more than a bit nervous, "Alexander. What are your goals? For us?"

"My goals?"

"Where do you see this relationship going?"

Alec pulled away, and Magnus mourned the loss, but then his beautiful angel was looking directly in his eyes and, well, he could never complain about that.

"To forever." Alec answered and kissed Magnus, pouring everything he felt into the kiss.

Magnus grinned into the kiss and responded fully, but he had to pull away before it went too far and Alec started slipping under again. Alec was smiling as he tucked his head back into the crook of Magnus' neck.

"What do you think..." Magnus began slowly, and Alec grew confused. Magnus never stumbled with his words like this. He was always smooth and confident.
Then Magnus finished his sentence.
"... about having a contract with me?"

Alec froze. He stopped breathing and just stared at Magnus.
"Darling?"
"A contract?"

Oh. Maybe Alec didn't want one. Magnus tried to keep the heart break off of his face, but he had been so certain that that was what Alec had wanted. "If that's not what you want..."

He was cut off as Alec quite literally threw himself at the warlock. The breath was knocked out of him as they fell back onto the bed. Alec was pressed as tight as the Shadowhunter could get. It took Magnus a minute to realize he was crying. It took him another minute to realize that his darling angel was talking.

"Please. Oh, please, please, please." He was whispering the words on repeat.

Magnus thought it was best to show Alec that he meant it. Using magic, because he was stuck and he refused to let Alec out of his arms, a box that he was hiding in the closet came flying into his hand.

"Darling," Magnus whispered, "I promise."

Alec pulled away. Magnus kept the box hidden for a few more minutes. Alec's eyes were shining, but he seemed to be in control of himself again. "No one has ever... I've never... Are you sure? That I'm the one you want?"

"You are everything I could ever want."

"I don't... I don't have a contract. I've never made one." Alec was blushing, embarrassed and ashamed, "I don't even know where to begin."

"I'll help you." Magnus shouldn't be shocked by that fact, but he was. It made him angry that Alec wasn't properly prepared and he inwardly cursed the society he grew up in that made it that way.

Alec couldn't help but ask again. He couldn't believe that this was happened. He had never thought that it would happen to him. That someone would actually want something like this with him. "You really want this?"

Magnus brought the box forward and put it in Alec's hand. "I want this. Badly."

Alec's hands were shaking as he held the box, "Is this?"

"Open it."

Alec did and gasped. Inside was a collar. It was simple, simpler than Alec would have thought Magnus would have picked out, but it was perfect. More than perfect. It was a black band. Slick and smooth, with a simple blue gemstone cut and laid out in the middle. Alec brushed his fingers against it, feeling like he was out of his body. Out of this universe, because there was no way that this was happening.

"Do you like it?"
"I love it."

"Let me put it on you."

Alec handed the collar back to the warlock and turned around. He was facing the mirror that Magnus kept on the far wall and he watched with both eagerness and disbelief. Magnus brought the collar up and over his head, positioning it perfectly around his neck. He pulled the strap to the buckle.

"Too tight?"

Alec shook his head, "One more?"

Magnus chuckled and Alec couldn't help the excited giggle that escaped him. Magnus tightened it that final click and then properly secured it. The pressure against his neck, the way it felt with every breath and swallowed, had Alec near tears again.

He was wanted.

Magnus was kissing at the spot just below his ear and playing with a lock of his hair. "Does this mean you want to enter a contract with me?"

"Yes!" Alec turned and kissed Magnus, loving the new collar and promising to never take it off in his mind.

...

When Alec made his way back to the Institute it was with a bounce in his step and a grin on his face. Nothing would get him down from this happiness. Even with the confrontation he knew would happen with his mother today looming over his head, he couldn't shake the feeling of excitement out of his head and heart.

His hand, once again, strayed to his collar around his neck. He loved the way it felt. He met not obstacles as he made his way to his room. No one talked to him, but he could see all of their gazes locked onto the collar around his neck. Normally, Alec would be curling in on himself from the attention, but this time he couldn't keep himself from standing up proudly and showing it off. How could he hide this? How had he been comfortable with denying who he was all these years?

Magnus wanted him. That meant that he was someone that meant something. And he wanted to show everyone else.

In his room, he was stopped by his reflection in the old mirror that he kept in his room. He was... dare he say it... beautiful. He had never noticed his body in this way before. He had form... His pale skin and his dark hair. His muscles. His eyes. His ass. His lips.

Alec blushed. And then he blushed harder as he saw his reflection. The gem on the collar sparkled and Alec loved it.

He still couldn't believe that this was real.

He quickly changed clothes and left before he could get too distracted.

"Alexander!"

Alec froze and fear he had felt like no other crept his way up his spine. He turned and met with the most dangerous creature he had ever had to face.
Isabelle.

Upon seeing him, her eyes immediately locked onto his collar. And. She. Shrieked. Alec winced, but then suddenly he was being dragged down the hall.

"Isabelle! What are you..."

"You have to tell me everything! But we need Jace! And Clary, honestly those two are inseparable now. And Simon. Who's awake now, by the way. And honestly, for a mundane he's kind of cute."

"Izzy!"

She kept talking, knowing that it would keep him discombobulated enough that he wouldn't fight back, "But this is about you. Oh my God. You have a collar. Do you guys have a contract? You have to tell me everything!"

"Um..."

"Wait! We need everyone first!"

With that Izzy marched them in silence all the way to the training room. Jace and Clary were already there and Alec was surprised to see that Simon was there as well. The three were talking about the events that happened yesterday and what it meant for the Cup and of course Clary's mom, but it all stopped when they walked into the room.

Clary and Simon were both grinning, but Jace was looking confused.

"Congratulations!" Clary said. It was still awkward between them, but it was something that was working to being better.

Simon nodded in agreement, "You two seem good together."

Jace was still confused, "What are you two talking about? We should still be strategizing."

"Alec has a collar!"

Jace's eyes went wide. "What?"

Izzy rolled her eyes, "Honestly, Jace it's like you don't know anything."

Jace glared at her, but turned his attention back to Alec, "So...do you have a contract?"

Alec refused to acknowledge the blush staining across his cheeks, "I'm making one tonight. For him. To read."

"Do you even know... what you want?" Jace was making this very awkward. This only furthered the truth that Magnus had been telling Alec all along. The Shadowhunter world had no idea how to properly handle Subs.

"I'm sure I could figure it out."

An awkward silence fell over them, before Clary broke it, "Your collar is really pretty. It matches your eyes."

Alec blinked, "Thank you."
Izzy scowled, knowing the moment to properly interrogate Alec had passed, but she let it go without further comment. Although, Alec could tell by the glint in her eyes that she was just going to wait until her next opportunity.

She turned to the mundane, "Simon. How are you feeling?"

"Better!" He answered quickly, blood rushing to his face, "Surprisingly well, actually. I thought I would feel awful."

"You normally would," Alec said, "But as long as they haven't drunk from you and you from them, you have nothing to worry about."

Simon had an odd look on his face, but he nodded, "Good. Because I now want to forget about it as soon as I can."

"Any progress on Valentine?"

Alec sighed, "Mother believes that he's dead and that these attacks are the works of rogues who want to follow his ideals. With only Clary and the Downworlder's opinion, there will be no way to convince the Clave to pursue the investigation."

"Your mother won't believe her own children?!?"

"She won't do anything if it threatens the way the Clave thinks of her." Izzy retorted.

"We just need to find our own evidence," Jace said, "We can handle this."

"And besides!" Simon said, trying to be helpful, "Alec is the head of the Institute. We're safe!"

"Actually, Mother is taking back the position. She doesn't believe I'm suitable enough for it."

There was a pause and then...

"That bitch!"

"Izzy!"

"I'm sorry, but it's true. I hate the way she's been treating you."

"She's just doing what's best for the family."

Izzy looked murderous, but her jaw was set. She knew that if she spoke it could lead to a big argument.

"Anyway," Jace said slowly, "We believe we might know someone to ask about Valentine."

"Who?"

Jace looked to Clary, who still looked a bit awkward. "The werewolves."

It took a second to compute, "You mean the werewolves that were at the Hotel last night?"

Clary's eyes were steely. "The ones who saved us yes."

"And why would they help us? We don't exactly have a good relationship with them."

"Because one of them helped to raise me."
Of course, it was utter fucking chaos, because apparently nothing could just be simple and easy and without violence.

Politics.

Alec was starting to see a pattern with anyone Clary Fray touches. They all start acting crazy and breaking all of the rules. This werewolf, Luke, decided it would be best to try and be the new alpha. Of course, it was to save their lives but still.

And now he was dying from a werewolf bite and honestly Alec could barely understand that. Being allergic to your own kind's bite? What kind of evolution was that?

But now they were on the way to Magnus' place and his heart rate spiked at that thought. The collar on his neck was just tight enough that he could always feel the pressure on every breath. As they neared the door of the loft, the bracelet on Alec's wrist sparked with blue magic and the door flew open. Magnus was already there to greet them, sleeves rolled up and magic gathered at his fingertips.

"Put him on the couch. Quickly, quickly!"

Luke grit his teeth, teeth that were much too large and sharp to look natural in a human mouth. His eyes were that of a wolf.

"Can you save him?" Clary asked worriedly.

"Of course I can." Magnus said, "But it's going to take a long time. And it's not going to be pleasant."

Magnus set to work, magic working hard and flowing into Luke's body. The strain in the werewolf seemed to lessen some. Magnus was barking orders, sweat beaded on his forehead, at Clary. Giving her instructions on how to make a potion.

Movement was a flurry in the room and Alec had no idea how to help. He kept making aborted movements in multiple directions, but... there was nothing for him to do. It was a weird feeling and he didn't like it.

Luke shouted in pain and Magnus grit his teeth. The warlock's magic was shining brightly and sweat was pouring from his face. Without even realizing it, Alec had crashed down on his knees next to Magnus, hand extended.

"Let me help," Alec whispered, "Take some of my energy."

Magnus glanced at him from the side of his eyes, the glamour long ago dropping. Alec shook the hand he was holding out a little, making Magnus acknowledge it, "Please."

Another moment passed and then Magnus grabbed Alec's hand. Alec felt the draw of his energy immediately and he sagged, leaning his head against Magnus' shoulder.

"Are you alright, darling?"

Alec nodded, "It feels... weird."

"I know, angel. You're going to be very tired after this."

"That's ok. I'm helping you."
Magnus gave him a fond look, but it was cut off by Luke shouting out again. Alec felt the tug on his energy again, and the tiredness grew. But he was more than willing to give all of his energy to Magnus.

As long as they were together like this.
Chapter 11

It was quiet for awhile, except for the harsh breath coming from Luke. The glamor slipped from Magnus and honestly Alec could not stop staring at the warlock. The man was beautiful, especially with those demon eyes. The magic was practically tangible in the air, and he could tell that he was getting drained, but it was so worth it to be a part of this.

After long moments Magnus finally fell back from the Werewolf, leaning back on the palms of his hands. He was taking deep breaths, his eyes closed.

Alec grabbed Magnus’ hand and pulled in to his chest, “Are you ok, Magnus?”

The warlock took a few moments before answering, “Yes. It’s a good thing you’re so pretty. Otherwise, I would be charging you so much for this.”

Alec chuckled, but it wasn’t quite full. He did not enjoy seeing Magnus like this. But there was nothing to be done about this. At least, not right now. Alec turned his attention to Luke, “Is he going to be ok?”

Magnus nodded, and it was easy to see that his strength was already beginning to return. “From this, yes. But from everything that has been going on? It’s a question as to how long we’re all going to actually survive.”

“What do you mean?”

Magnus finally opened his eyes, and the glamor had returned, “Something is coming, Alec dear. Something big that’s going to change the world as we know it. The Cup is returning. The talk of Valentine, whether it’s actual him or not, is returning. Downworlders are interacting in ways that haven’t been done in such a long time.”

“Do you think Valentine is alive? That he’s going to return?”

“I keep forgetting that you are your friends weren’t alive for the time of the Circle. When Valentine was very much in power. It’s a shock to me that they managed to keep it a secret for so long from you. If there was anyone in the world that could pull this off, it would be Valentine. Of that I have no doubt.”
“And if it’s true. And he gets the Cup?”

Magnus looked away, but Alec could still the despair in his eyes, “Then war.”

...

It wasn’t too long after that Luke began to stir for the first time. Alec had since made Magnus go lie down in the bed and was prepping him a hot pot of tea.

The werewolf groaned and arched from his spot on the couch, eyes fluttering. Alec immediately went to Luke’s side, reaching forward to try and shake his shoulder. As soon as he made contact however, the werewolf snarled and scratched out, claws fully extended. Alec shot himself back, doing a sort of impromptu backward somersault. He landed on his knees, and grabbed his shirt. It was rips where the claws had made contact.

“What’s going on?!!?” Magnus stumbled into the room, leaning heavily on the doorframe.

“Luke’s waking up.”

“Call your shadowhunter friends,” Magnus said, “I’ll calm him down.”

...

Even a shorter amount after that, Jace, Clary, and Isabelle came back to Magnus’ house, looking like they hadn’t even rested themselves.

“Where’s the mundane?”

Clary shot him a dirty look for the word, but didn’t comment, “He went home. He’s had enough of this for today. He’s not like us.”

Alec wanted to yell at that. She wasn’t like them either. She hadn’t done the training, but one look from Jace had him keep his mouth shut. He supposed he didn’t know everything that had happened
in her life.

Clary didn’t notice this exchange though as she was already leaning down toward Luke. She reached out and grabbed his shoulder, only she was successful, “Luke? Can you wake up? It’s Clary.”

The werewolf grunted, but otherwise didn’t stir.

“Please Luke. We need your help. My mom is in trouble. Everyone is in trouble.”

Jace jumped in, “A shadowhunter named Valentine is coming back. you might have heard of him. He’s coming back and he’s after the Cup.”

There still wasn’t a true reaction from the police officer.

“Mom’s in danger,” Clary pleaded again, “Jocelyn is in danger.”


Luke groaned, rubbing his forehead with his fingers, “God damn it.” He forced himself to sit up, and everyone could see it now. This man was the alpha of the pack. He was in command, it was tangible.

“Tell me everything that’s happened.”

“I was attacked,” Clary said, “By demons. Jace saved me. When we went home we saw that Mom had been taken. We think someone called Valentine is behind it all. And we think he’s looking for the Cup.”

“This is not good. This is not good at all.”
“So it’s true,” Jace said. “Valentine is back and he’s after the Mortal Instruments.”

“It is. We’ve been waiting for this day for a long time now. We hoped it would never come. Maybe we hoped naively.”

“You’ve been waiting?” Alec said, “Maybe you should tell us everything you know.”

“Jocelyn and I have always known that something like this was coming. We’ve both known Valentine for a long time. We were best friends with him.”

“What?” Clary practically shrieked.

Luke looked remorseful, “It’s true. We learned with him. And he was enthralling. We couldn’t stay away from him. He has such charisma. A way with words. A way to make you feel like you can be bigger than you are. We couldn’t resist.”

“But what about when he created the Circle?”

Alec glanced over at Magnus. The warlock didn’t look too shocked at what the werewolf was saying.

“We were right there with him the whole way through. I was his right hand man. And Jocelyn… was his first lady.”

Clary stumbled back, physically affected by such a blow, “What?”

“Jocelyn and Valentine were more than just friends.” Luke said, “They were together. They were married.”

Clary was shaking her head, “No. No. There is no way that Mom married that monster. That she was part of the Circle. It’s impossible.”

“Our parents were part of the Circle.” Alec said.
“Yea, well your parents are monsters.” Clary snapped.

Isabelle shrugged, “It’s true.”

“But it’s true,” Luke continued, “We both were very much part of the Circle.”

“But you’re a werewolf, and the Circle was very much against Downworlders,” Isabelle said.

Luke chuckled, “I wasn’t always a werewolf. Before I was turned, I was a Shadowhunter.” And as he said it, Alec could see the old trace of runes on his skin.

“When I turned, Valentine gave me a dagger. Told me to kill myself with it. I left. But the goal of the Circle back then was to get rid of the Downworlders. To make sure that their ‘evil’ was erased. Only then could the world be safe.”

“And what happened?”

“Things didn’t work quite the way he wanted them to go. He was stopped. And he lost everything. Jocelyn left him. With you.”

“What?”

“Clary, I’m not sure how to say this. But Valentine is your father.”

There were beats of silence after Luke said this. Clary shot to her feet, immediately denying, “No, no, no. That can’t be true. My mom had the box. The box full of memories. Jonathan. Jonathan is my dad. Valentine can’t be my dad.”

Alec had no idea what to say. What to do. But it made sense. It almost made too much sense.

“When Jocelyn left with you. The house burned. We thought Valentine was dead. We found two
sets of skeletons. Signs of two dead bodies. One for Valentine. And the other for your younger brother, Jonathan."

“I can’t deal with this,” Clary kept shaking her head back and forth, “I can’t… I can’t deal with any of this.”

Alec looked to Magnus, “Did you know any of this?”
Magnus had his arms crossed, “I did, yes.”

“And you didn’t tell us?” Jace turned on Magnus.

“It wasn’t my story to tell.” Magnus said, “If it became necessary to make it known, I would have.”

“Whether or not you accept it,” Luke said, “It’s true. You are the daughter of Jocelyn Fairchild and Valentine Morgernstern. And you had a younger brother. When your mother escaped with you, the manor in which you lived burned. We found two different signs of dead bodies. We assumed one was for Valentine and the other was for Jonathan.”

“And yet you thought that he might return?” Jace asked. His face was full of quiet fury.

“With Valentine it is always safe to assume that he isn’t stopped.”

“Do you know exactly what he’s planning now?”

“Not exactly. But back in the Circle he was always talking about how he wanted to create a perfect race. A pure race.”

Alec felt a spark of recognition jolt through his body, “And that’s what he needs the Cup for.”

“What does the Cup do?” Clary asked. She still seemed shaken, but she was pushing through.

“If you drink from it,” Isabelle said, “It may turn normal mundanes into Shadowhunters.”
“May?”

“It’s not exact. Sometimes people aren’t meant to become Shadowhunters. They are rejected. They don’t make it.”

“So he wants to make Shadowhunters?”

“He wants to make an army of Shadowhunters. Ones that are pure from the touch of Downworlders.”

“And then what?”

“Then he’ll do what any crazy man with an army will do. Try to take over.”

“We have to find the Cup. Before him. Or this will be a much bigger battle than we are prepared for.”

Jace and Clary left. The former wrapping his arms around the latter. The Switch still looked like she was in disbelief from all that she had learned. Alec could not blame her. Her entire world has turned on its head.

Luke had fallen asleep again on the couch and Magnus had returned to rest in his bed.

Isabelle had stayed behind. And was staring intensely at Alec. The older brother shifted under the scrutiny.

“What?”

Isabelle broke out into a grin. “Have you written your contract yet?”
Alec sighed and rolled his eyes, but he couldn’t stop himself from reaching up to tug at his new collar. “I haven’t yet. It’s been a crazy day.”

“You’re going to though right?”

“Yes,” Alec licked his lips nervously, “I want to. It’s just nerve wracking. I’ve never done it before.”

“Don’t be nervous,” Isabelle said, “You can’t get it wrong. Just put what you feel you need to have. And if he truly likes you, he will accept it.”

“Yea, that’s the scary part.”

Isabelle chuckled, “Trust me, brother. You have nothing to worry about. And if you need any advice, I’m here.”

“Thank you.”

…

Back at the Institute, Alec carefully avoided his mother. He couldn’t deal with that right now. Not today. He needed to focus on happy things. His mother could wait. Valentine could wait. Magnus was the important thing right now.

He entered his room and locked the door, turning on his laptop. He really had no idea what to do about creating a contract. Was he supposed to make it look formal? Was he supposed to write it in legal language? Or could he just type? He had a feeling that making just a bullet point list wasn’t good enough.

He cracked his knuckles, sighed deeply, and began typing.

Magnus…

He erased that. It shouldn’t be addressed to anyone.
I am Alec Lightwood. I am a Shadowhunter. I am a Sub.

A contract is not something that I have ever prepared. I have never thought that I would need one. I have no idea where to begin. And I have no idea where to begin. And that’s part of the contract, I suppose. That’s where I should begin.

I’m not a good Sub. I’ve never accepted that side, and I’ve had a chance to truly learn about it and to figure it out for myself. So if we enter into a contract, one thing that needs to be known that not everything is set in stone. I am still learning. So if there is something that I learn that I cannot handle at some point, I need to be able to stop doing said thing. Of course it will have to be done with a conversation, but I still need to be able to feel that at some points I can move beyond the contract. This relationship needs to be more than just what’s on paper.

I cannot handle humiliation or belittling in any manner. Just because I am a Sub does not mean I am not an equal, both in this relationship and in life. I need to be treated like that. And I promise to treat you with the utmost respect as well.

Alec was shaking as he typed this. The nerves and the excitement was overflowing within him. This was just supposed to be a beginning contract too. Definitely not a marriage contract by any means. But he just couldn’t shake the nerves.

I need to be Dropped. And it needs to be soft. It needs to be controlled. But I trust you. I will give you myself totally during these times. And I promise that as long as we’ve talked about it and agreed everything beforehand, I will do what you need and listen to what you say.

Contracts are two ways. So one thing I need is that we need to have open communication in all things. I need to be able to feel confident that you have come to me with anything and everything that is bothering you so that we can work through it. And sometimes you need something that I can provide for you, and I wish that you are comfortable enough to just ask for it.

With this contract, it’s less of a what is and isn’t ok, but rather a promise that we keep constant communication so that we both know what the other wants. That we go through this together.

Alec sat back and forced himself to read through it twice. It was sappy, a little more sappy than what he meant it to be, but he was going to stick with it. They were words that needed to be said, and so be it if it was a bit sappy.

A knock on the door made him jump. But he quickly stood and unlocked it, trying his best to keep a calm demeanor.
Isabelle.

He relaxed as she strolled into his room. “How’s it going, brother?”

He gestured a bit uselessly to his laptop, “It… goes.”

She smiled knowingly, “I know what ever you just wrote will be perfect.”

Alec shrugged and bit his lip. He quickly wanted to change the subject, “How’s it going out there?”

“As fine as it can be I suppose. Clary has slowly calmed down. Jace is helping her. All that is left for us to do is find the Cup. If we do that, we’ll be ok.”

“And Clary hasn’t thought of anything yet?”

“Not yet. But give her time. She only just found out this all existed a few days ago. It’s overwhelming.”

Alec was nodding as she finished speaking. “I know, I know. I just wish we didn’t have to deal with this.”

“We all do. But we can’t deny that we’re here now. That we need to see this through. We’ll get through it.”

…

Alec was shaking as he stood outside Magnus’ door, papers clutched tightly in his hand. A few moments later, the door swung open and Alec went inside. Luke was gone, presumably with his new pack. And Magnus was in the kitchen, looking much more well rested.

The warlock came over, holding two martinis in his hands, a large grin on his face.
“My dear, Alexander. I have been looking forward to this.”

Alec took the offered drink and took a sip, the burn was rough but welcomed, “Me too. How are you feeling?”

“Much better.” He took his own sip, “Thank you. For lending your strength. Not many Shadowhunters would be willing to do that.”

Alec blushed, “For you, Magnus? Always.”

Magnus grinned and took a longer drink. He gestured to the papers, “Is that?”

“Uh, yes.” Alec thrust the papers toward Magnus, “Sorry, they’re not… uh… well, I didn’t know…”

Magnus put down his drink and calmly took the papers, “Hush, Alexander. You have nothing to worry about.”

Alec took another drink. Magnus took a moment to look over the contract. It was the longest minutes that Alec had to survive through.

Magnus put the contract down, “This looks perfectly wonderful, Alexander. I see no problems with it. I agree to everything here.”

Alec’s heart felt like it was about to explode from his chest, “Really?”

“Really.”

“What about your contract?” Alec’s voice was higher than he meant it to be, but he couldn’t stop it.

Magnus waved a hand, and with a burst of flame Magnus’ contract appeared in front of Alec. He grabbed it from the air.
We respect each other. We talk to each other. We go through this together.

I trust you Alexander.

Alec had to read it a few times in order to realize and accept that that was it. He was shaking again, more of a tremble, as he looked back up at the warlock.

“Everything in order?”

Alec licked his lips, “Yes.”

“Then lets sign. If you’re ready.”

Alec nodded, “I am.”

The moment was quiet, but the air was full as they both signed their names on each contract. It was nice. Alec couldn’t tear his eyes away from the sight of both of their names next to each other on paper. It was like it almost couldn’t be true.

“Come here,” Magnus said, and Alec went willingly. Leaning into Magnus’ chest. They were together.

…

They were much too tired still to have an overly excited night, but for Alec everything was perfect.

…

They were asleep in each others arms. And it was peaceful. It was perfect.

Then the knocking. Loud and abrasive.
“Alec! You need to come here right now! Right now! This is important!”

Alec shot out of bed and went running to the door. He flung it open and he could sense Magnus following closely behind.

It was Isabelle and Lydia, covered in blood.

“What? What’s going on.”

“It’s Simon. He’s dead.”

End Notes

Thanks for Reading.

Follow me for Updates and ways to influence what happens in the story!

the-sanity-of-insanity

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